



JERSEY FLYERS AQUATIC CLUB

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PARENT HANDBOOK

Introduction:

This handbook should be used as a tool to better understand the full nature of the Jersey Flyers Aquatic Club (JFAC) competitive swimming program. Parents must assume the responsibility of reading this handbook with their swimmers so that the family understands the program. This handbook will help make your participation in the JFAC swim program easier and more productive as well as keeping you well informed. This handbook and other important team matters will be addressed at the parent meetings to be held at the beginning of the short course season. The swim season is considered to begin in September with short course and conclude at the end of the summer long course season. All swimmers are expected to participate fully as determined by Coach Ruben and his staff. Typically short course season (swum in 25 yard pools) begins in September and concludes in mid- to late March. Long course season (swum in 50 meter pools) begins in April and concludes in July (sometimes August for those competing in Zones and national competitions).

Mission Statement:

JFAC is a competitive swim club dedicated to the mission of developing swimmers of all levels to enable them to reach their full potential as athletes. JFAC's coaching method encourages swimmers to develop the confidence and self-discipline necessary to improve skills in all strokes. JFAC's certified coaches focus on swimming technique first; after the technique is mastered the swimmers will acquire the necessary speed to be aggressive competitors and potential college-level swimmers. This program will encourage teamwork, respect, self-esteem, nutrition and physical fitness for each swimmer involved. Every swimmer will be given the opportunity to accomplish their goals and the confidence necessary to be a future leader in and out of the pool.

We Are A Team:

When your swimmer is invited to join JFAC, it is not just the athlete who joins, the entire family does. Swimming is an extremely time-

intensive activity which requires everyone to put in many hours at the practice pool, at meets and team activities.

Parental involvement is crucial to the success of JFAC. All teams are expected to provide help at swim meets. Typically, a host team does not have enough people to do it by themselves, so volunteers from visiting teams are necessary. Parents/guardians will be asked to volunteer as a lane line timer. In addition, a parent/guardian will be required to, volunteer at team hosted swim events and other activities. These obligations may be up to 1-4 hours. It is important that you take that into consideration and commit to being part of the team. By everyone doing their fair share, we make the club stronger and more importantly ensure that the swimmer will enjoy the experience and have every chance to succeed!

In addition, all families MUST participate in fundraising to help defray the costs of running the club. JFAC will hold one major fundraising event this season. For the coming season, JFAC will be running a Swim-A-Thon as its major fundraiser. Swimmers will be asked to solicit donations, usually a flat donation or some amount per lap, for the swims they will do at the event. Swim-A-Thon is a trademark of the USA Swimming and the USA Swimming Foundation, the organization's charitable arm. 5% of all donations are paid to the USA Swimming Foundation for their work in promoting youth swimming and swimming safety.

Important General Information

USA Swimming:

Through New Jersey Swimming, each swimmer is registered with USA Swimming. Each year USA Swimming requires swimmers to pay a fee for participation in USA Swim. This covers registration and insurance cost from the national organization. Yearly registrations are done each Fall. USA Swimming is the national governing body for amateur swimming competition in the United States. All times achieved in sanctioned meets are entered in the SWIMS database. With some exceptions involving certain high school meets, only times entered in SWIMS are official times. Further information about USA Swimming can be found at www.usaswimming.org

NJ Swimming:

JFAC is part of the New Jersey swimming Local Swim Committee and is subject to its by-laws and regulations. Nationally, there are 59 different LSC. There are a total of 73 clubs who swim as part of NJ Swimming. NJ Swimming is part of the Eastern Zone (USA Swimming splits up the various LSCs into 4 Zone by geography) which is comprised of the Adirondack, Allegheny Mountain, Connecticut, Maryland, Maine, Metropolitan, Middle Atlantic, New England, Niagara, Potomac Valley and Virginia LSCs. More information about NJ Swimming can be found at www.njswim.org and information about the Eastern Zone can be found at www.easternzoneswimming.org.

