

PARENT GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

NORFOLK YMCA AQUAJETS

REVISED SEPTEMBER 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AIMS & PURPOSES OF THE NORFOLK YMCA AQUAJETS SWIM TEAM.....	1
GOALS.....	1
POLICIES	2
Swimmers Are Asked To Comply With The Following Items Of Policy.....	2
Parent Requirements.....	2
HOW CAN YOU AS A PARENT HELP.....	2
ELIGIBILITY	2
PRACTICE.....	2
WHAT ARE THE FEES.....	3
THE NORFOLK YMCA AQUAJETS SWIM ASSOCIATION.....	3
WHAT IS USA SWIMMING.....	3
TEAM ATTIRE.....	4
COMPETITIVE SWIM SEASONS.....	4
SWIM LEAGUES.....	5
YMCA Youth Swimming League.....	5
Platte Valley Conference.....	5
Tri-State Swim League.....	5
SWIM MEETS.....	5
Classes of Competition at Swim Meets.....	5
Events and Relays.....	6
Scratches and Disqualification.....	6
Officials of the Swim Meet	6
To Eat or Not to Eat.....	7
Comfort for Everyone at Swim Meets.....	8
WHAT A PARENT CAN EXPECT OF A COACH.....	8
WHAT A COACH CAN EXPECT FROM PARENTS.....	9
UNITED STATES SWIMMING “NUTRI-TIPS”.....	10

PARENT'S GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

The Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Team wishes to welcome you and your child(ren) into the exciting and interesting sport of competitive swimming. This booklet is designed to make your swimming experience and the meets you attend more understandable, more interesting, more fun and more rewarding. We hope it will explain the more common terms that you will want to know as you attend meets. It is in no way comprehensive.

AIMS & PURPOSES OF THE NORFOLK YMCA AQUAJET SWIM TEAM

1. To offer an activity which provides instruction for and participation in competitive swimming under the direction and supervision of Christian leadership.
2. To develop the finest qualities of our youth by their association with other children throughout Nebraska and surrounding states.
3. To provide opportunities for both team and individual achievement.

GOALS

1. To provide opportunities for social and emotional development.
2. To furnish a wholesome and worthwhile physical and recreational outlet.
3. To provide an opportunity to learn sportsmanship and make swimmers aware of team cooperation.
4. To provide an educational opportunity.
5. To provide an opportunity to learn good health habits and self discipline.
6. To provide training and competition to all swimmers who desire it.
7. To develop the knowledge of swimming and stroke mechanics as they relate to competitive swimming.
8. To provide a wide base of experience to swimmers.
9. To inspire the less proficient swimmer to self-improvement.
10. To provide an understanding of athlete, coach and spectator responsibility.
11. To develop coordination and confidence through individual achievement.
12. To develop a sense of pride towards the team, its members, and the YMCA.

POLICIES

SWIMMERS ARE ASKED TO COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OF POLICY

- A. Be in the pool area in time to work out and be at the meets at the time scheduled.
- B. Swim in events the coach feels are most appropriate and beneficial for the swimmer and will be for the good of the team. The events set up by the coach are final.
- C. Help with: storage of equipment, preparing pool for workouts, putting equipment away.

PARENT REQUIREMENTS – Parents are asked to comply with the following items of policy.

- A. Encourage your swimmer but not at the expense of their teammates.
- B. Do Not Interfere with the swimmers at meets or workouts by offering advice on strokes, etc.
- C. Contact the coach or club officer when questions arise about meets, workouts, swimmers, ability, etc. You should contact the coach and NOT another parent.
- D. **Volunteer** to help at meets and other team activities. It is important to be a doer and not an observer. Without your help and cooperation, there will be no club.

HOW CAN YOU AS A PARENT HELP?

- 1. Attend each swim meet you can so you are able to give encouragement to your swimmer.
- 2. Get swimmers to all practices/meets on time.
- 4. Attend association meetings and voice your opinions.
- 5. Keep track of your swimmer's times from the meets to show improvement.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to join the Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Team a swimmer must be between the ages of 5 and 18 and be able to swim one length (25 yds) of the pool. High School varsity swimmers may not participate in any meets during the official High School competitive swim season.

