



CENTRAL OHIO
A Q U A T I C S

2021-22
HANDBOOK

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Who We Are

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to establish a framework for a safe and positive environment for our Central Ohio Aquatics (COA) members. All of our COA members are expected to read this handbook in its entirety.

About Us

Central Ohio Aquatics currently includes an age-group competitive swim program sanctioned by USA Swimming and a masters team sanctioned by U.S. Masters Swimming. We also hope to offer other aquatic programs in the future.

Our Mission

Central Ohio Aquatics aims to foster a lifelong love of aquatics in our athletes from the developmental stages to the international ranks of competition. Our goal is to provide a safe environment with excellent coaches, resources, and facilities for all of our athletes. We plan to improve our athletes' physical development, while simultaneously challenging them to become the best athletes and individuals they can be.

Our Vision

Central Ohio Aquatics is committed to developing excellence in all of our athletes, both in and out of the water. Through aquatic sports, we aim to help our athletes achieve their goals and learn strategies to excel in every aspect of their lives. We are teachers, and our medium is water!

Our Values

At Central Ohio Aquatics, we value:

- **C**ommitment: to ourselves, our teammates, and our team!
- **O**ptimism: in our swimming careers and beyond!
- **A**ccountability: on a personal and team level, to ensure that we challenge each other to be the best that we can be!

Our Coaching Philosophy

The COA staff strives to be excellent role models and teachers to all of our athletes. One of the reasons we choose to coach is because of the positive influence that our sport and coaching mentors had on each of us. We believe that we are instilling in our athletes the discipline and work ethic necessary to be successful within their lives.

Each of our coaches have their own distinct coaching styles and methods, but we are united in our beliefs. We believe, first and foremost, that it is important that our athletes be provided with a safe, positive and supportive training environment. We believe that the foundation of swimming begins with proper technique and fundamentals. While our athletes receive plenty of volume while training, our coaches' primary focus is to maintain proper technique in practices and competitions.

As our athletes advance through our program, coaches will continue to build on a strong foundation of proper technique. Our coaches are passionate about ensuring proper technique even as athletes receive additional conditioning – strength, flexibility, body awareness, intensity and mental preparation – in our upper levels of training.

While competitive swimming is not traditionally viewed as a team sport, it is our hope that through our focus on each individual and by giving our athletes individual encouragement, responsibility, goals and the direction by which to achieve their goals that they will be individuals who compete not only for themselves, but also in support of their team.

Club Administration and Staff

Central Ohio Aquatics strives to maintain a stable, well-trained, and experienced coaching staff at all levels of the program. Our hiring process begins with a pre-employment screening, including an interview and a comprehensive criminal background check for each prospective employee.

All coaches must have a certification from their national governing body (USA Swimming and/or U.S. Masters Swimming). Central Ohio Aquatics coaches are certified in First Aid, CPR, safety training, athlete protection (U.S. Center of Safe Sport), and have passed a Level 2 Background Check.

Our Commitment to the Protection of Minors

Our team is committed to providing the best experience possible for minors. Central Ohio Aquatics staff members are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct when interacting with minors. Please be aware that our staff members are required to report any instances of known or suspected child abuse or neglect of minors.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP)

USA Swimming's top priority continues to be creating healthy and positive environments free from abuse for all its members. As part of its commitment to safeguard athletes, USA Swimming has released an updated [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy](#) (MAAPP) applicable to all USA Swimming Adult Participants, Zones, Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) and member clubs. These required updates come from the [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#) (the "Center"). USA Swimming's updated MAAPP document has been approved by the Center and is required to be fully implemented by USA Swimming, its Zones, LSCs and member clubs.

COA's Non-Discrimination Notice

Our team is committed to equal opportunity and eliminating discrimination. This commitment is both a moral imperative consistent with an intellectual community that celebrates individual differences and diversity, as well as a matter of law.

Central Ohio Aquatics reserves the right to suspend or expel an individual or family from our team and/or our facilities for any governing body code of conduct violation, COA code of conduct violation or the like. Our team reserves the right to suspend or revoke facility access for similar infractions.

