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**Hannibal Hurricanes**

**Competitive Swim Team**

**Swimmer & Parent Handbook**

**2021-22**

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one commits oneself, then providence moves too. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings, and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would come his way. I learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:**‘Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.   
          Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it!'”**

### --Entire quotation from W.H. Murray in The Scottish Himalaya Expedition, 1951

### --Couplet from Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe in Faust, 1775

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**Introductory Information**

**BENEFITS OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING**

* Safety skills in and around the water
* Enhanced health and fitness
* Lasting friendships with teammates and competitors from other teams
* Team spirit and a sense of belonging to something greater than oneself
* Confidence through taking risks and surmounting adversity
* An appreciation for fair play, good sportsmanship, and leadership
* The emotional resilience to manage success as well as disappointment
* Self-discipline and internal motivation
* An understanding of the relationship between effort and outcome
* Fun

**Coaches**

Head Coach Mike Austin

Coach Mike **graduated from Wilmington College in Ohio with a degree in Sports Management. He started his swimming career as an 8-year-old at the YMCA. His swimming portfolio includes competing at the Y, USA, high school, and collegiate levels.  He has 8 years of coaching experience with a variety of clubs including a USA team, summer league team, high school boys/girls and a college program.**

Coach Marie Bachman

Coach Marie Bachman is in her fifth year of coaching with Hurricanes. Coach Marie swam with the Hurricanes for many years and was the winner of the Eye of the Hurricane Award in 2014-15, Marie frequently assisted in coaching her younger Hurricane teammates. Along with being our lead Silver coaches, Marie helps with the other groups, is a personal trainer and coaches many in our dryland program.

Coach Heidi Hansen

Coach Heidi Hansen joined the Hannibal Hurricanes as an 8-year old. Her swimming career continued through high school. She brings 10 years of coaching experience to the Hurricanes. Heidi is an elementary school teacher at Veteran’s school, she is married and has 2 young children. We are excited about her passion and love for swimming and kids. Heidi will be filling in one day each week.

Coach Sarah Zielinski

Sarah Zielinski graduated from Hannibal High School and was a member of the Hurricanes and high school teams growing up. She represented the Hurricanes multiple times at the area meets and also earned Eye of the Hurricane. Sarah is the lead coach for Bronze 2 and also assists with Bronze 1.

Coach Kelly Colley

Kelly Colley is in her third year of being a part of the YMCA family. She is our Bronze 1 lead coach and the aquatics director.  She started coaching when an injury took her out of practice her senior year of high school.  Kelly brings great enthusiasm to the program and will always have a smile on her face.

Coach Sam Zielinski

Samantha joins us this year as one of the Bronze 1 and 2 coaches.  Samantha swam for the Hurricanes for 8 years and for the Hannibal High School all 4 years.  She is a graduate of HLG and currently is working as a lifeguard and swim lesson instructor. We are excited to have her instruction our beginner Hurricane swimmers

**Mission**

The Hannibal Hurricanes’ mission is to foster the development of local youth as competitive swimmers and well-adjusted individuals embodying the Y’s core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We offer a professionally coached instructional program emphasizing hard work, attention to detail, and the embrace of individual and team challenges.

**History**

A group of interested parents, a supportive YMCA, and Spike Ehrhardt of Hardees Family Restaurants founded our team in 1986. We have continued to prosper due to the support of the YMCA and the commitment of the swim parents. Parent committees organize and manage meets, stage fundraisers, and ensure the future of competitive swimming in Hannibal. Teamwork drives Hurricane success at all levels of the program.

**Hurricane Booster Club Officers**

1. Jill Briscoe – President [jbriscoe713@gmail.com](mailto:jbriscoe713@gmail.com) 573-808-3878
2. Jamie Johnson—Vice President jamieajohnson@gmail.com 314-960-1191
3. Amanda St. Juliana – Secretary [stjuliana@icloud.com](mailto:stjuliana@icloud.com) 573-795-6399
4. Melissa Foster--Treasurer [mafoster@gmail.com](mailto:mafoster@gmail.com); 573-795-4371

**YMCA/Hurricane Contacts**

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Aquatic Director Kelly Colley

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YMCA Director Eric Abts

573-221-0586

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**Team Website/Email**

[www.teamunify.com/ozshhst](http://www.teamunify.com/ozshhst)

hannibalhurricanes@gmail.com

**Parent meetings**

September – Sept 14th Information will be sent via email

January and February TBD

**Competitive Affiliations**

The Hurricanes compete in three different swimming associations:

1. River Country Swim League, which features a summer-season for various seasonal and year-round teams in our immediate vicinity
2. YMCA meets at various levels, occurring primarily during the short-course (September through March) season
3. YMCA meet levels
4. Dual meets
5. Local invitationals
6. Championship meets at three increasingly experienced levels
7. Central Region--one of three regions that make up the Heartland Area Swim Conference
8. Heartland Area—includes 30 YMCA teams in three different regions in Missouri and Illinois

<https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?_tabid_=0&team=reczzhascil>

1. YMCA nationals
2. YMCA team membership
3. Membership is open to any swimmer between 5 through 21 who can swim a length of freestyle and a length of backstroke. Every Hurricane must be a member of the YMCA of Hannibal. Swimmers must have participated in 3 YMCA meets in the current season (2 if a high school swimmer) to participate in the Area Championships.
4. USA Swimming (USAS) sanctions events at various levels throughout the year in both 25-yard (short-course) and 50-meter (long-course) pools
5. USA Swimming is the national governing body for swimming as an Olympic Sport and sanctions competition at all levels from local to national as follows:

Local meets are typically invitationals, which, despite their name, are usually open to any team that wants to attend; these meets are hosted by local teams and often serve as not only competition venues but major fundraisers; For USAS meets swimmers compete in the age group that they are the first day of the meet.