Deck Pass:

USA Swimming has created a free program called *Deck Pass* which tracks your swimmer's times in all sanctioned meets and allows swimmers and coaches access to a host of other useful tools. *Deck Pass* is completely free of charge and is a great way to ensure that your swimmer's times are current for entries into various meets as well as being useful to track goals (i.e., Junior Olympic, Zone, Sectional, Junior Nationals times, etc.). JFAC urges all swimmers and parents to utilize Deck Pass. More information may be found by going to the link on USA Swimming's website: <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=2151&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

JFAC Coaches:

Coaching Staff:

All JFAC coaches are certified and experienced teachers of the sport. Coaches are required to attend regular continuing education seminars and programs to further develop their knowledge and create newer and better programs for our swimmers. We are proud of the fact that many of our graduating seniors have chosen to and have the opportunity to swim in college. Regardless, swimmers leave our program with a life-long love and commitment to the sport!

Access to Coaching Staff:

JFAC prides itself on being a club where parents are welcomed and encouraged to observe practices and have the ability to communicate with coaches about the development of their swimmers. In this spirit, other than for true emergencies or to report a medical condition, all communications with the coaching staff must occur AFTER practice has concluded. Practice is a time for the coaches to pay attention to the swimmers and this attention cannot be divided for performance and safety issues. Please also be mindful of the fact that we have many parents on the team so please be economical with your communications to allow everyone fair and equal access!

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Specific JFAC Information

Communication:

Our primary form of communication is our Web Site: The team website is www.jerseyflyers.com.

JFAC official team email is jerseyflyers2010@yahoo.com. All comments or concerns are to be sent to jerseyflyers2010@yahoo.com mail box. In addition, through the TeamUnify website, notifications of upcoming events, including practice changes and meet announcements, will be made via email. This year we may have the ability to text such reminders to parent's and swimmer's cell phones.

It is the responsibility of each family to monitor their email and check the website on a daily basis.

Tuition Payment Schedule:

Families must pay their fees by the designated installment dates. All fee payments are made to the Jersey Flyers Aquatic Club. For your convenience payments may be made on line via credit card at www.jerseyflyers.org/payments, or deposited in the box at the Secaucus recreational center.

Please do not give any payments (tuition or meet entry escrow) to Coach Ruben or any other member of the coaching staff.

Meet Fee Escrow Account:

Each swimmer is required to maintain an escrow account with for meet entry fees.

Meet entries will not be made for a swimmer if the escrow fees have not been paid by the deadline established for the particular meet in question. This policy will be strictly enforced. Checks

should be written to the Jersey Flyers Aquatic Club, with the swimmer's name and 'escrow' in the memo portion of the check. The escrow coordinator is Ms. Judy Pace-Garcia. Checks can be placed in the designated box at the Secaucus Recreation Center's Front Desk or mailed to Ms. Garcia at 1 Beechwood Lane, Kinnelon, NJ 07405.

Minimum Escrow funding is \$200.00 which must be funded at the beginning of the short course and long course season. An appropriate escrow level must be maintained during the course of the season to cover all anticipated meets (individual meets and relays).

Swimmers participating in championship meets ((i.e., silver/bronze and Junior Olympics) will be required to deposit an additional \$50.00. This will allow for meet entries and fees to be completed in a timely manner.

Entry fees are usually paid approximately three (3) weeks in advance to the USA Swimming Meet Sponsor to ensure that the team is not shut out of a meet and fees cannot be refunded if the swimmer fails to attend the meet or if the swimmer must scratch after the deadline stated by the host club in the meet information sheet.

There are approximately 10 -12 meets over the course of the season with each swimmer generally competing in three events per meet. Historically, each individual and relay event costs on average \$5.00 and \$8.00, respectively and such costs are likely to increase. In order for JFAC to effectively participate in these meets, we must be assured that the escrow accounts are funded so that entries can be made. **IF AN ESCROW BALANCE IS NEGATIVE, THE SWIMMER WILL NOT BE ENTERED IN ANY MEET UNTIL THE ACCOUNT IS FUNDED.**

JFAC Swim Levels:

Coach Ruben will place swimmers in appropriate groups based on their current abilities with the goal of development to the highest levels. The following are the current groups.