Should you witness or become aware of a non-discrimination or code of conduct violation, the incident should be immediately reported to your Head Coach.

Organization & Membership

Governing Bodies of Sport

To participate in Central Ohio Aquatics, each athlete will be registered with their National Governing Body (NGB) and Local Swimming Committee (LSC), specifically USA Swimming & Ohio Swimming for our age group swimmers, and U.S. Masters Swimming for our masters swimmers. As it relates to athlete protection, these organizations are responsible to the U.S. Center for Safe Sport.

The following links are helpful to reference and explore.

USA Swimming usaswimming.org

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States. It is a 400,000-member service organization that promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through teams, events and education.

COA membership is comprised of swimmers of all ages, as well as coaches and volunteers. There are more than 2,800 teams across the country. USA Swimming is housed in Colorado Springs, Colorado. USA Swimming provides insurance which covers Central Ohio Aquatics, individual swimmers, and non-athlete members who have completed requirements for membership.

Ohio Swimming swimohio.org

Ohio Swimming Inc. (OSI) is one of 59 Local Swim Committees (LSC) with responsibility under USA Swimming to manage swimming competition in much of the state of Ohio as well as the Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties in Kentucky.

Ohio Swimming aims to provide leadership and support to coaches, volunteers and swim programs in an effort to maximize every swimmer's potential.

U.S. Masters Swimming usms.org

U.S. Masters Swimming is a national membership-operated nonprofit that provides membership benefits to nearly 65,000 Masters swimmers across the country. These benefits include [insurance](#), *SWIMMER* magazine, [sanctioned events](#), and more. USMS and [its 52 Local Masters Swimming Committees \(LMSCs\)](#) provide direct support to more than 1,500 Masters Swimming clubs and workout groups. Structure and organization of USMS programs vary and are driven by factors such as pool availability, instructor or coach availability, community support, and finances.

U.S. Center for SafeSport safesport.org

The U.S. Center for SafeSport is a national nonprofit organization providing education, resources and training to promote respect and prevent abuse in sport. The Center is located in Denver, Colorado.

The Center is governed by a non-member board of directors, which includes subject-matter experts in the areas of abuse prevention and investigation, ethics compliance and sport administration.

Disability Accommodations

Athletes with a disability may request special accommodations for participation in our program. Prospective members are encouraged to disclose information related to their disability *prior to registration* so that we can ensure that your needs may be handled appropriately and to increase the likelihood of a positive experience with our program.

Gender Diverse Athletes

If a current member athlete transitions and wishes to compete in his/her/their gender identity, that athlete's designee should request a change of the athlete's gender in SWIMS by contacting the Diversity & Inclusion staff at USA Swimming at inclusion@usaswimming.org. Once this process is completed, the athlete will be able to be entered and compete in events that match his/her/their gender identity. To see more information visit USA Swimming's [Recommended Practices for Gender Diverse Minor Athletes](#).

Concussion Information for Youth Sports

The Ohio Department of Health has guidelines in place to educate families on the signs and symptoms of concussions and the dangers of returning to sport too soon after a head injury. Information may be found by visiting the [Youth Concussions page](#) of the Ohio Department of Health website.

In compliance with Ohio's Return-to-Play Law, an athlete cannot return to play, practice or training on the same day that a player is removed due. Under Ohio law (ORC 33313.539 and ORC 3707.511), a physician must provide WRITTEN clearance for an athlete to return or play. Additional details may be found through Ohio Department of Health's document "[Ohio's Return-to-play Law](#)."

Lindsay's Law and Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Lindsay's Law, Ohio Revised Code 3313.5310, 3707.58 and 3707.59 went into effect in 2017. This law is intended to inform and educate students and youth athletes participating in or desiring to participate in an athlete activity, their parents, and their coaches about the nature and warning signs of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in youth athletes. It covers all athletes 19 years or younger who practice for or compete in athletic activities organized by a school or youth sports association.

Per the requirements established by Lindsay's Law, participation with our program requires youth athletes, parents/guardians and coaches to:

1. Watch a video
2. Read the SCA Informational Handout
3. Complete and return the Parent/Athlete Signature Form

These items may be found by visiting the [Ohio Department of Health website](#).