1. LSC (local swim committee) championships are essentially state championships, although the boundaries making up the LSC do not always correspond perfectly to geographical lines (for example, our LSC, Ozark Swimming, also encompasses eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois)

<https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=czoslsc>

1. Sectional and national level championships are overseen directly by USA Swimming and involve highly accomplished swimmers from several states or the entire nation

<https://www.usaswimming.org/>

1. USA Swimming Time Standards

These are the times needed to qualify for designated USA meets. The meet packets will tell you the time (BB, A, AA, AAA, etc.) that is needed. Time Standards can be found on the USA Swimming website. Follow the following steps:

### [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org), TIMES tab, time standards, age group time standards, age group motivational (by age group).

**Practice**

“The highest reward for one’s toil is not what one receives from it but rather what one becomes by it.”

--Anonymous

**Practice Schedule for school-year 2021-2022** (starts Tuesday, September 7)

**Junior:** M W 3:30-5; T TH 4:45-6:30; F 3:30-5:15 Dryland T TH 3:45-4:30

**Gold:** M W 3:30-4:45; T TH F 3:30-5; Dryland T, TH 5:15-5:45

**Silver:** M W 5:00-6; T TH 5:45-6:45; F 5-6:15; Dryland T TH 5-5:30

**Bronze 2:** M W 5:30-6:30; \*\*T TH 4:00-5; F 5:15-6:15; Dryland M, W 4:30-5:15 (Born to move class) \*\* Starting Nov.15, T TH will be 3:45-4:45

**Bronze 1:** M W 4:45-5:30; T H 5-5:45 F – No practice; (Arrive with suit on and be ready 5 minutes prior to start for stretching on deck)

Saturday practices TBA for gold/jr each month 7-8:45 am

**Fees**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Practice group** | **Paid by month** | **Paid in full** |
| Bronze 1 | 60 | 357 |
| Bronze 2 | 80 | 476 |
| Silver | 85 | 505.75 |
| Gold | 112 | 666.40 |
| Junior | 130 | 773.50 |
| High school swimmers during season | 112 | NA |
|  |  |  |

Notes:

1. Season runs SEVEN months, September through March
2. $100 Registration fee includes USA reg, Heartland area reg, cap, t-shirt, equipment.
3. Payments will be due on the 15th of each month, starting September 1
4. Register On-line through the YMCA website Or YMCA App

**Practice Group Structure**

Basis for establishing practice groups and assigning participants:

1. Given our constraints of lane space and available times, number and skill level of swimmers, and number and availability of coaches, we strive to create practice groups relatively homogeneous with respect to age, ability, and ambition and provide each group sufficient time and opportunity to stimulate adaptation to increasing demands on the neural, musculoskeletal, and cognitive systems. While no grouping is perfect, our goal is to provide an improvement-driven team culture that emphasizes increasing refinement of skills, enhancement of physical capacity, and annealing of the will. When we assess swimmers’ readiness to advance to the next practice group, we consider all of the aforementioned variables, seeking evidence of progress already made. For example, swimmers who consistently lead the top lane in their current practice group and exhibit similar abilities in dryland are likely to have a successful transition to the next level.
2. Our goal of creating relatively homogenous practice groups with respect to age, ability, and ambition is in recognition of the fact that we can design more appropriate challenges for swimmers who are similar in skill, physical capacity, and drive, increasing the likelihood of hitting the learning sweet spot characterized by a challenging but not overwhelming curriculum. As well, when swimmers are surrounded by those with shared abilities and goals, the collective group energy and positive peer pressure leads to higher levels of motivation and meaning for most if not all swimmers in that group; the result is that swimmers start pushing each other, enabling coaches to focus more on technique and higher-level performance parameters.

**Swimmer Advancement**

Decisions regarding whom to advance and when are made by the coaching staff and reflect a combination of objective and subjective criteria including the following: attendance history, available space, practice- management behavior, lane leadership, cognitive engagement, stroke efficiency, physical capacity, receptivity to change, willingness to accept a challenge, team orientation, drive to excel, age, repeat times, goal set performance, and meet participation.

Relevant to swimmer advancement in general, the eight-category outline below details the core habits, behaviors, and attitudes of swimmers’ who are best poised to optimize their personal and athletic growth and contribute to the development of a team culture within which success is inevitable. Please notice that all of these components have in common an emphasis on the process of pursuing excellence:

1. Arrives at practice punctually and prepared
2. Competently and confidently leads the practice lane and strives to exceed group expectations
3. Consistently attends practice and communicates with the coach when unable to attend
4. Practices enthusiastically and deliberately
5. Gives best mental and physical effort every practice
6. Seeks and responds positively to feedback
7. Changes technique when instructed to do so
8. Executes swimming and dryland skills with precision
9. Exudes a “can-do” attitude and practices positive self-talk
10. Listens attentively, follows instructions, monitors and reports practice performance parameters succinctly, clearly, and accurately
11. Communicates with the coach
12. Responds positively to feedback
13. Inquires when unclear
14. Requests specific feedback
15. Monitors and reports performance parameters such as HR, SC, time, SIF, etc.
16. Learns and uses stroke tenets and acronyms
17. Knows and uses drills and drill progressions
18. Keep eyes and attention on coach during instruction
19. Apprises coach as soon as a scheduling conflict arises
20. Informs coach of possible injuries
21. Competes in meets
22. Participates in seasonal and meet goal-setting activities as offered
23. Participates in meets regularly and races 100% every time up
24. At least one meet monthly
25. All home meets unless facing a direct scheduling conflict
26. Season-ending championship meets for which he/she qualifies
27. Swimmers aspiring to participate in championship meets at the regional and national level will be expected to meet all Junior-group entry criteria
28. Best-effort relay swims on every leg
29. Relay efforts are the embodiment of teamwork and team spirit in swimming
30. Gives best efforts in all meets at every level with the following general guidelines as illustrative:
31. Within 3% of PR in early season (e.g. a 1:00.00 100 freestyler should be < 1:01.8)
32. Within 2% of PR in mid season
33. Within 1% of PR in late season (without a tech suit, rest, or shaving)
34. PR at season-ending taper meet with a tech suit, taper, and shaving)
35. Demonstrates team spirit and sportsmanship
36. Practices teamwork
37. Holds self and peers accountable
38. Represents the team with integrity and enthusiasm
39. Races 100% and congratulates competitors for assisting in the pursuit of excellence
40. Manages “invisible training”
41. Sound diet with sufficient calories to sustain high-level practice effort
42. Positive self talk
43. Plans ahead and manages time wisely
44. Organizes schedule and uses time wisely to fulfill school, family, other non-swimming commitments, thus minimizing conflicts with swim practice and meets