Novice Group

Primary focus for the novice group is the basic mechanics of the four strokes. The program includes basic endurance conditioning, starts and turns. The goal is to have the swimmer progress to the next level. Practice is 3 days a week for 1.15 hours

Pre Junior

Primary focus for the Intermediate Junior Prep group is the basic mechanics of the four strokes. The program includes endurance, conditioning, starts and turns and stroke technique. The goal is to have the swimmer progress to the junior group. Practice is 4 days a week 1.5 hours

Junior Group

These swimmers build on the foundations of stroke techniques. Training includes repetitive drill work to perfect strokes, start and turn mechanics. The program prepares the swimmers for competitive swim meets. The goal is to have the swimmer progress to the Senior level. Practice is 5 days per week for 1.5 hours

Senior Group level 3

This group is for existing swimmers not quite ready for the senior 2 level due to age, size or stroke development. This group also comprises of new swimmers joining the team with sufficient experience in development of the four basic strokes. These swimmers focus on endurance, speed, discipline. Repetitive drills for technique on all strokes, turns, starts and finishes. Race strategies for competitive swim meets are also covered. The goal of this program is to prepare swimmers to move on the high school and

college level swimming. For our existing younger swimmers this group will prepare them to move forward to the Senior 2 group. Practice is 6 days per week for 2.0 hours.

Senior Group level 2 (Gold swimmers and high school swimmers)

This group is for existing JFAC swimmers with gold times and high school swimmers without sectional or national times. These swimmers focus on endurance, speed, discipline. Repetitive drills for technique on all strokes, turns, starts and finishes. Race strategies for competitive swim meets are covered. The goal of this program is to prepare swimmers to move on the high school and college level swimming. Practice is 6 days per week for 2.0 hours.

Senior Group level 1 (Sectional-national level swimmers)

These swimmers focus on endurance, speed, discipline. Repetitive drills for technique on all strokes, turns, starts and finishes. Race strategies for competitive swim meets are covered. The goal of this program is to prepare swimmers for high school and college level swimming. Practice is 6 to 7 days per week for 2.0 hours. This group will also practice two times a day when instructed.

Criteria for Advancement:

Decisions regarding the placement of any swimmer in a practice group shall be made exclusively by Coach Ruben. Such decisions shall be based on, among other things, stroke development, attendance/productive participation at practices, physical and mental maturity. Please remember that although a swimmer may be “fast enough” to be in a certain group, he or she may not be ready from an emotional maturity standpoint to be put into a group where for example the other swimmers are significantly older. In making these decisions, the entire coaching staff always have the best interests of the swimmer in mind!

Practice:

Commitment and hard work are required for any individual to become successful. **To remain in good standing, JFAC are required to attend 85% of the practices conducted throughout the season.** Swimmers who do not attend practice on a regular basis cannot be entered in US Swimming, NJ Swimming and championship meets. In the event that a swimmer has an extended period of absence due to illness, injury or other circumstance, we ask that the parent or guardian please provide an email or note to Coach Ruben indicating dates of expected absence and the general reason for the absence.

- Swimmers will be invited back to the JFAC the following season if their attendance is 85% or better and assuming the swimmer meets all the other criteria to remain in good standing. This applies to the entire season, not just short course.
- Swimmers are expected to stay and participate for the entire practice session unless the coach is notified in advance.
- **Swimmers must attend only their scheduled practices.** Please do not send your child to practice with another group if they cannot make their respective practice. Practice schedules are set up to maximize practice time and avoid overcrowding. Failure to adhere to the schedule will result in a less than optimal practice experience for all.
- Swimmers must bring their caps, goggles, fins, kick boards and suits to practice. It is recommended that each swimmer bring a water bottle during practice and stay adequately hydrated throughout.
- Practice times are for the coaches and swimmers to work together. Accordingly, parents must refrain from speaking with any of the coaches during the practice session. Unless it is an emergency, speaking with the coaches takes away

from their attention to the swimmers and is counterproductive to the goals of the team and its swimmers.

- You must pick up your swimmer after practice within a reasonable period of time after he or she is finished. Swimmers will not be supervised before their designated practice times. The coaching staff will not be responsible for any actions by a swimmer left unattended by a parent.