As with our concussion policy, we require any athlete who has experienced a SCA related event to provide our coaching staff with a physician's note permitting them to return to physical activities prior to returning to practice.

Facility Logistics

Transportation

Coaches are not permitted to transport athletes in personal or team vehicles except in the case of an emergency situation or during authorized team travel. In cases of emergency, or authorized team travel, a coach should not travel alone with an athlete. And in such instances, it is expected that athletes sit in the back seat of the vehicle separated from any adult staff members.

Athlete Drop-Off and Pick-Up

We prefer that parents park and walk their children into the facility and maintain supervision of their child until practice or competition begins and that they resume supervision of their child immediately upon the completion of practice or competition. We recognize, however, that this practice is not always practical for families; therefore, some families choose to drop off or pick up their children in the parking lot. Each family should determine what is most appropriate for their child.

Parents who choose to drop off or pick up their children, rather than walking them into and out of the facility, must ensure that their child is able to handle the responsibility of being temporarily unsupervised by adults (i.e. proper conduct, making good choices, understanding of facility safety, etc.). Children who demonstrate the inability to handle this responsibility will be required to be escorted by a parent or guardian before and after practices while in the facility.

Parking

Parking is available at our facilities to all of our members. If we know of scheduling conflicts, we will do our best to provide you with additional parking options in nearby lots.

Athlete Supervision

Care, custody and control of athletes by coaching staff occurs from the scheduled start of practice to the scheduled end of practice. Coaches record practice attendance. Parents and guardians are responsible for their children's care before and after practice. While facility staff maintain loose supervision of unrestricted public areas and pool safety supervision of athletes on deck, they do not serve in a capacity of care, custody and control. When a staff member recognizes an unsafe or a correctable behavior, they will bring it to the individual's attention and expect appropriate modification of behavior.

Attendance

Attendance in each of our training groups is optional. There are no minimum training attendance requirements for any of our swimmers. At each practice, attendance is taken and will be recorded electronically through DeckPass. Parents of age group athletes are able to sign-in to their TeamUnify account to view their child's practice attendance.

Changes in practice schedule will occur due to other athletic events, aquatic events and other school events. These "dates of exception" are communicated by the coaches through email notifications and website posts, and social media. If you are uncertain about whether or not practice will be held, check your email for your weekly swim

club update. It is important to note that “dates of exception” are an anticipated and planned part of our program which has been taken into account in the development of our fee structure.

Cancellation Due to Inclement Weather and Unexpected Emergencies

In case of inclement weather, families should assume that the COA will hold practice unless school has been canceled, or the Franklin County Sheriff's Office has declared a Level 2 Snow Emergency. Families will receive notice regarding this closing by email and the team website.

Each family needs to weigh weather conditions and other safety factors when deciding to attend practice.

Our Facilities

St. Charles Preparatory School: This will be our primary training location for the short course season.

The Lakes: We will also offer programming in The Lakes Bubble.

50-meter pool: We expect to use a local indoor or outdoor 50-meter pool during the long-course summer season. We will continue to use one or more of our other facilities during this time as well.

Emergency Procedures

If an emergency arises while an athlete is in our care, our staff will guide that athlete to an area of safety.

In case of a tornado warning, fire, or other weather-related emergency during practice, all building occupants, including parents in the spectator areas, athletes and coaches on deck will evacuate according to the natatorium's or facility's evacuation procedures. Fire and other evacuation locations may vary depending on the situation. Staff are equipped with resources to be prepared in a number of emergency situations.

Natatorium Rules and Regulations

Athletes are permitted in the facility no earlier than 30 minutes prior to the start of scheduled practice and may enter the actual natatorium no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of practice unless prior authorization is given by coaches or administrators.

No one is to enter the water, sit on starting blocks or diving boards, or utilize any training equipment until the coaches are present, have given permission and are in direct supervision of the activity.