**HHST Practice Group Entry Criteria**

The following outline provides a map of swimmer development and a representative set of specific skills, capacities, behaviors, and attitudes coaches use in assessing swimmer readiness for advancement. The skills listed for a given group are considered entry-level skills; for example, Bronze swimmers who can swim 100 yards of freestyle with alternate-side breathing and flip turns are more likely to successfully transition to the Silver group. Criteria are additive, so those listed at lower levels are assumed at higher levels.

**I. Bronze I**

A. Attitude

1. Respects teammates and coaches

2. Demonstrates desire to improve swimming skills and fitness

B. Skills

1. Swims 25 yards of freestyle face in water with an attempt of side breathing

2. Swims 25 yards backstroke with continuous arms and steady kick

3. Can somersault in water

**II. Bronze II**

1. Attitude
2. Knows when practice starts and plans to arrive on timely fashion
3. Gets in quickly and without need for prodding
4. Cooperates with lane mates
5. Maintains eye contact with coach during instruction
6. Skills
7. Dolphin kick and a semblance of arms-together fly
8. Proper breast pull and a legal whip kick with a semblance of PBKG timing
9. Spears consistently off walls on back and belly
10. Executes head-first dive
11. Knowledge
12. Uses pace clock to monitor rest intervals
13. Knows how to count strokes for the length or from flags (backstroke)
14. Knows two-handed touch rule for breast and fly and proper backstroke finish
15. Understands and practices lane etiquette
16. Knows stroke order of IM
17. Training
18. Leaves on rest interval
19. Swims continuously when instructed
20. Racing—has competed

**II. Silver**

1. Attitude
   1. Arrives for practice prepared and punctual
   2. Pays attention and tries hard
   3. Focuses on technical improvements
   4. Encourages and cheers teammates
2. Skills
   1. Executes a head first dive
   2. Swims 100 yards of freestyle with alternate-side breathing and flip turns
   3. Swims 100 yards of backstroke with flip turns and legal finishes
   4. Swims 25 yards of legal breaststroke
   5. Swims 25 yards of legal butterfly
   6. Performs simple drills

a. 6/3/6 on crawl and back

b. Fists on free and back

c. Two kicks and one pull on breast

d. Hand-lead body dolphin for breast and fly

e. One-arm swimming in all strokes

D. Knowledge

1. Uses pace clock to monitor sendoffs using multiples of 30 and 60

2. Calculates times from those sendoffs

3. Leaves five seconds behind next swimmer in lane

4. Knows two-handed touch rule for breast and fly and proper backstroke finish

5. Knows stroke order of IM

E. Training

1. Pool

a. Swims continuously when assigned; refrains from stopping or breaking stroke

2. Dryland

a. Runs, not walks, during running dryland activities

b. Performs basic dryland movements with increasing proficiency, range of motion, and speed of movement

F. Meets—has competed in at least 5 meets

**III. Gold**

A. Attendance --recommended minimum of 4-5 practices/week with consistently strong effort

B. Attitude

1. Asks questions and requests feedback

2. Willing to try larger challenges

3. More sophistication and clarity with season-long goalsetting

4. Appreciates link between effort and results

C. Skills

1. All strokes
2. Spine line head position

b. Executes a head-first dive with moderate push-off

1. c. Performs a tight streamline and kicks in that position for 25 yards
2. Performs basic drills and drill progressions, for example

1) One-arm swimming in free, back, and fly

2) Two pulls and one kick in breaststroke

3) Three basic prone scull positions

2. Freestyle

1. Minimal head movement
2. Rhythmic side breathing integrated with at least some body roll
3. Backstroke
4. Minimal head movement
5. Some body roll
6. Steady flutter kick

4. Fly

1. Dolphin kick
2. Simultaneous arms

5. Breast

1. Short pulls (no farther back than chin)
2. Legal kick
3. Pullouts
4. Head on the spine line

6. Turns

a. “Hot-plate, ceiling watch” on open turns

b. “Scoop-spear” on flip turns

D. Knowledge

1. Describes basic drills and knows purpose of each

2. Detects major strengths and weaknesses in others’ strokes at Silver level

3. Explains basic rules of strokes, starts, and turns

4. Uses pace clock to monitor repeat times and send-offs of any multiple of 10 or 15

5. Counts stroke cycles/length and understands importance of increasing distance/stroke (DPS)

E. Meets

1. Has competed in at least 5 meets

2. Has completed races in all four strokes legally

3. Competes at least every other month

**IV. Junior**

A. Attendance --recommended minimum of 5-6 practices/week with consistently strong effort

B. Attitude

1. Approaches practice with purpose

2. Formulates clear season-long goals

3. Embraces hard work and big challenges

C. Skills

1. All strokes
2. Accelerates hands from catch to release of all strokes

b. Pushes off walls underwater in “spear”

c. Dives from blocks keeping head down and goggles in place

d. Propels self efficiently with the three basic prone sculling movements

e. Propels self with three basic supine sculling movements

f. Supports streamline with kick alone for at least 50 yards in each stroke

1. Performs intermediate drills and drill progressions, for example
2. Free and back
   1. Rolling human stroke sequence
   2. 3 power strokes and glide
   3. Long-axis drill
3. Fly
   1. One-arm swimming with other arm back and chin-forward breathing