Practice Location:

JFAC practices at the Secaucus Swim Center, 2000 Koelle Blvd, Secaucus, NJ 07094

A full practice schedule will be published prior to the start of the Short Course Season.

Practice Cancellations or Modifications:

Announcements concerning necessary practice cancellations and schedule modification due to unexpected issues with swim facilities, weather or other emergent circumstances as determined by the Head Coach will be made via the JFAC website and email blasts. In addition, practice schedules will be adjusted due to the high school season which alters our access to the Secaucus pool.

Code of Personal Conduct:

Swimmers must participate in a positive, supportive and spirited manner. Good sportsmanship at meets and practice must be demonstrated by each member of the JFAC swim team which include swimmers, coaches and parents. USA Swimming and NJ Swimming have issued a code of conduct including anti-bullying and safe swimming policies which JFAC incorporates and makes part of this Handbook. The USA Swimming Code of Conduct may be accessed by clicking on the following web address:

<http://www.usaswimming.org/ViewMiscArticle.aspx?TabId=1599&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en&mid=6074&ItemId=5661>

Inappropriate behavior, that which is potentially dangerous or harmful or illegal, which interferes with coaching or another swimmer's comfort, wellbeing or ability to practice or compete, as well as inappropriate items brought to practice or meets, will be cause for dismissal from the team without refund.



Information about Swim Meets

Meet Entries:

At the beginning of the short course and long course season, JFAC will publish a list of anticipated sanctioned meets the team will try to enter. When meets are put on the NJ Swimming calendar, the team will send an email to parents requesting that they accept or decline attendance at the meet. The notification will also be posted to the website. Please be especially vigilant with regard to these deadlines. Swimming is a very popular youth sport and as a result meets fill and are closed sometimes within minutes of being posted. Coaches, swimmers and parents have a shared responsibility of reacting to the posting of new meets and taking every reasonable step to ensure that JFAC participates in the meets that are available to it by promptly responding to requests made by the team.

While Coach Ruben welcomes parent input into meet entries for their particular swimmer, Coach Ruben has the final determination of entries for a particular meet. But for extraordinary circumstances, no changes will accepted to final meet entries. In fact, due to the fact meet entries are controlled by the host teams, changes often cannot be made after the established deadline posted in the meet information sheet.

Swim Meet Participation Requirement:

JFAC is a competitive swim club. Swimmers will be expected to compete in their respective meets over the course of the year. The coaching staff will determine the appropriate events for each swimmer, based on their individual skills and goals. Unless otherwise indicated (particularly for our Novice and Pre-Junior Groups), each swimmer will be required to complete in no less than three USA Swimming sanctioned meets before the championship meets (defined as the silver/bronze, Junior Olympics, Zones, Sectionals etc.

Under no circumstance shall a swimmer be permitted to enter and compete in a meet in which JFAC is not participating as a team. Any swimmer who enters and swims at a meet that JFAC

is not participating in as a team may result in immediate dismissal from the team without refund.

Time Entries:

For any championship level meet and those with time standards, all times must be verified. Accordingly, JFAC's meet entry coordinator CANNOT and WILL NOT alter any official meet entry time that is produced from USA Swimming SWIMS database unless the rules of the specific meet permit use of non-verified times. Any unauthorized alteration of times produced by the Team Manager software could subject JFAC to a fine of \$100 per improper entry.

What to Expect at a Swim Meet:

Swimmers:

- Arrive on time. Swimmers must arrive at the meets thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the first warm-up. If a swimmer does not present themselves to one of the coaches by no later than 15 minutes after the start of the scheduled warm-up, the swimmer may be scratched from the meet unless the emergency contact person for that particular meet is notified by cell or email that the swimmer is late but will be in attendance. Any swimmer who does not participate in a meet in which he or she is entered will be charged the applicable meet fees and will not be entitled to a refund.
- Be prepared. It is best to know what events you are swimming BEFORE warm-up. Swimmers, particularly our younger swimmers, will draw grids on the back of their hands or arms to note event numbers, type of event and mark down heats and lanes when announced at the meet (usually given to you by your coach). Also, make sure that you have everything you need – towels, swimsuit, water bottle, cap and goggles. All JFAC swimmers participating at a sanctioned meet must wear official team apparel which consists of team cap, team t-shirt, team warm-up uniform (sweat shirt or pants) etc.... You will have an opportunity to purchase team apparel during the season online through the

team website (click on Team Store) and through on-site visits by our cap and suit merchant. The display of team apparel at meets is an important aspect of team spirit and pride and must be observed by each swimmer.