PRACTICE

Practices are held at the YMCA Monday through Thursday during the short course season and Monday through Friday during the long course season. . We encourage all swimmers to attend three or more practices a week. The coach will determine the length of time each swimmer practices based on individual skill level.

WHAT ARE THE FEES

There are several types of costs associated with the swim team. The following will explain each fee.

1. All swimmers **MUST** have a YMCA membership to participate on swim team.
2. All swimmers **MUST** pay the YMCA fees associated with joining the Aquajets. Registration forms and payment options are available to fit your individual needs.
3. All swimmers **MUST** have a USA card. This fee is included in the club registration fee.
4. Team suits can be ordered/purchased at the start of the fall/winter season. There is no obligation to purchase a suit. If you do order a team suit, it **MUST** be paid for at the time you order the suit.
5. Your swimmers will be attending meets and there are fees associated with the events a swimmer participates in. These fees are paid in advance of the meet by the club treasurer. You will be billed periodically by the club treasurer for any fees associated with meets that your swimmer may attend. If a swimmer signs up to attend a meet and later is not able to attend for whatever reason, those fees will still be billed to the parents. No fees are refundable because they are paid well in advance of the meets.

THE NORFOLK YMCA AQUAJETS SWIM ASSOCIATION

The Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Association is YOU! The parents of all the swimmers are what make up the Swim Association. As a member, you will be called upon to donate your time to the swim team in a variety of ways during the course of the season. Competitive swimming will not work in Norfolk without your help. The board consists of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Entry Chairman. Officers are elected to the board every two years.

Current board members are:

President:	Sandy Spence (379-0732)
Vice President:	Tracy Jacobsen (529-3267)
Secretary:	Ginger Powell (371-4514)
Treasurer:	Phyllis Cleveland (371-7378)
Entry Chair:	Michael Meuret (379-0225)

WHAT IS USA SWIMMING

USA (United States Aquatics) is an organization that governs and promotes Amateur Swimming in the United States. The Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Team is a member of the Midwestern USA district which consists of the state of Nebraska except the county of Scottsbluff and the following counties in the state of Iowa: Lyon, Oscula, Sioux, O'Brien, Plymouth, Cherokee,

Woodbury, Ida, Monona, Crawford, Harrison, Shelby, Pottawattamie, Mills, Montgomery, Fremont, and Page. Several Districts make up a Region. Midwestern is in Region VIII. Swimmers entered in USA sanctioned meets are responsible for entry fees per individual event and a splash fee.

TEAM ATTIRE

Practice: For practice swimmers should have a suit, towel, and possibly a water bottle. Goggles are strongly encouraged to help reduce eye irritation.

Meets: The official team suit can be ordered/purchased from the team chairman in charge of suits at the start of the fall/winter season. These suits should be worn for meets only so they will last for the entire season. Chlorine is hard on suits so we would encourage swimmers to have a separate suit that they can wear for practice purposes. Swimmers should wear a team cap, called a racing cap which can be purchased from the coach for \$3. Swimmers are strongly encouraged to also wear goggles to help cut down on eye irritation. Sweatshirts and pants, socks, sleeping bag, beach towels and sandals are important items to have when you attend swim meets. It is important that the swimmer keeps warm between events in order to perform at their best during each race.

Check before leaving for home from practice and swim meets to make sure that you have all of your belongings. Be sure to mark your swimmer's name on all of their belongings they bring to the pool.

COMPETITIVE SWIM SEASONS

The Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Team participates in two swim seasons. Following are general guidelines.

Short Course (SC)-The short course season runs from October through the dates set for the Championship meet, which is usually in mid March. Swimmers compete indoors in 25 yard pools. The Norfolk YMCA Aquajet Swim Team will host meets during the short course season.

Long Course (LC)-The long course season generally runs from June through the dates set for the Championship meet, generally the latter part of July. Swimmers compete outdoors in 50 meter pools.

SWIM LEAGUES

YMCA Youth Swimming League

During the winter months, the Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Team participates in the Nebraska YMCA Youth Swim League. The YMCA Swim League consists of YMCA's in Fremont, Lincoln, Columbus, Hastings, Beatrice, Grand Island, McCook, Omaha and Norfolk. All swimmers must be YMCA members in order to compete in this league. These are especially good meets for the novice swimmer. In March a state championship/novice meet is held. All teams in the league participate and all swimmers are eligible to enter if they have participated in 3 Y League meets during the season.