(b) Three hand-lead body dolphins followed by three strokes

* 1. Three sculls with hand-lead body dolphin and pull through on third scull

1. Breast
   1. Three hand-lead body dolphins followed by three strokes
   2. Breast with dolphin or flutter
   3. Double-pullouts
2. Freestyle
3. Head centered and spinelined
4. Bilateral breathing
5. Moderate body roll
6. Beginning hip snap
7. Consistent use of flip turns
8. Backstroke
9. Head centered and spinelined
10. Moderate body roll
11. Beginning hip snap
12. "Machine gun" kick
13. Continuous arm action
14. Consistent use of backstroke flags and flip turns
15. Butterfly
16. Dolphin kick initiated from trunk
17. "Kick-in, kick-out" timing
18. Chin-thrust, low-angle breathing
19. Breaststroke
20. Pull-breathe-kick-glide timing
21. Out-slow, in-fast pull
22. Feet wider than knees on thrust of kick

d. Moderately long pullouts

6. Turns

a. Accelerates into wall

b. Long, powerful pullouts (br) and fast-snappy kickouts (fl, ba, cr)

c. Deep-arm breakouts (ba and cr) and no-breather breakouts (fl and cr)

D. Knowledge

1. Describes intermediate drills and drill progressions and knows purpose of each

2. Explains minor rules of strokes, starts, and turns

3. Explains proper technique and diagnoses stroke flaws at Gold level

4. Uses the pace clock to monitor repeat times and send-offs of any multiple of 15

5. Counts stroke cycles for 50 yards and adds count to the 50 time

6. Takes 6-second pulse check and converts to heart rate (HR); explains relationship between HR

and exertion level and change in HR and fitness level

7. Recalls racing times in best six events and all goal-set times

8. Knows Heartland Area and Ozark Champs time standards and team records for these events

9. Sets seasonal training and racing goals and discusses them with the coach

E. Meets

1. Has completed most events within their given age group

2. Performs warm-ups and cool downs at meets; checks on relays; cheers teammates

3. Begins to evaluate own races objectively and consults with coach

5. Competes at least monthly including USAS meets

**Technique**

The development of efficient technique lays the foundation for long-term swimming success, a fact evident in the many child-wonder swimmers who set records as 10-and-unders only to quit the sport at age 12 or 14 when they stopped improving and got passed by better-skilled competitors. Such departures from the sport are often misidentified as “burnout” when the root problem is often that these formerly fast swimmers 1) never had the opportunity to acquire efficient strokes because they were developed in a yardage-centric program that ignored the critical importance of swimming well and/or 2) never felt the need to develop efficient strokes because they were faster than their peers by virtue of being “gifted” with greater natural size or strength or—in the case of males--earlier maturation that allowed them to trounce their smaller peers without ever investing in learning the nuances of body shaping and water manipulation that lead to advanced aquatic excellence.

HHST is fundamentally an instructional program designed to equip members with the most economical strokes, starts, and turns, all skills that will enable them to continue improving over the course of their careers. They will learn to swim well early in their development so that they can swim their very fastest later. While we know our swimmers might have faster race times in the short term if practices were designed around long yardage under increasing time pressure, we would be doing them a disservice because we also know that such programs have the unfortunate side effect of encouraging the development and habituation of inefficient techniques (not to mention being monotonous and stultifying). Thus, while Hurricanes will do their share of long sets at challenging speeds, sound technique will remain the centerpiece of our instructional program.

**Equipment**

The Y and/or the Hurricanes or the coaches supply kickboards, pull buoys, hand paddles, short and long fins, ankle straps, neck devices, and backstroke duckies. In addition to their swim suits and goggles, swimmers in Gold and higher groups will need outdoor dryland gear for each practice. Beyond that, they are strongly encouraged to purchase the following training aid, which will be used extensively:

1. Center-mount snorkel—the following link to Amazon.com shows two worthy center-mount snorkels, the Finis Swimmer’s Snorkel (typically $25-$30 depending upon whether or not you are a Prime member) and the OMID Swim Snorkel (on sale for $22.99, at the time of writing). I have used the Finis product and found it of reasonable quality; the OMID is new but has great reviews. Most center-mount snorkels will work and are more alike than different. There are also youth sizes in some of these products, but they may be outgrown in a year or two; most kids 10-and-older can probably manage the regular size.

<https://www.amazon.com/FINIS-FNSS-RD-Parent-Finis-Swimmers-Snorkel/dp/B01M5GT5Y7>

Snorkels need to be disinfected periodically and present many swimmers with a challenging learning curve because of the swimmer’s tendency to swallow or snort water. In addition the Finis snorkel has less-than-robust headband adjustment clips and purge valve.

**Injury/illness**

Athletes who are injured or suspect an injury are asked to inform the coach immediately so that an alternative activity can be offered if appropriate. Injuries that have not improved after a week should be diagnosed by a physician. Injured athletes who retain use of arms, legs, or core are encouraged to attend practice when feasible; alternative activities will be provided so that afflicted athletes can retain as much of their skills and physical capacities as possible. Given that the most common swimming injury is to the shoulder and many swimmers are relatively weak kickers, some injuries have turned out to be blessings in disguise by providing a concentrated opportunity to improve the kick.

Athletes who have a rhinovirus are encouraged to attend practice at a reduced workload. Research suggests that light to moderate activity may bolster the immune system and hasten one’s recovery. The flu or any illness that affects the digestive or lower respiratory tract merits staying home from practice. All athletes, whether or not they intend to practice, are encouraged to inform the coaches.

**Discipline**

Hurricanes are caring, honest, respectful, and responsible. Should a behavioral problem arise at practice or a meet, coaches may respond, depending upon the circumstances, with one or more of the following steps:

1. Ignore

2. Pause practice to allow the behavior to self-extinguish

3. Non-verbal cue

4. Verbal cue

5. Brief conversation with swimmer out of the pool

6. Longer timeout with follow-up conversation

7. Suspension from that practice

8. Longer-term suspension

9. Expulsion from the team

Offenses resulting in a suspension from practice will be followed with a parent contact; if the problematic behavior is a repeat offense, the coach may also require a meeting with parent and athlete before the athlete returns to practice.