- Sit with your teammates and cheer. Swim meets are the best time to get to know your teammates and build team spirit. It is also easier for your coach and teammates (relay members) to find you if they need you. **DO NOT LEAVE THE TEAM AREA WITHOUT LETTING SOMEONE KNOW WHERE YOU ARE!**
- Stay positive! If you have a “bad” swim, do not focus on the negative and take something positive out of the experience to build on. A winning attitude is a must whatever the results of a particular event might be.
- Bring plenty of drinks (preferably water in a re-useable water bottle) and healthy snacks. Know how much water you will need and be prepared. Bring light snacks to munch on, such as fruit, crackers, bagels or string cheese. No junk food!
- If you are chosen by your coach to participate in a relay, accept the assignment gladly, pump up your teammates and have fun!
- Talk to your coach after every event. Make sure that you see your coach after each event to get input on your race. And if you have time, cool down between events (if the facilities are available).
- Respect the meet officials. Remember that these are volunteers who want to see you get the most out of swimming. If you are DQ'd, listen to the explanation given to you and treat it as the learning experience it is to help you improve!
- Clean up ALL of your mess. It is important to leave your area just as you found it. Throw away your empty bottles and

wrappers. If your teammates left a mess, go ahead and pick it up. That's what teammates are for!

What to bring to a meet:

- 2-3 towels
- Extra goggles
- Drinks- water or energy drinks
- Snacks – energy foods, fruits, veggies, sandwiches, etc.
- Team suit
- Team swim cap
- Parka or warm clothes in cold weather
- Footwear (sheepskin lined boots, flip flops)
- Games, books, cards, etc.
- Camera

Parents:

- The number one job of a swim parent at a swim meet is to cheer and support the swimmers. We are here to create and fun and supportive environment!
- **Non-volunteering parents MUST NOT be on deck.** NJ Swimming and USA Swimming rules provide that for safety and insurance purposes, parents who are not volunteering must not be on deck before or during the swim meet. Failure to abide by this rule can result in sanctions being levied against JFAC and its coaches. Please do not put volunteers, officials, and other meet workers in the uncomfortable position of having to ask you to leave the deck. Becoming trained as an official and timing are two great ways to be on deck in a positive and helpful way.
- It is the responsibility of the individual swimmer to know their events and be in designated areas to be marshalled. Coaches and other volunteers will do their best to ensure that all swimmers are where they are supposed to be but parents should speak with their swimmers about their responsibilities at a meet.

- Parents should NEVER enter the deck to talk to a coach during a meet. Any issue about which a parent needs to have a discussion with a coach should be brought to the coach's attention via email and a mutually convenient meeting time should be identified so that during practice and meets the coaches can do their job effectively. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a member of the coaching staff who will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
- Meets are opportunities to measure how your swimmer is doing in their training at that moment. Nearly every swimmer has a bad swim or meet occasionally. If your child is DQ'd (disqualified), it is not the end of the world. Almost every swimmer has been disqualified at least once. As a parent you must ensure that your child has a positive experience even if they do not swim well. Remember that our children learn values and sportsmanship from us. Coaches go to meets to coach and parents should go to meets to cheer, offer love, and encouragement!

Timing at the Meets:

If a swimmer is entered in a meet that JFAC is not hosting, families will be required to fulfill any timing assignment assigned to JFAC by the host team. **Parent timing at meets is a crucial function necessary to enable the meet to be conducted.** Accordingly, it is very important that you honor the timing assignments given to you. In the event you cannot time for whatever reason, you must inform the timing assignment coordinator well ahead of the meet to enable an alternate to be named. If you are given a timing assignment, report to the timers meeting when announced and where clothing and footwear that you don't mind getting wet.

