

Hello Gator Nation. I know many of you have been anticipating information regarding this year's swim team. The good news is we WILL be having a swim team! We appreciate your patience as we work diligently behind-the-scenes to get everything set up for the 2021 season. There are many variables and hurdles this year. We are doing our best to stay fluid and open minded about the best way to accomplish this season as safely as possible. As you know, neither we nor the other TSA teams in our league have a template for running a swim season during a global pandemic. We have some great ideas, and we can put the best laid plans out there, but much of what we do this year will also be very dependent on what the clubs we are swimming against want to do. We must respect their wishes as it pertains to their clubs.

Unfortunately, all of us are in the planning stages of our seasons so there is no concrete information at this time. Please bear with us and know that we are doing the best we possibly can. Please take the time to read this email in its entirety. *There is an immense amount of information included.* Please understand that everything you read is subject to change as we progress through getting this season underway.

Registration

Currently registration is not yet open. We hope to open either on April 24th or on May 1st. More information will be coming once we have a few remaining details.

Dues

It is very difficult to financially plan without definitive numbers, but dues will be increasing this year. Our overall operating costs have increased. We also had to spend over \$4000 for 2 new lane line reels and are considering a new timing system. This system comes with a cost per swimmer, per year, so we have not yet made a definitive decision regarding its use. We are losing revenue from the Gator Grill. We are also losing revenue from sponsors. We are going to try to keep as many things as possible this year but expect some things to be eliminated to help with cost savings. We will be providing the cost of this year's swim team dues when the email is delivered providing details for registration.

The Swim Season

The board agrees that swimmers must be able to safely swim 25 yards and exit the pool without hands on assistance from coaches. For those of you who are not sure if your child can do this, we will offer an assessment before formal practices start. This will be held on May 27th, time TBD.

We will not have kid catchers for the 6/under kids at the 15-yard rope, so your child will have to be able to swim to the end of the pool by themselves and exit the pool independently.

Our coaches will be offering swim lessons this summer if you want your child to work on being able to swim 25 yards by themselves.

It might also be a good time to look into building swim skills at spring clinics offered by year-round teams such as MOR, WAVE, RSA, TAC, YOTA or to look at lessons at local swim schools.

If at any point during the 8 weeks of swim season your child is able to swim the length of the pool, they are immediately eligible to join the team. The fee will be prorated based on the date you join the team. The total dues will be divided by the number of days, then rounded up to the nearest dollar, and that will be your fee.

Swim team 101 for all new swim team members will also be held on May 27th during the swimmer evaluations. This is a very informative session for new swim team parents.

The swim season will begin the day after Memorial Day, June 1st. There will be evening practices only until June 14th. We will not have exact practice times until we have exact numbers of swimmers and their ages.

While we recognize that being outside in the open air significantly reduces the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and we understand that many parents and coaches will have been vaccinated by the summer, regardless of our personal opinions, we are still required to follow current guidance for youth sports in outdoor venues/public pools from NCDHHS. Thus, in addition to spacing out kids in the water, kids will be required to wear masks as they arrive/leave practice.

For planning purposes, evening practices have traditionally run from 4pm-6:45pm. Morning practices have been run from 9am-11am. Normally, we have only divided the swimmers into 2 groups, please keep in mind we may have to run smaller practice windows to allow us to divide the age groups as necessary based on numbers.

Time trials will be held on Saturday June 12th. Time TBD

Our first swim meet will be June 15th. Our first 2 swim meets will be virtual swim meets. They are both “away” meets but will be held at the Swamp. Our first “home” meet is our third meet of the season. It is likely that the majority of our meets this year will be virtual. This means that we will swim against the other team on our schedule, but we will swim at our pool and they will swim at their pool. Times will then be compared and places determined based on those times.

We are willing to hold in person swim meets, everyone must be wearing a mask at all times and practicing 6 feet of social distancing as best possible.

We will have to get creative to do this. The board has approved, based on numbers, running this meet in 2 separate groups. Based on numbers, age group A, B, C would swim in the first session with one parent allowed on the swim deck with your child. Group A, B, C would then leave and groups D, E, F would then enter the pool with one parent only and swim. Again, this is dependent on the other club as well. If they do not wish to participate in person then we will swim against them “virtually” even if we wished it to be in person.