**Notes on practice protocol:**

1. **Attendance**

Attendance is not mandated, but it is encouraged because of the simple and indisputable correlation between attendance and progress. Swimmers who aren’t present are unlikely to be improving. The recommended minimum number of practices attended/week for each group represents an estimation of the minimum amount of time required for swimmers to develop and maintain a modest level of understanding of their group’s swimming-related jargon, drills, concepts, and standards; an ability to acquire the skills expected at that level; and the physical capacity to perform those skills repeatedly and under increasing physical duress. It also reflects the minimum amount of time commonly required for continued improvement in an absolute sense for swimmers typical of that group’s age, ability, and experience level.

Improvement relative to one’s competition or relative to an objective age-referenced standard such as USA Swimming’s age-specific motivational times will require more practice time than that required for absolute improvement; the additional practice time required to maintain one’s performance level relative to such objective standards also generally increases as swimmers mature and advance through the competitive ranks.

Regardless of the amount of time the swimmer elects to devote to the sport, it is important that both athletes and parents be realistic regarding expected swimmer outcomes, given their time and energy invested in deliberate, rigorous practice. One of the life-skills competitive swimmers often derive from their experiences in the sport is a keen appreciation for the relationship between effort and results.

1. **Punctuality**—we recognize that most of our swim families have busy lives and may not be able to get their swimmers to the pool by the start of practice or be able to keep them at practice until it ends. If you have an ongoing scheduling conflict that precludes your swimmer’s punctual arrival or end-of-practice departure, please apprise us of it so that we can plan accordingly. We stress the importance of arriving on time and staying for the duration because it imparts valuable life lessons such as timeliness and follow-through; however, if you have an unavoidable scheduling conflict that precludes a complete practice, we’d rather your swimmer come late or leave early than not practice at all. At the Junior level and higher, we would like the athletes to assume primary responsibility for this type of communication (we’re happy to hear from the parents, but that parent-coach communication should be considered in addition to, not in lieu of, the athletes’ own communication with their coach).
2. **Making up missed practices or scheduling alternative practices**--requests to make up missed practices because of unavoidable scheduling conflicts should be directed to the head coach. Examples of such accommodation might include any of the following, usually pursued in the order listed:

a) Swimmers who cannot make their assigned practice group for selected practices may request to attend a less-advanced practice if it occurs at a more compatible time

b) Swimmers who cannot make their assigned practice group for most of all of those practices over the course of a season may request reassignment to a less-advanced practice group that conforms to their schedule

c) Swimmers may request a workout and practice on their own. This is highly encouraged for consistency in their training, however it will not be counted in their attendance.

1. **Athlete-coach communication**-- We encourage swimmers to attend practice as often as possible and to communicate their intended plan to their coaches because doing so results in more rapid progress for the swimmer and better planning for the coaches; however, there is no requirement to do so except for Junior and Senior swimmers.

**Meets**

**Benefits of Competition**

* Gauge progress
* Incentivize hard work
* Foster friendships with teammates and competitors
* Build team spirit
* Foster fortitude and build self-confidence
* Meet new people, see unfamiliar places, experience different cultures

**Meet schedule and meet-event event selection**

The meet schedule and meet events are both determined by the coaches to provide for the optimum long-term development of the team and its individual members. The meet schedule is based upon level of competition, meet events offered and allowed, driving distance, league and other affiliations, phase of the season, costs, likelihood of being admitted, exposure to unfamiliar athletes and venues, age and developmental levels of athletes on the team, and other factors. Because much of that information is not available at the season’s beginning when we publish a tentative meet schedule, there may be changes to the schedule as this information becomes available.

Meet events for each swimmer are also selected by the coaches based upon on myriad criteria including the

following: swimmer’s age and ability, phase of the season, swimmer’s proximity to qualifying times or team records, meet’s purpose, probability of a PR, recent practice emphases, swimmer request, and meet-event restrictions. While it would be less work for the coaches to allow swimmers--or their parents—to select events, doing so usually results in swimmers “specializing” in one stroke and often one distance at an early age because they—or their parents—want them to race their best events every meet while minimizing racing in other events to a) prevent unnecessary fatigue and b) avoid showing less than their “best.” One of our responsibilities as coaches is to ensure that swimmers develop all their strokes and energy systems at the age-group level so that they have the greatest long-term potential for success. This means providing them as many racing opportunities as possible and entering them in as wide a range of strokes and distances as their current skill and fitness levels allow. With this emphasis on diversification, many swimmers will find that their former “weak” strokes or distances become strengths. Not only does this approach result in more confident and capable swimmers but it increases their likelihood of staying in the sport by decreasing the probability of a plateau and it helps foster a “growth” mindset so vital to their long-term prospects in life. Thus, while we will try to honor requests to swim a specific event, we don’t allow swimmers or parents to select events for mid-season meets. At season-ending championship meets, we encourage swimmers who are qualified for more than the maximum number of events to select their events with coach approval. Swimmers who would like to request a specific event in a mid-season meet are encouraged to do so in the “notes” box on the entry page.

**To Bring**

* Water bottle and nutritious snacks
* Spending money
* Sleeping bags or blanket
* Sweat suit or parka
* Two of each of the following: towels, goggles, current year’s team suits (if available), and team caps (required)
* Quiet games, books or CD player with earphones
* Lawn chairs
* Canopy and sunscreen if meet is outdoors

**Home Meets**

Home meets provide an unparalleled opportunity to develop camaraderie and team spirit among both swimmers and parents. Swimmer participation and parent volunteerism are both essential to a successful home meet. We typically host dual or tri meets against other Y teams in October, December, and January, an invitational meet in February, and three to four summer league meets in June and July. In October and June, each registered family is assessed a concession supply fee of $5 for each home meet. At home meets Hannibal swimmers may run a tab at the concession stand. Please stop by at the end of the meet to pay the tab.