Platte Valley Conference

The Norfolk YMCA Aquajets Swim Team is a member of the Platte Valley Conference Swim League which consists of teams from Broken Bow, Grand Island, Hastings Kearney, North Platte, York and Norfolk. A Championship meet is held at the conclusion of the short/long course seasons. Swimmers must be USA registered to compete.

Tri-State Swim League

The Tri-State Swim League consists of teams from Nebraska, western Iowa, and southern South Dakota. The teams that make up the Tri-State Swim League are Sioux City Mariners, Siouxland Sharks, Sioux Center Seahawks, Spencer Y Sailfish, South Sioux City Dolphins, Yankton-Vermillion and Norfolk Aquajets. There are approximately five Tri-State Meets during the winter season with a championship meet held at the end of the season, usually mid February. All swimmers must be USA registered to compete. There are qualifying times to determine who goes to the championship meet. The Norfolk YMCA Aquajet Association pays a league fee so there are no entry fees with the exception of the championship meet and splash fees per swimmer per meet they attend.

SWIM MEETS

Classes of Competition at Swim Meets

Both the USA and the YMCA Leagues have the following age group competition levels for 18 years and under swimmers.

The YMCA divides their events as follows: The age of the swimmer is calculated as of December 1st of the current swim season. This means that the swimmer will swim the age they are on December 1st for the entire season.

The following are the age divisions of competition: 08-Un (8&U), 10-Un(9&10), 12-Un(11-12), 14-Un(13-14), JR is 15-18. NOTE: Swimmers are allowed to swim up one age group for relay and individual events.

The Midwestern USA and Tri-State Leagues divide their events as such: 8 & Under, 10 & Under (9-10), 11-12, 13 & over or 13-14, 15 and over or 15-18.

Events and Relays

An event is a race with a designated stroke and distance. For each such stroke a separate event is held for boys and girls in each age bracket.

In a race where there are more competitors entered in an event than there are lanes available there are separate heats. Heats continue until every entrant has swum that event. Awards are based on specific times. One can win a heat and still not place in the final awards. A relay race is one in which four (4) different swimmers, belonging to the same club swim a designated leg and stroke. The combined time of the four legs is used to assign place. In some relays all four swimmers swim the same stroke, however, in the medley relay each of the four swimmers swims one fourth of the distance with a different stroke in the following order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle.

Scratches and Disqualification

A scratch is when a swimmer decides not to compete in the event he/she is entered in. You must check with the coach for proper procedures as well as entry information. There are time limits for scratching at some meets. **FEES WILL BE ASSESSED TO THE SWIMMER FOR ANY SCRATCHED EVENTS.**

Disqualifications can be made only by the officials during the race. Most disqualifications are for improper strokes. When this occurs, the officials notify the coach and sometimes the swimmer. Disqualifications are not made to penalize a swimmer but to help them improve.

Officials of the Swim Meet

- A. Meet Director – the person in charge of the administrative details of running a meet.
- B. Meet Marshall – enforcer of all safety precautions in the pool/locker area with authority to remove swimmers from the meet.
- C. Referee – person in charge of all officials and who enforces all rules and decides all questions about actual conduct of the meet. The referee also decides any point where opinions of the judges differ.
- D. Starter – person who starts each race. The Starter has control of the swimmers from the time they are assigned to their proper lane by the Clerk of Course until the gun is fired or the horn is sounded.

E. Judges

1. Relay Take Off Judge – a relay is disqualified if the swimmer leaves the starting block before the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool.
2. End Judges – record the order of finish of all swimmers.
3. Stroke and Turn Judges – observes the swimmers from the side lines/ends of the pool to ensure the rules relating to the mechanics of each stroke are being followed and to ensure the starts, turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.

F. Timers – people who record a swimmer's time for each event. There are usually two timers per lane plus a Head Timer.

To Eat or Not to Eat

Each parent faces the problem of food. Just what should a swimmer eat before and during the meet? You will soon find out if your swimmer develops a nervous stomach under the pressure of a meet. The night before a meet, try to get a substantial meal high in carbohydrates. This also applies to breakfast and lunch if they do not swim until later in the afternoon.