If an athlete chooses to not follow the above rules, a meeting will be requested with the family and disciplinary action may be taken, which could include suspension of swim privileges or even revocation of your team membership.

Changing Areas and Restroom Use

Facilities

The following is a description of our changing area and restroom facilities to allow athletes and their families to plan their use:

- Locker Rooms for athletes: our natatorium locker rooms are equipped with showers and restroom stalls. Only athletes should be using these areas during practice timeframes.
- Restrooms for parents are located in the lobbies. Athletes who choose to change clothes in these areas should do so only in bathroom stalls and not in open areas.

Use of Cell Phones and Other Mobile Recording Devices

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The USA Swimming Athlete Protection Policies prohibit the use of such devices in the locker room or other changing area:

Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.

As a general rule of thumb, phones should be put away before entering changing areas, rest rooms and locker rooms.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items will be logged and kept for a short period of time before being donated to a charitable organization. Please check with your coach if you think you left something at one of our facilities.

Please note that items deemed personal in nature such as underwear, socks, water bottles, shampoo and brushes are typically discarded and not sent to Lost and Found.

Conduct and Expectations

Behavior Management

The majority of the behavior of COA members, including athletes, family members and coaches will be positive, but some behavior may be problematic or challenging. To encourage positive behavior and respond to unacceptable behaviors we utilize a behavior management plan.

Part 1: We focus on everyday interactions.

1. Ensure that expectations are understood
2. Reinforce the behavior we want
3. Ignore the behavior we don't want
4. When the behavior we don't want can't be ignored, we will intervene in a 'least attention' manner and document the situation as necessary
5. A parent may be notified of repeated disruptive behavior issues if the behavior occurs over several practices

Part 2: If the behavior we don't want continues, or it is of a more serious nature, involves the safety of others, damage to property, facility, or is disruptive to practice and the participation of others, etc.

1. An individual may be required to 'sit out' for a portion of the day's activity or be dismissed from the remainder of that day's activity
2. If a minor is involved, their parent or guardian will be notified
3. A meeting between the head level coach, athlete and parent may be required – depending on the nature of the situation, a COA member may be suspended from participation until a meeting can occur and/or all facts are gathered

Part 3: Consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Depending on the nature of the situation, a COA member may be:

1. Required to remedy the situation, if it can be remedied
2. Suspended from participation for a period of time

Part 4: Consequences for *repeated* unacceptable behavior, or egregious behavior.

Depending on the nature of the situation, a COA member may be:

1. Suspended from participation for a longer period of time
2. Dismissed from the program or facility
3. Prohibited from entering facilities or making contact with certain members and staff

Bullying Behaviors

Central Ohio Aquatics has an action plan to address bullying behaviors. The full Action Plan to Address Bullying Behaviors can be found in a standalone document on our team website.

Conflict Resolution

It is helpful when we all assume positive intent in our interactions with one another. Assuming positive intent first allows us to give each other the benefit of the doubt, reduces situational conflict and allows us to better understand the other's perspective so that we may work well together and support one another. If we agree that we all want what is best for those involved, then we can more easily work together to find a solution.

Below is our conflict resolution plan.

1. When you have a concern, contact your child's head level coach. Head level coaches can answer most of your questions and address most of your concerns.
2. If there is a true problem that cannot adequately be addressed by your head level coach, then email the Head Coach for assistance.

Following the chain of command is necessary for timely resolution of conflicts. Jumping levels (i.e. reaching out to the Head Coach before working to resolve the issue with the head level coach does *not* help to remedy situations and often further complicates them.

Theft and Property Damage

Inappropriate rowdiness, theft, or damage to the facilities or equipment could result in an individual, family or team suspension or revocation of that individual or family's COA membership. If damage occurs due to negligence or misconduct on behalf of a COA member or family member, it will be that family's financial responsibility to restore the damaged item/area back to its original state.

Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Use

Anyone suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other drugs that alter awareness may be asked to leave the facility. Anyone caught stealing or in possession of illegal drugs will be asked to leave the facility. As warranted, the authorities may also be called. Additionally, a meeting will be requested with the family and disciplinary action may be taken which could include suspension of privileges, or even revocation of your COA membership.