**Away Meets**

Away meets demand more travel time, financial outlay, and schedule-juggling than home meets; however, they are an important part of our season and our commitment to the YMCA conference as well as to your swimmers’ development. We strive to muster a strong turnout for away meets just as we expect the same from teams that we invite to our meets. Car-pooling of swimmers to away meets is routine, so please ask another family if your swimmer may ride along when you are unable to attend. Some of our away meets will be dual meets or tri meets, either YMCA or summer league, and typically involve no meet fees and shorter drives with no overnight stays required. Invitational meets (YMCA or USA Swimming) are usually two to three days of competition and include entry fees and, in some cases, qualifying times. Swimmers choose to swim one or more days. Regional or National meets involve qualifying times and usually airplane travel and hotel expenses. For such meets, qualifiers who wish to participate are expected to attend at least 80% of their group’s available practices during the preceding season with a high level of engagement in order to justify the coach’s travel costs and time away from practice as well as any travel subsidies the participants may receive.

**Swimmers’ Meet Conduct**

1. If a team-area has been designated, swimmers are encouraged to remain with their teammates when not swimming or completing other essential business
2. No horseplay
3. Swimmers are expected to follow this general protocol for each race:
4. Monitor progress of meet and be at assigned heat and lane several heats in advance
5. Race your guts out
6. Congratulate your competitors for helping you do your best
7. Complete assigned water or dryland cooldown immediately after event; this includes after your final event as well
8. Report to your primary coach for debrief
9. Eat if appropriate
10. Cheer your teammates
11. Check with your coaches before leaving the meet to ensure that you are not entered in any more events; this is a particular issue for relay events

**Officials**

Officials implement the technical rules of swimming and ensure that the meet is fair and equitable to all teams. Parents may become officials by passing a certification course and then shadowing with a senior official for five meet sessions. All parents are encouraged to get involved in some form of officiating or meet administration. Most of our parents haven’t any previous knowledge or experience in competitive swimming before becoming involved. **HHST reimburses aspiring officials the cost of class and mileage to the class if travel is required plus the additional stipends for each session worked at various meet levels:**

**Dual/Tri (home/away meets)**

* **$10 (Level 1 officials)**
* **$20 (Level 2 officials)**

**Invitational Meets--$20**

**Regionals/Area--$25**

**Parents**

Parents are the most important factor in their children’s swimming careers. Below is a widely reprinted article that addresses many of the considerations (cautions) of that vital role:

**The Ten Commandments of Swim Parents** (by Rose Snyder of USA Swimming)

1. Thou shalt not impose thy ambitions on thy child.  
Remember that swimming is your child’s activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don’t judge your child’s progress based on what you think they should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is that every person can strive to do their personal best.

2. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.  
There is only one question to ask your child: “Did you have fun?” If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

3. Thou shalt not coach thy child.  
You have taken your child to a professional coach; do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. That is not your area. This will only confuse your child about whose sport it is and prevent the swimmer/coach bond from forming.

4. Thou shalt have only positive things to say at a swim meet.  
If you are going to show up at a swimming meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.

5. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child’s fears.  
A first swimming meet, 500 free or 200 IM can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don’t yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if your child was not ready to compete in it.

6. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.  
If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, don’t criticize those who are doing the best they can.

7. Honor thy child’s coach.  
The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child’s success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child; it will only serve to hurt your child’s swimming.

8. Thou shalt not jump from team to team.  
The water isn’t necessarily bluer at the other team’s pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by the teammates they leave behind. Oftentimes swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

9. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.  
Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, “My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. This does not make me a failure, in fact, I am very proud of that swim.”

10. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.  
There are 225,000 athletes in United States Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child’s odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are, he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that he wants to pass that love for the sport on to others. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.

**Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

1. Love your children unconditionally
2. Refrain from coaching your children; doing so creates confusion regarding why they are swimming (for their own development or their parents’ ego needs?) and whom they should listen to when parents’ advice contradicts coaches’ advice
3. Provide emotional, logistical, and financial support
4. Teach sound diet, sleep hygiene, and positive self-talk
5. Communicate with the coach and encourage your swimmers to do the same
6. Emphasize process over product
7. Praise effort and perseverance
8. Focus on challenges met and life lessons learned
9. Volunteer at home and away meets and for Parent BOD
10. Check the family folders regularly
11. Attend parent meetings
12. Utilize goal-setting meetings opportunities
13. Emphasize responsible management of all swimmer responsibilities: family, school, swimming, other

**Communication**

*Coaches’ communication with parents*--may include any or all of the following modalities: emails, texts, website postings, family folders, telephone conversations, group or team parent meetings, and one-on-one meetings. For transaction of routine business, emails and website postings will be relied upon.

*Parents’ communication with coaches*--

1. Please email, call, text, or catch us after practice, or request a meeting. Please do not communicate with coaches--or swimmers--during practice unless it is an emergency; practice is the swimmers’ time and needs to be as free from distraction as possible for both swimmers and their coaches. If your message is simple and brief, before practice may work, but coaches will be setting up and preparing for practice during that time, so any issue that may be involved would be better addressed after practice or at a pre-arranged time.
2. If you have a concern regarding something that was reported to have occurred at practice, we request that you refrain from forming conclusions until you have gathered all relevant information. To that end, please follow this communication hierarchy to minimize the likelihood that information will be altered in its transmission and maximize the likelihood of resolving the issue expediently:

a. Coach of record

b. Head coach Mike Austin

c. Executive director Eric Abts

*Parents’ communication with swimmers*—as mentioned above, we ask that parents refrain from communicating with their swimmers during practice both verbally and non-verbally. Parents are encouraged to view practice when their schedules permit but should do so from the observation window in the Y’s lobby or from the spectator stands in the pool’s viewing area. To minimize distraction and enhance safety, parents are asked to stay off the pool deck during practice.