Suggested menus for meals the night before a meet are lasagna, spaghetti, greaseless pizza. For breakfast you should choose from juice, fruit, pancakes with syrup, English muffin with jelly, raisin bran with low-fat milk, bran muffins, hot cocoa, bagels, or raisins.

Lunch should be eaten in small amounts during the meet and may include any of the following: peanut butter or turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread, low-fat fruited yogurt, orange juice, plain baked potato, chili, chocolate milk shake, vegetable soup, applesauce, raw vegetables, dried fruits, granola bars, oatmeal-raisin cookies, pretzels, apple juice, mozzarella string cheese, or blueberry muffin and water.

Certain foods give your child a psychological boost and therefore do not be too condemning. Use trial and error if necessary. Try to avoid sweets. Make sure, especially on a hot day, that your child drinks enough liquids (water and juice, NOT soda pop or carbonated drinks including carbonated sports drinks), gets enough rest and stays in the shade. The younger children require more of your attention in these matters and may even need to be reminded to go to the bathroom before any events.

Bring along some foods for yourself in case you do not want to leave the area to find a restaurant. Most clubs provide concession stands at meets. Many families bring coolers with food/drinks to meets during the summer season. CAUTION: Please do not bring or send any glass items to the meets.

Comfort for Everyone at Swim Meets

To make competitive meets as pleasant as possible parents should consider their own comfort as well as that of their swimmers. At indoor meets, remember it is usually hot and humid in the pool area. Dress in layers or lightweight clothes. Informality is the rule.

At outdoor meets, remember it can be extremely hot, cold, wet or dry. Sunglasses, sunscreen, lawn chairs, sweaters, shorts, raincoats, hats, pillows, blankets, sleeping bags, or small tents are some of the equipment you will see at meets. Our team provides awnings at all outdoor meets for both swimmers and families to use.

Age group swimmers are remarkably well behaved considering the waiting such meets entail. This is a good time to teach your child card games. Supply books, games, playing cards, etc to help pass the time. Take things that do not require too much physical exertion as they are to rest when not competing in their events.

Have your swimmers arrive at the meet for a warm-up period, usually one hour before the meet starts. The Coach will announce such information at workouts before the meets. Be sure your swimmer is kept warm during waiting periods between events. Socks, shoes, warm-up suits or pants and jackets are supplies you want to have at each meet. In the summer a hat or head covering would also be helpful and sandals for walking on hot cement.

Following each swim workout and shower, swimmers should dry their ears thoroughly to help combat the problem referred to as “swimmers ear”. There are products you can purchase for swimmers ear from sporting goods stores or pharmacies.

WHAT A PARENT CAN EXPECT OF A COACH

The Coach should possess a professional attitude, knowledge of the skills used in competitive swimming and the ability to teach them, and a genuine enjoyment in working with children of various ages. The Coach should also be fair, giving each swimmer an equal opportunity (not equal time) to excel at the level of his/her capabilities and praise them for a job well done. Good coaches have a desire to win. Tempers can flare at times of stress. Help your child by remaining calm and explain the circumstances. Remember it is the swimmer who does the work and wins or loses and not the parent.

Each age requires different parental supervision. As swimmers mature they become less dependent upon parents and receive more of the motivation from within themselves, their peers and their Coach. Keep a record of your swimmer’s times and teach them to seek to better their own times, not seek to win by beating someone else. Over a period of years this process pays better dividends than just aiming to be first.

Constant parental criticism of a coach in front of a swimmer destroys the swimmers relationship with the coach and hurts the child's progress. It is self-defeating. Instead, direct any concerns to the coach directly in private.