Parental Support

Listening to Your Athlete

Gaining the benefits that competitive sports provide does not always come easy. Just as we need to decompress from work, our children need to decompress from their day's activities. You are your child's safety net and many times children get their feelings out with their parents – and they are tired from a day's worth of being on their best behavior. For this reason you may find that your child will share with you in an emotion-filled way what occurred at practice or during competition. What you hear may seem positive or negative. This may depend on many factors including, but not limited to, the physical or mental challenges they faced during practice, their attitude that day, other factors outside of sport, post-practice hunger, and their level of tiredness.

It is important to remember that just because your child unloads their day on you it does not mean that there is a problem. Ask your child "are you telling me this because you just need to get everything out, or because you have a problem that you need me to help you fix?" Most of the time children just need to let it all out, get everything off their chest and just need to feel lighter. Simply listening and offering support if it is needed is all you need to do.

When Problems Arise

If your child shares that there is an *actual* problem that they *do* need assistance with, remain objective and ask open ended questions to determine how you can best support them. *Do not make assumptions or make the issue into something it is not.* Avoid phrases that label a situation and simply gather the facts and try to separate them from opinions. Sometimes just talking through the issue will help your child to process what they are experiencing,

and it may equip them with the tools necessary to resolve the situation on their own. If your child is experiencing an issue at practice that needs to be brought to our attention, please contact your head level coach for assistance.

The Magical Phrase – “I love to watch you swim”

Children want the love and support of their parents. At the end of a practice, or the end of a competition they do not need pointers from their parents on what they could have done differently, how they can improve, etc. – this is the role of the coach. Research has proven that the most effective phrase a parent can say to support their child in sports is “I love to watch you play.” We encourage you to browse parenting resources online and to click here to hear directly from how youth athletes feel that their parents can best support them in sports: [I love to watch you play.](#)

Watching Practice

Parents are welcome to watch practice from the spectator seating area, but parents are not permitted on the pool deck unless they have been specifically invited by a coach or staff member (during a specific time for a specific purpose), they have a prearranged meeting with a coach, or there is an emergency.

Here are some important guidelines to keep in mind when observing a practice.

1. Young athletes will always seek the approval of their parents. If they know that you are watching practice, it's only natural for some of their attention to be directed to you. However, for the athletes to learn as much as possible, it is imperative that the coaches have your child's undivided attention during practice. We ask that you not communicate with your child during practice so that the coach can have his or her undivided attention.
2. We insist that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. If you need to communicate with a coach, please do so after practice (if they are not coaching another group) or during a prearranged meeting.
3. Our coaches spend a considerable amount of time planning weekly training sessions for each of their practice groups. Each training set or instructional drill has a purpose and one practice and/or set often builds on another throughout the week. If you have not attended all of the practice sessions, you may not understand the purpose of what the athletes are doing on a given day.
4. Please do not try to coach your child based on what you see (or think you don't see) him or her doing at practice. Many times when teaching skills, the coaches ask our athletes to do things that might look incorrect or might actually be illegal (as it relates to technical sport skills) according to the rules, but those drills have an important purpose in teaching skills. With these various reasons in mind, we ask parents to not attempt to interfere with your child based on what you observe at practice. Please leave the coaching to our experienced coaching staff!

Photography and Video

Parents may take pictures and video of their own child during practice and competition for personal use, however parents may not take pictures focused on other children or for the purpose of improving or comparing athletic performance, body type, talent, skills, etc.

Communication

Team Communication

Good communication is vital to the success of any organization, and Central Ohio Aquatics is no exception. We have structured various systems to help with the dispersion of information to our athletes and families.

We utilize a number of forms of communication

- Team Website
- Email
- BAND
- Team Social Media Pages
- Telephone
- Face-to-Face Meeting

Communication from you to the coaching staff:

1. Coaches are instructed not to accept calls, texts or notes while they are on the pool deck working with athletes. Please do not attempt to contact a coach during meets or practices through any of these methods unless there is a true emergency.
2. Your child's head level coach is the person that you should contact for all practice and meet-related questions. Please ask your coach how he or she wants to receive communication from you. Coaches are not permitted to make personal phone calls or text with their swimmers, but they can communicate with their swimmer's parents in these manners or with swimmers if their parents are included in the communication. Please be respectful of your coaches' work schedule and family time, and limit calls and messages between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Prior to reaching out to a coach or administrator, please check the website or recent team email as the answers to many of your questions may be found there first.