**Burnout**

Often treated as a distinct psychological state, “burnout” usually describes the waning motivation that accompanies the conclusion that the costs of swim training outweigh the benefits. This conclusion can be driven by myriad factors including failure to improve; illness, injury, or emotional distress; prioritizing product over process; parental pressure; changing interests; and unrealistic expectations. While burnout is often attributed to an athlete’s doing too much, it is just as likely to result from doing too little. For example, a 14-year-old girl who has been swimming competitively for six years and is a regular qualifier for her state championships practices fairly hard 8 hours/week, a significant physical workload and time investment but less than the 10, 12, or more hours per week that many of her competitors at that age and ability are investing. Consequently, this girl, who was competitive at a younger age, is now falling behind her peers, while still working hard in the pool and sacrificing other opportunities to do so. It’s not surprising that she may grow frustrated and question whether it is worth it.

Reframing such scenarios may reduce “burnout” by allowing the athlete to more clearly identify the factors contributing to her growing frustration and adjust her goals or her investment accordingly. Maybe the swimmer decides to recommit to the sport; or to continue at her current level but with realigned goals; or to reduce her training but continue swimming with less-demanding goals such as health, fitness, or preparation for lower-level competitions; or to take a break to re-evaluate. Regardless, she is likely to feel more settled and comfortable with her decision if she objectively assesses the factors underlying her frustration.

The failure to improve, or the perception that one is not improving as rapidly as one should, underlies many cases of burnout. That is one of the reasons we emphasize instruction over training at our lower levels and continue to prioritize technique as swimmers advance. The instances of 10- or 12-year-old champions’ quitting the sport are legion and almost always result, at least in part, from overvaluation of winning (product) and an undervaluation of the self-discipline to defer gratification and the diligence to apply oneself to the task day in and day out (process). Often those age-group champions who exit the sport were successful at young ages because they were bigger and stronger than their peers or swam more; in either case, however, it is likely that they did not develop the highly efficient strokes that characterize the sustained improvement curve of their peers who eventually surpass them.

**Awards/Incentives**

Seasonal Awards

We will have two season-ending awards ceremonies, one in April following short-course season and one in August following long-course season. At each event, swimmers will be recognized for the following achievements:

1. Meet attendance
2. Short-course season minimum—at least 8 meets
3. Long-course season—at least 6 meets
4. Practice attendance
5. Awards for season-long attendance to any swimmers achieving one of the following levels
6. 70%
7. 80%
8. 90%
9. Top attendance percentage
   1. For each practice group
   2. For the whole team
10. Most improved swimmer for the team based upon progression in practice and meet performance
11. High-point award for the team (one boy and one girl) based upon total number of points scored
12. Eye of the Hurricane award for the team based upon dedication, diligence, respect, team spirit
13. YMCA Nationals qualifiers
14. State champions
15. Team-record setters

Monthly Awards

We will also acknowledge the following monthly achievements during the course of each season:

1. Practice attendance at 70, 80, and 90%

2. Swimmer of the month, one recipient for the team, based upon practice attendance and effort, meet participation, meet performance, positive leadership, team contributions

Meet Awards

For each meet session, swimmers are encouraged to select one of their individual or relay leadoff swims, as a “spud swim.” The selection should be based upon probability of a PR (personal record). If they PR in that swim, earn an HHST Spud Buck, which they will accumulate over the course of the year and squander at the awards ceremony to bid on junk food and other thoroughly nonessential items.

Following each meet, we will recognize some or all of the following accomplishments/behaviors, depending upon number of participants, performances, and observed behaviors:

1. Swimmer of the meet—based upon percentage of PRs and relay PRs, relative improvement, placing, and

sound meet-management behavior

2. Team spirit—based upon the pre-meet team cheer as well, actively cheering for one’s teammates during their races, and other acts of selflessness

3. Sportsmanship—based upon racing one’s hardest and congratulating one’s competitors for assisting in the process

4. RelayBig—based upon relay performance and a willingness to race on whatever relays and relay legs necessary to support the team

5. Helper—based upon willingness to assist where applicable including highlighting, banner-hanging, recording hashmarks for team spirit and sportsmanship

**College Swimming**

With many different levels of competition, collegiate swimming offers a place for all abilities of competitive swimmer. The NCAA offers three competitive divisions with I and II offering scholarships. The NAIA also offers its own competition. While not every swimmer can earn a scholarship for swimming, being a potential member of the college’s swim team can render one a more attractive college applicant, earn one greater consideration for academic financial aid, and enhance one’s enjoyment and increase one’s opportunities for growth in the collegiate experience. Joining the swim team is the quickest way for freshmen to make new friends and develop a sense of community in their new environments. Collegiate swimming as a goal also helps age group swimmers focus their practice efforts and sustain their motivation through the many years they may be involved in the sport. It can serve as a beacon for all swimmers, not just those at the highest levels. Following is more information about how swimmers can pursue the college-selection process:

