

## THE ROLE OF A PARENT

### A. General Guidelines

The role of a parent is to support their child in the sport of swimming. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Appropriate parental participation and support is an important contributor to the success of both the child and the team.

- **Let the Coach do the Coaching!** The best way for parents to help their child to achieve his or her goals is to allow the coach to coach. It's important for swimmers to receive technical information and constructive criticism about their performances from one source only - the coach. Input from too many sources can confuse and overwhelm swimmers. Parents can help the coach stay focused on the swimmers by not interrupting them at practice or at swim meets. Instead, parents should contact coaches with questions as outlined by the Coach Contact Information section of this handbook.
- **Be Enthusiastic and Supportive.** Parents can make an important contribution to their child's success by providing a stable and loving environment. They should help their young athlete feel like a winner by supplying support and encouragement. Parents should never overburden a child with winning or the achievement of unrealistic best times. Instead, parents should give credit to the swimmer whenever an improvement is made and understand that not every swim will be an improvement in time.
- **Demonstrate good sportsmanship and set a good example for your child.** Parents should serve as a positive role model by demonstrating good sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, other parents, opponents, and teammates. Poor attitudes on the part of parents have a lasting impact on a child. Complaints and criticisms, along with suggestions for improvement, should be directed at the coaches or board members at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner. A swim meet is not the time or place.
- **Attend Parents Meetings** - Attendance at all parents meetings is encouraged. These meetings are an important vehicle for communicating plans for the season, goals for the swimmers, and the direction and needs of the NOVA program.
- **Support fundraising activities** - NOVA attempts to keep dues low by offsetting costs through fundraiser activities. The fee charged for dues covers only a portion of the total cost of running the NOVA program. The Virginia Swim Shop, which is operated mostly on a volunteer basis, is NOVA's biggest fundraiser. Parents can support the Virginia Swim Shop by purchasing all needed swimmer equipment and gear at the shop. NOVA generates additional funds through other fundraisers, such as the Swim-A-Thon and through profits earned from NOVA-sponsored swim meets. Parents can support NOVA's fundraisers through their participation and by volunteering to help.

## B. Volunteer Requirement

Swimming is a very “volunteer intensive” sport: it takes many volunteers to run a swim meet and a swimming organization. Families are encouraged to support the NOVA organization by becoming active volunteers. One of the best ways to do this is to become familiar with various duties at the meets and consider becoming trained and certified for official positions. In addition, there are many other volunteer positions within the NOVA organization. Nova requires all families a minimum volunteer hour commitment which is specified in the contract.

- **Volunteer Opportunities** - There are a variety of opportunities for volunteering at NOVA, so parents can usually identify ones that fit their family schedule well. See Appendix D for a list of volunteer opportunities. Please check the website for the current Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator can be reached by e-mail at [novahours@novaswim.org](mailto:novahours@novaswim.org) to submit your units. Please email the Volunteer Coordinator with any questions concerning the number of units recorded. Volunteer opportunities will be communicated in various ways throughout the year.
- **Recording Volunteer Units** – The Volunteer Coordinator will record units as reported (usually within two weeks or less from when reported). While YOU are generally responsible for reporting the hours that you work, there are a couple of exceptions where you do not need to report hours (unless, for some reason, these hours don't show up on your account in a timely manner):
  - ✓ You do not need to report hours worked at meets and other events where you signup for volunteer jobs on-line. For those events, the Volunteer Coordinator receives a copy of the check-in sheet from the event and will apply volunteer hours to accounts as reflected on that sheet. Therefore, as long as you check-in at the event, the Volunteer Coordinator will know to apply those hours to your account. In addition, if you work last minute hours and record those on the check-in sheet at the event, the Volunteer Coordinator will be able to pick up those hours also and apply them to your account.
  - ✓ Hours worked in the Swim Shop are reported by the Swim Shop Manager to the Volunteer Coordinator *quarterly* – there is no need for you to report these hours to the Volunteer Coordinator.

The Volunteer Coordinator does not always receive copies of timer sign-in sheets for away meets or know about other volunteer work that you are doing (team parties, soda machine brigade, etc.). So if those hours do not show up on your account within a reasonable period of time, please report them to the Volunteer Coordinator.

You may track your volunteer units by going to the NOVA website. To see your hours, you must:

1. Login;
2. Then click on "\$ My Invoice/Payment" on the left side of the page;
3. Then click on the "Volunteer Hours" tab along the top of page under "My Invoice/Payment."

If the hours Balance shown is a positive number, you still have more hours to work to complete your obligation. If the hours Balance is a negative number, you have met your obligation – *but please don't let that stop you from continuing to volunteer and support NOVA!* The more involved you are, the more fun being a NOVA parent can be.

If you identify hours that have not been credited to your account, please do not hesitate to email the Volunteer Coordinator at [novahours@novaswim.org](mailto:novahours@novaswim.org). At the end of the contract, the Business Manager will bill any family not meeting the minimum volunteer unit commitment specified in the contract. The charge per unit of not meeting the commitment is also specified in the contract.

### **C. Registration and Swimmer Contract**

Each spring NOVA begins the process of registering swimmers for the next season. New swimmers can of course register to swim at NOVA at any point during the season. Registering a swimmer commits a family to paying a yearly US Swimming registration fee and a NOVA registration fee. Both are one-time, per year, charges. Families will be asked to choose between lump sum, tri-payment and monthly payment options. Families also have the option to pay by check, ACH or credit card.

Registered families will be expected to sign a yearly contract committing the family to volunteer time throughout the season and to assist NOVA with fund-raising. Volunteer time and fund-raising levels vary depending on the group level of the swimmer(s).

In addition, any family has the option to become a NOVA member. A one-time joining fee gives member families reduced swimmer dues, a discount in the Swim Shop, discounted lessons, half price on NOVAFit and free NOVA car magnets.

Families new to NOVA have the option to wait 3 months after registration before signing a yearly contract. First year families will also pay dues at the member rate for the first year the family swims at NOVA. (No other member benefits will apply.)

All families with multiple children in the program will receive discounts based on the number of children swimming. NOVA also provides financial assistance for eligible families. Please contact the NOVA Business Office at 750-1183 or at [novabusinessoffice@comcast.net](mailto:novabusinessoffice@comcast.net) if you have further questions.

## **D. Financial Support and Assistance**

Nova is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, entirely dependent on the support of its members. The club relies on the financial commitments made via the swimmer contracts; it expects that parents and members take their financial responsibilities, very seriously.

NOVA recognizes that the financial impact of joining and participating in ongoing swim related activities can be burdensome to some families and wishes to be able to provide assistance to families in need, if funding is available. NOVA wants to provide for today's youth regardless of family financial status and therefore tries to facilitate the potential financial assistance needs through grants obtained from US Swimming and other sources. The allocation of any such funds received is done through an evaluation of family requests for assistance.

NOVA also recognizes the financial resources/constraints of a member may change from time to time. It is in the best interest of NOVA, in keeping with its charter, to review a family's circumstances, if asked, and allow a swimmer, if possible, to continue to participate in the program by providing options to the family for continued membership.

Please see the Business Manager if you feel you may qualify or are in need of financial assistance. The business manager will provide a copy of the forms that are needed to be filled out as well as a more detailed description of the financial assistance program.