3. Parents, we strongly encourage our athletes to communicate directly with the coaches about absences, athletic concerns, entries, etc. Please have your son or daughter speak directly to his or her head level coach rather than contacting the coach on his or her behalf. MAAPP protocols should be followed.
4. Coaches are happy to meet with athletes and/or parents, but please contact the coach to prearrange a meeting so that the coach can prepare for the meeting.
5. Unless it is an emergency, please allow a coach 48 hours to reply to your communication. Most of our coaches have families and multiple jobs, but they will reply as soon as possible.

Billing Policies and Fees Information

Overview

The COA offers a variety of training groups. Each training group has a different cost, because of the different levels of instruction, the amount of time in the water, and the amount of time outside of the water. These are yearly fees paid per athlete and are non-refundable. Detailed fee information for the various training groups may be found on our team website.

Annual Registration

Registration for our teams is done on an annual basis and includes:

1. Completion of on-line registration.
2. Payment of the non-refundable membership fee.

Completing these steps holds your position on your assigned team roster.

Invoice and Payment Schedule

Invoices are available monthly beginning the 1st of each month and payment is typically due by the 15th of each month. See our team website for details.

Fees & Discounts

Training fees vary by practice group. A table of fees may be found on our team website in fees & frequently asked questions documents. Discounts may be available depending on a variety of factors. Since the accounting of swim club finances are separate and coach to athlete ratios are substantially different, program costs and discounts may not be comparable.

Financial Obligation

By enrolling in our program, you are making a financial commitment to pay for the entirety of the program offered for that competition year or session as detailed on the team website. You do not have the option to discontinue your financial commitment except through use of the Central Ohio Aquatics Inactive Status Form.

Medical Exception

If an athlete has sustained an injury or illness connected to their participation in the COA that precludes him or her from participation in the program for 30 scheduled practice days or longer, a medical exception (proration of fees) to the financial obligation may be requested. Each situation is handled on a case-by-case basis and medical documentation is required. Documentation must include the date of the injury/illness, the nature of the injury/illness, physical restrictions and the date at which physical activity may be resumed. All medical documents must be from a licensed medical doctor's office.

Notification should be done within one week of an athlete's absence from practice so that we are aware that there is a potential longer-term issue. Do not wait until the end of 30 days to let us know why your athlete has missed practice.

Financial Hardship

If you are experiencing a financial hardship that may prevent your participation in the program or ability to maintain your membership in good standing, please notify us prior to enrolling or *prior to* falling behind in payments.

Program Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw your child from our program prior to the end of your financial commitment, you must submit a Central Ohio Aquatics Inactive Status Form. This form outlines the notification procedure and your remaining financial commitment to the program. It is important to be aware that if you plan to return to Central Ohio Aquatics for the next registration season, you will lose your priority registration status.

Waiting List

If there are no remaining spots for a particular training group, then a waiting list will be established for that group. If someone were to leave a specific group and a spot opens, the family at the top of the list would be contacted. Each family thereafter would be contacted until that specific group is filled. Please note that no athlete will be placed outside the training group that was recommended by his or her coach. The waiting lists are established by chronological order of registration with our club.

The COA reserves the right to accept siblings of current COA members into any of our training groups at any time, regardless of our team cap in that particular training group.

Payment Penalties

Prior to joining the COA, it is important to be aware of the cost of participation and to ensure that it fits within your family's financial plan. Additionally, making your payments on-time helps us to most efficiently operate the club. When our attention is diverted to chasing late payments, less attention is given to helping to improve swimmers' performance and club experience.

Invoices are available on the 1st of each month and payments are due by the 15th of each month.