1. General considerations for swimmers in selecting a college
2. Coaches cannot initiate contact with recruits until June 1 preceding their senior year in HS, but recruits can and should contact coaches of colleges high on their interest list long before that date. As the recruit’s club coach, I am happy to communicate with a prospective college coach, but my experience suggests that recruits who make the make the initial contact will establish themselves as serious about that school and program and demonstrate the kind of initiative and focus that college coaches like to see. I will, of course, be happy to follow that initial contact up with my own contact(s) to the prospective college coach.
3. A simple 2-3 paragraph email inquiry to the head coach of the school of interest is perhaps the easiest way to start this conversation and can include the swimmer’s
4. Age, year in school, hometown and competitive swimming history
5. Specific interest in that school
6. Intangible strengths
7. Diligence
8. Integrity
9. Coachability
10. Competitiveness
11. Determination
12. Potential for improvement
13. Leadership
14. If the coach responds, ask if there is a time you can call him/her for a follow-up conversation. Also ask about the possibility of a campus visit, and do not be shy about asking for expenses to be covered if the school is DII or DI.
15. Ask your club coach to contact the college coach and to specifically address your strengths from the list of intangibles listed above as well as aspects of your experience that suggest more-than-the usual room for improvement such as not yet having done weights or inability to do doubles because of the long drive to and from practice. This can be done in a formal letter of recommendation or through less formal email and telephone conversations with the college coach. Your coach may also be able to help videotape your swimming to send on to the college coach.
16. In all of the above, many athletes are reluctant to sell themselves because they have been taught to be humble, but college coaches want emotionally strong, confident athletes and will appreciate your taking the initiative to argue your own case; at the same time, it can be difficult to ask hard questions, so this is another area where the recruit’s club coach can be of assistance because they are not selling themselves and as colleagues and peers there is no authority differential between the college and club coach, so ask your club coach to assist you if you believe it would be beneficial. The same is true, and even more so, when you start asking the college coach to convince you that his/her town/school/team/conference are right for you. Do not be afraid to ask the hard questions because the response you get will convey not only objective information but less tangible aspects of that particular choice that may increase or decrease its valuation in your eyes. At the same time, you will demonstrate your resolve to find the best situation and your initiative in doing what is required to make that determination.
17. Links (or PDFs) to time relevant times

a. LookForIt compares swimmer’s times to eligible colleges:

<http://www.lookforit.com/site/static/6>

1. Use this link to find your best times. Coaches look at this all the time. <https://www.swimcloud.com/>

Considerations for college choice and questions for college coaches in the recruiting process

Criteria (in no particular order) when deciding:

1. Location/size

a. Distance from home

b. Distance from other opportunities such as internships, recreational pursuits, shopping

c. A place you would like to live?

d. Size of school, town, and campus

2. Academics

a. What is the quality of the school and the academic program(s) you might be interested in? If possible, get contact information for somebody in two or three academic departments you might want to major in and contact them directly.

b. Is there academic support available for athletes?

c. What percentage of swimmers graduate in four years? Five?

d. What is the team GPA? Is scholarship truly supported or simply paid lip service?

e. Do the coaches strictly adhere to the 20-hour-per-week limit on practices/meets or will they expect “voluntary” time from the swimmers?

3. Cost

a. There may be scholarship money available for swimmers at the YMCA National level or faster, especially girls, but it might be at the DII or less-competitive DI schools. Whether the school is offering athletic or academic money, however, do not be timid about asking for more money. You can use an offer from one school as leverage when discussing offers from other schools. You may or may not choose to mention the competing offer. Even if you don't have a better competing offer, you might consider requesting more money because you cannot afford to attend for the initial offer (this might be more persuasive when considering private or out-of-state schools because those schools recognize that their tuition costs are often several times higher than an in-state school. The coach's initial offer will be a lowball number to see what you will take. If you don't ask for more, you won't get it.

b. Immediate cost is an important consideration, as is scholarship amount, but you don't necessarily want that to be the determining factor in your decision. Ask about contingency funding such as the prospect of increasing your scholarship in subsequent years if you perform at certain levels (be specific and nail this down so the coach cannot "forget" later when you come back to ask for the increase); ask about academic scholarships available through the school; ask about part-time job opportunities (you want to be careful about taking on a part-time job if you are swimming and taking a full load, but this query demonstrates your interest and commitment, and there might be a job that requires only a few hours a week and pays well or a job in your professional area of interest that would provide valuable experience).

4. Team

a. Level of competition in their league and depth on the team (do you perform better being the big fish in the small pond or one of the aspirants chasing faster swimmers?)

b. History of success

c. Friendliness and positivity of team culture

5. Coach

a. Is he/she well-informed and authoritative about not only swimming but about the school and its programs and opportunities; attentive to detail; interested in his or her swimmers' long-term development as individuals not just as point-scorers; inspirational; respectful; trustworthy?

b. Ask the coach how his or her swimmers progress during the four years they swim? Request specific examples. One of the secondary benefits of negotiating your scholarship (as well as any extended conversations you have with the coach) is that you will learn more about how the coach does business. Some college coaches are smooth-talking salesmen and will say all the right things to get you to commit only to disappear later when you need something from them or are struggling.

c. Ask the coach how well he stands by his athletes in the face of adversity. Ask for specific examples. Also, ask that your scholarship be guaranteed will for four years regardless of your performance level (schools can offer four-year scholarships, but many don’t).

d. Ask the coach about his/her plans: Does he/she plan to be there in five years? What is it about that school, that conference, that level of swimming that appeals to the coach? Ask what the coach is looking for in an athlete and team member? Are accommodations made for class conflicts? Who are the assistant coaches and what are their respective roles and strengths? If possible, communicate with both the head coach and the assistant coach who will be responsible for your practice group. Be less impressed if the head coach quickly directs your questions to his recruiting assistant: if the head coach doesn’t have time for you during the recruiting process, it is unlikely he will have time for you once you have committed to attending.

6. Athletic facilities

a. Are the pool and weight room places you would look forward to spending time? With respect to the pool, specifically, what is the water temperature? How well is the water chemistry managed? Do kids have breathing problems? Skin problems?

b. Are there other exercise/recreational facilities available to you that you would like to use?

c. Is there a training table? Study hall? Athletes' dorm? Who uses them? Under what circumstances?

The better informed you are the more likely you are to select the best school for you, academically, athletically, personally. By asking a lot of questions, not only will you obtain important information, but you will demonstrate that you are thoughtful, serious individual who would make an excellent contribution to the team. When you talk to the coach prior to your visit, ask him or her for names and contact information for others who could help you answer these questions including current team members, former team members, staff overseeing admissions and merit-aid, faculty in disciplines you might be interested in. Contact some of these people prior to your visit. This will help you use your limited time during the visit to meet the people you most need to meet and see the things you most need to see. Finally, it may be worth your time to make an unofficial visit simply to see what everything looks and feels like when they are not laying out the red carpet for you.