Each swimmer will need to bring Ziploc bags with their name on it as well as a couple of extra masks as they will get wet. The Ziploc bags will need to be labeled with their name. Before the start of their race, they will place their mask in the Ziploc bag which will then be placed in a basket. A “runner” will then take these masks to the other side of the pool so that when the swimmer has completed their race they can retrieve their mask and put it back on. Please plan on bringing hand sanitizer with you as well so your swimmer can use it throughout the meet. Again, *this information is subject to change* based on changing requirements or improvement in processes.

Regardless of our personal opinions, please understand that current NCDHHS guidance for youth sports in outdoor venues/public pools requires that everyone on the pool deck at meets will wear a face covering. It may be possible to adapt some of these protocols if NC restrictions are relaxed and if we are able to demonstrate adequate social distancing between swimmers, volunteers, and officials on the pool deck during meets.

The last home meet is July 13th. This will also be senior recognition night so that you can add this to your calendars.

The last meet is July 20th

TSA ***IS*** counting this as a recorded season. If a swimmer sets a record it will stand. However, TSA is not counting any team's record towards rankings. No team will change rankings this year. If we were to go 6-0, we will stay in the same division, at the same rank, and likely will swim the exact same schedule as we are this year.

TSA championships are up in the air. TSA has not definitively decided how they are running championships so we have not definitively decided whether we will participate.

Volunteering

Please be aware that we may well need more volunteers than usual at 6 possible home meets (vs usual 3) and we will need your family's help to make this swim season actually happen.

Awards night

TBD. We have not decided whether there will be an awards night. If held it would likely be on Tuesday July 27th. If we hold something it will be at the swamp as we will not be booking an indoor venue or passing out snacks/ treats. Due to circumstances this year, the board has voted *not* to issue trophies at the end of the season.

Swim Caps

We will be issuing swim caps to each swimmer this year as we have done in the past. We will not be ordering any merchandise this year. There may be some left-over merchandise for sale from previous years, but no new merchandise will be ordered for 2021.

Swim Suits

There will be no suit fittings this year. We will be partnering with All American Swim as in years past for the ordering of suits. We ask that you wear a black suit if possible. You can visit the store in Cary to try suits on. I will include a link to the website with the registration email

Sponsorships

In past years we have been the beneficiary of generous monetary donations from local businesses and individuals who are members of the Greystone Swim and Racquet Club and community. This has helped tremendously with expenses and helped keep costs down. Through discussion, the board feels that it is not appropriate to solicit businesses for donations without knowing whether or not they have experienced financial hardships through lost business or otherwise. This year we still plan to hang a banner at the swamp for any individual or business who is willing to donate money or services to help the swim team. If you can help, please contact Julia Cowlbeck @ jcowlbeck@fmrealty.com.

Swim-A-Thon

We do not know exactly how we will do this, but we are going to try as we consider it a very important event to support our seniors. We were unable to hold this event last year, but I again want to thank all of the kind individuals who donated money so that we could keep this going. I was truly humbled by the amount of donations received for this cause last year. Gator Nation is truly a wonderful community and family.

Donuts and Ribbons

Yes and yes. But again, please be ready to be flexible. It will likely be 2 adult volunteers who are masked passing donuts out to swimmers who are masked. Then all will separate to enjoy their donut and reconvene in the normal spot after masking back up to receive their ribbons.

Traditionally, the home team issues all ribbons for both teams. Because there is no way to know what other teams are comfortable with and how this will work with virtual meets, the board has decided that we will issue all ribbons for all meets to our own swimmers for places 1-6. We will issue those ribbons to those swimmers for all meets regardless of home or away designation

Family Fun Night

Unfortunately, we will not be hosting a family fun night this year

Gators on the Go

We will not be holding an event like our trip to Tucker Lake as in years past. We plan on having some of the events the kids love so much that do not involve venturing too far. Chalk art at the pool for our meets, posters for encouragement and to build enthusiasm, etc. We want to see as much team spirit as possible this year!

I apologize for the long email but we wanted to get as much information as possible to you so you could make an informed decision(s) surrounding this summer. Go Gators!

Greystone Gators Swim Board