A \$25 late fee will be auto-assessed to accounts without a zero balance on the 16th of the month. Payment of the late fee should be included with the late payment.

Suspension from participation: If your payment has not been received by the 16th of the month, your athlete will be suspended from practice, other club activities, and may be restricted from meet registration until the outstanding balance has been received.

If payments are consistently late, we reserve the right to remove the account holder from a payment plan and assess the remainder of the season's fees in one lump sum.

If you are experiencing a financial hardship, it is imperative that you make us aware of your situation before you miss a payment so we may discuss a potential payment plan. We will submit accounts (the full account balance) to collections when they fall 60 days behind in payment unless a special financial arrangement has been approved.

Travel Expenses

Athletes and their families are responsible for arranging their own transportation and accommodations for out-of-town meets. The cost of travel and accommodations are NOT included in program fees.

Apparel

Overview

Apparel and uniform items will be available for purchase through an online team store. Apparel fitting days will be posted on the events calendar on our team website.

Uniform Requirements

At Practice

Athletes wear swimwear to water workouts that is intended for competitive swimming, and most swimmers prefer to wear swim caps as well. All swimmers need to have goggles, plus a backup pair of goggles for practice. Athletes should wear a t-shirt, shorts, and sneakers for all dryland practices.

At Competition

All athletes should wear our team suit (or a generic suit with no other team logos) at all non-championship meets. Team swimsuits can be purchased from our online team store. Tie-back suits are not permitted for competition.

Swimmers may wear high-tech ("fast") suits at championship meets and as permitted by the head level coach of each training group. Please be aware that tech suit standards for 12 & under swimmers have become more restrictive since September 1, 2020.

It is recommended that athletes wear team warm-ups that have been purchased through our online team store to each meet. We want to wear our team colors with pride and show our team spirit! All purchases are the responsibility of each team family.

Provided Apparel

As part of their club membership, each swimmer will receive two latex swim caps and two team t-shirts. All swimmers are required to wear their COA team cap at all meets, if they choose to wear a cap. A schedule of t-shirt colors will be posted on the event page of each swimming competition so swimmers know what color shirt they should wear on each day of competition.

Practice Information

Swim Seasons

The USA Swimming competitive swim year runs from September through August. There are short breaks between the Short Course and Long Course seasons. The seasons are as follows:

Short Course (SC)

- Pre-season High School: runs from early September through late October. This training group only practices with COA until their high school season begins, at which time they will train with – and compete for – their respective high school teams. Many of these swimmers return to COA in the Senior group at the conclusion of high school season.
- All other SC training groups: begin in early September and end somewhere between late February and early April, depending on the date of the swimmer’s championship meet.

Long Course (LC)

- This season runs from late April until late July or early August, depending on the training group.

Training Group Time Standards & Expectations

Masters: Ages 18+. No time standards. A swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards of freestyle with bilateral (on both sides) breathing and 25 yards of backstroke. Proficient form is not required.

Novice: Ages 5-8. No time standards. A swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards of freestyle with bilateral (on both sides) breathing and 25 yards of backstroke. Proficient form is not required. Swimmers should be able to pay attention to instruction.

Bronze: Ages 8-10. No time standards. A swimmer should be able to legally swim freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke, and 100 IM. Swimmers should be able to make 10 x 50 SCY freestyle on 1:15.

Silver: Ages 10-12. No time standards. A swimmer should be able to legally swim freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke, and 200 IM. Swimmers should be able to make 10 x 50 SCY freestyle on 1:00.

Gold: Ages 12-14. No time standards. A swimmer should be able to legally swim freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke, and 400 IM. Swimmers should be able to make 10 x 50 SCY freestyle on :45.

Senior: All High School aged-swimmers + swimmers who have achieved at least one Central Zone or Sectional cut.

Swim Meet Information

Meet Schedule

Some meets last one day; some meets run the entire weekend. Swimmers may choose to compete in single or multiple sessions at any meets.

Meet information will be posted on our team website, including our swimmers' entries, meet fees, and special instructions such as what time our swimmers are to arrive at the pool for warm-up. Swimmers should arrive at the time stated on the meet page.