Officials:

You are encouraged to volunteer to become an official. Certification courses will be offered by the NJ Swimming committee at various dates listed on the NJ Swimming website. Each member club is expected to recruit its parent members to serve as officials. The

certification process is not time consuming and extremely helpful to the growth of the sport and to the experience of the swimmers at the meets. JFAC urges you to volunteer if you are able and be more connected to the sport.

Parent Participation Requirements:

The success of JFAC relies on parent volunteers in order to provide the best program possible for our swimmers. Your assistance helps JFAC maintain an enthusiastic, efficient, and well-managed swim club. By honoring these requirements, you will enjoy the benefits of greater team unity and show active support for your child's swimming efforts. In order to ensure the full participation of all families and so that the duties and responsibilities are evenly and fairly distributed, each family will be required to commit to the following:

JFAC Hosted Meets: No fewer than four hour work assignments.

Non-JFAC Hosted Meets: No fewer than four timing assignments during the short course season and no fewer than three timing assignments during the long course season.

If you are unable to fulfill an assignment, it is your responsibility to find a replacement or to inform the volunteer coordinator in sufficient time to find a replacement. In such event, you will commit to a future volunteer assignment.

If you do not fulfill your volunteer assignment absent obtaining prior approval or in the event a true emergency arises on the day of any meet, you will be fined \$50 per occurrence for the non-JFAC meets and \$100 per occurrence for the JFAC-hosted Meets. All fines are due within ten (10) days of the infraction being brought to your attention, are not appealable and will be deposited into the general fundraising account. Repeated infractions may result in suspension of membership in JFAC and other appropriate remedies.

JFAC does not want to collect fines and would much rather have your time and effort. Your involvement in the program is one of the cornerstones of the club's and swimmer's success and allows you to be involved in your child's sport in a concrete and meaningful way.

Please make every effort to fulfill your volunteer responsibilities and most of all JFAC greatly appreciates all of the efforts of its parent and youth volunteers!

Jersey Flyer Parent Association:

JFAC Parent Association is an association whose purpose is to fundraise and otherwise support JFAC, its swimmers and coaches. The Association's membership consists of all parents of swimmers in good standing with JFAC. Support of JFAC means, without limitation, financial help with JFAC expenses such as extra costs associated with travel meets, certain capital expenditures that benefit all swimmers (purchase of pace clocks etc.), and social events meant to bolster team spirit and to just have a good time!

Swim Team Apparel and Spirit Wear:

To appropriately represent our team, each swimmer is encouraged to wear the Team Suit, T-shirt and swim cap to all meets. Team suits with team logo will be available for purchase at the beginning of the season or by ordering through our vendor. A team swim cap and T-Shirt will be provided to each swimmer at the beginning of the season.

Spirit Wear is additional clothing that swimmers and their families can purchase and wear to show their support and enthusiasm for the JFAC. Spirit wear for swimmers and parents can be placed year-round online at jerseyflyers.com. A portion of the proceeds will go to support the team.

Note: The purchase of Spirit Wear is not required for swimmers or their families.

JFAC is a coach-owned club:

As such, the Parent Association has no role or authority in the business management of JFAC. Board members can and often do act as go-betweens parents and coaches and each board member will do their best to facilitate communications between parents and

coaches but all financial and coaching questions will be addressed by Coach Ruben.

You are encouraged to get involved and take an active role in helping to make the program a fun and rewarding experience. Your interest and support of our team contribute to and are important to the success of the JFAC swimming program.

During the swim season, activities include fund raising, setting up and running meets, team gatherings or parties and supporting the coaching staff. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by the swimmers and the coaching staff.

Please feel free to contact a board member if you have any questions or concerns.

Committees:

There are various committees which the Parent Board oversees. Currently, those committees are:

- (a) Apparel;
- (b) Fundraising;
- (c) Social Activities;
- (d) Officials; and
- (e) JFAC Meet Planning.

If you would like to help on any these Committees, please contact a Parent Board member. Your participation is greatly appreciated and encouraged!