WHAT A COACH CAN EXPECT FROM PARENTS

1. Getting swimmers to workouts and meets consistently and on time.
2. Keeping the child in good health and on a decent training schedule. See that the swimmer gets plenty of rest. Do not expect him/her to do well if he/she has been sick, up late the night before a meet, or has done some other kind of hard physical labor, chores, etc.
3. A young swimmer should be allowed to participate in other outside school activities, but parents will have to decide when, what, and how much. There comes a time when a swimmer does not have the time to be good at everything. Some hard choices must be made. These usually have to be made as a swimmer nears high school age.
4. Good behavior at practice and at meets and consideration for other swimmers present is expected.
5. Each swimmer should be in good standing in school. A coach understands and wants the student to do well in school.
6. Before and after each event at a meet, the swimmer should report immediately to the coach for directions and comments. As a parent, do not do the coaching, leave it to the coach. A disappointed swimmer needs parental consolation NOT parental reprimand. Just expect your swimmer to do their best.
7. At a meet, the coach is busy supervising the children, taking splits, advising the upcoming swimmers, congratulating, consoling, and explaining to those who just swam. Do not expect the coach to also take the burden of parental concern. Wait until later for this. However, do tell them if your child is seeded wrong or is not listed in the program, etc.
8. There is more to swimming than getting wet! This is a time to teach your child good sportsmanship, patience, the necessity to obey rules, the responsibility to a group, and the value of hard work. If you value winning a race for your child more than any of the above qualities, you are selling your child and age group swimming short. There are things to be learned from losing as well as winning. To young children, especially, it will take guidance to teach them how to handle both situations. One aid is to keep a chart or record of their times so they can compete against themselves and chart their progress and set their goals. The rewards of hard work, friendship, and traveling are all available to your child. Take advantage of them to build your child's self-confidence and to speed his/her maturation. Remember the teams' slogan: "Everybody swims, everybody wins".
9. **SUPPORT! SUPPORT! SUPPORT!**

UNITES STATES SWIMMING “NUTRI-TIPS”

Carbohydrate intake is important during every state of nutrition. For each meal and snack, follow these Do’s and Don’ts for wise food choices during training.

BREAKFAST

DO

- Eat hot cereals like oatmeal or oat bran
- Select whole grain or high-fiber cold cereals
- Eat breads, including muffins, biscuits, bagels
- Try milk, skim or low fat is best
- Drink hot beverages such as hot cocoa & hot apple cider
- Eat pancakes, waffles, and French toast
- Choose eggs up to 2 or 3 times weekly
- Choose fat-free toppings like syrups and jams as an alternative to butter

DON’T

- Eat sausage, ham or bacon more than once or twice weekly
- Opt for eggs every day
- Choose sugary children’s cereals
- Choose fast food breakfast sandwiches & fat laden croissants every day
- Use too much margarine or butter
- Eat doughnuts or pastries daily
- Skip Breakfast

LUNCH

DO

- Pack a lunch when possible
- Choose whole grain breads
- Choose lean meats like turkey over salami or bologna
- Use mustard and ketchup as condiments
- Choose a hamburger over hot dogs
- Choose a baked potato over French Fries
- Eat pasta as much as you like, but choose tomato sauces rather than cream sauces.
- Try pizzas without fatty meat toppings
- Eat hearty soups and stews

DON’T

- Eat fast food meals too frequently
- Eat fried foods like fish n chips too frequently
- Overuse condiments like mayonnaise or salad dressings
- Eat fatty and salty luncheon meats too often
- Skip lunch
- Choose prepared salads containing excessive Mayonnaise or salad dressings

DINNER

DO

- Eat pasta dishes
- Choose pizza with vegetables and lean meat toppings
- Try Chinese food with rice & fresh vegetables
- Select fish often. Broiled or poached is best
- Trim visible fat from meats and remove skin for poultry
- Have soups, salads and plenty of vegetables
- Eat as much bread as you like
- Include potatoes, rice or beans when available
- Choose fresh fruit, yogurt or Jell-O for dessert

DON’T

- Choose deep-fried meals more than twice a week
- Eat high-fat meals like hot dogs or sausages in excess
- Choose meals with heavy cream sauces or gravies
- Ruin a baked potato or bread with too much butter
- Have cakes, ice-cream and pies every night

SNACKS

DO

- Pack nutritious snacks like fruit and nuts
- Have rolls, muffins and breads when you get a break
- Snack on popcorn, pretzels and breadsticks
- Drink eight to ten glasses of fluids a day
- Drink non-fat or low-fat milk. Drink fruit juices, sparkling water or plain water
- Drink hot ciders, soups, and hot chocolate

DON’T

- Count on potato chips or tortilla chips as good snacks
- Eat cupcakes or cream filled pastries to satisfy hunger
- Each ice cream, cakes, or candies in excess
- Drink too many soft drinks or carbonated sports drinks