All swimmers are required to sit on the deck with their coaches and teammates during meets. Swimmers are not to sit with their parents or with other swim teams. Swimmers may quickly meet with their parents in the stands after an event only after receiving permission to do so from COA's coaching staff.

Attending a Meet

The coaching staff firmly believes in the value of competition for all levels. Each individual swim meet has a particular format which restricts entries in some way. Each meet will have either an age-group format where each event is broken down into age group or a qualifying format where anyone can swim those events, no matter how old, as long as they have previously achieved the time standard for that event.

Some meets are designed to accommodate only the slower swimmers. These meets will typically require the entries to be slower than the national "B" standards.

Meet Procedures

It is important that you understand meet procedures and how they relate to you.

At the beginning of each season, we will post a list of the meets that COA will attend that season. It is the responsibility of each family to pay attention to the time standards for each of those meets (which will be stated in the meet information or "notes" section of the entry page), as well as the registration deadline for each meet. COA coaching staff allows its swimmers to indicate the events that they would like to swim on the website entry page; however, the coaches always make the final decision about individual events and relay participants/order.

Once the entry deadline has passed, no changes may be made to your entries.

We believe that our swimmers should participate in all events that they are capable of doing. Sometimes swimmers will be entered in events in which they do not excel, but our coaches still want our swimmers to have the experience of trying! Parents should support the coaches and encourage their swimmers to do their best at all times. Early experience in all strokes and events is an important part of the swimmer's total development, both in terms of skills, and in terms of developing a positive attitudes-toward difficult tasks.

Swimmers or parents are not allowed to enter in meets outside of Central Ohio Aquatics schedule without prior approval of their Head Level Coach and the Head Coach.

Relay line-ups are decided in the sole discretion of the coaching staff, and we reserve the right to change our relays at any time and for any reason. Relays are often configured by TeamUnify to make the fastest combination

of swimmers available, but exceptions could occur if another swimmer has competed better/faster throughout a meet. We ask our team parents to support these coaching decisions. We understand that can be a challenge when your child is left off a relay, but we want to encourage all of our athletes to exhibit support for their teammates regardless of personal disappointment. If your child has a question or concern about these types of matters, please encourage him or her to communicate directly with the coach. This will allow the coach to explain his or her decision, and can be a positive experience for our swimmers as they learn to deal with both success and failure.

Hosting Meets

Swim meets are a necessary part of the sport of swimming. They provide your swimmer with the opportunity to compete, and to demonstrate his or her achievements. We expect to host some intrasquad meets or dual meets this season. These meets require time and effort and only through the interest and participation of *all families* will the effort be equitably distributed throughout the club. Your cooperation and assistance as a parent is essential in order for our team to experience success when hosting competitive swim meets. Our COA families will be required to fill all job duties that are needed to successfully run a meet.

Parent Home Meet Work Expectations

Parents (or a representative for your family) are expected to work at least one session at each home meet in which their swimmer is participating, unless otherwise specified when meet worker signups are posted. Parents will be expected to sign up for work slots as they are registering their swimmer(s) for home meets.

Officials

Have you ever thought of earning certification to become a volunteer USA Swimming official? Now is a great time to consider starting (or continuing) the process.

Becoming a USA Swimming Official is a rewarding way to be a part of your child's swimming experience and is one of the best places to be a part of the action of meets. Serving as a swimming official allows you to learn the rules of the sport and be engaged in a way that's not possible from the stands. It also is a great way to make new parent friends and have fun.

Some folks think that you need to know a lot about swimming to become an official – that's simply not true! You can learn what you need to know through clinics, online training and on deck apprenticeship sessions.

If you have an interest in becoming an official, please let coach Kyle know. He'll help you start the process by attending one of the clinics offered at the beginning of the season.

Parent Meet Worker Positions

Home swim meets provide numerous ways for parents to assist with meets. While a majority of the available positions during meets involve lane timer duties and officiating, other positions may include, but are not limited to: deck marshal, runner, check-in, head timer, bullpen, and concessions.

We'll need your help!