

L A N C A S T E R A Q U A T I C
C L U B

USA SWIMMING/MIDDLE ATLANTIC SWIMMING

PARENT HANDBOOK



The Mission of Lancaster Aquatic Club is to demonstrate a tradition of swimming excellence through Leadership, Achievement and Commitment.

HEART HEAD GUTS

Welcome to 2009 Fall Registration at the Lancaster Aquatic Club (LAC). LAC provides instruction for swimmers of all ages and abilities, ranging from beginners to National qualifiers. We run an Individual Medley based program with a focus on all four strokes. In our younger age groups, we promote the sport of swimming with a heavy focus on technique and a requirement that the swimmers have a lot of fun! As swimmers progress through the various training groups including Senior group, the core values of Individual Medley training, dry-land training and technique continue. As swimmers reach the Senior group, we expect a serious commitment to the sport so we can help each athlete realize their full potential.

VISION STATEMENT

The Lancaster Aquatic Club is a competitive swim program committed to:

- Advancing the sport of swimming
- Recruiting families who share our enthusiasm
- Providing swimmers with the highest quality coaching
- Maintaining an enjoyable and productive swimming environment
- Recognizing each individual and valuing his or her role in the success of our organization
- Encouraging positive mental attitudes and mutual respect among teammates
- Teaching and developing life skills through our swimming program
- Providing swimmers the opportunities to grow and succeed to their highest level, including the Olympic Dream

LAC PROGRAM LEVELS

Age Group C:

The goal in this group is to lay the foundation of stroke mechanics, technique, training basics and dry-land training (core balance) that will carry through the succession of LAC training levels. This ranges from an 8 and under swimmer new to competitive swimming to the 10 and under with summer swimming experience.

Age Group B:

The goal in this group is continue to lay the foundation of stroke mechanics, technique, training basics and dry-land training (core balance) that will carry through the succession of LAC training levels. This would be a swimmer who has some competitive experience or younger swimmer with strong basic skills.

Advanced Age Group (formerly B Gold):

Designed for the 11-14 yr old with more experience in competitive swimming. This group continues to train swimmers in the LAC tradition of strong stroke mechanics, technique, building the foundation of training, strengthening attitude and dry-land training. Placement in this group will be the ability to accomplish specific training intervals, technique and maturity standards. Practice attendance should be min 4 days/week.

Senior Prep (Tenacious A):

Designed to take the 12-14 yr competitive swimmer to the next level of training and competition and prepare them for training in the Senior group. Swimmers will be placed in this group and/or advance to this group based on ability to accomplish training intervals, technique and maturity standards.

Senior: 11 month Program through Summer Long Course

Designed for the age 14 and up who is seeking to qualify for Elite Senior USS Meets up to and including Junior Nationals and Senior Nationals. Swimmers will be placed in this group and/or advance to this group based on ability to accomplish training intervals, technique and maturity standards. Attendance is expected to be 80% or better.

TEAM PHILOSOPHY

The team philosophy is encompassed in the words **HEART HEAD GUTS**.

HEART

Heart is the Passion, the Desire for swimming and all things swimming, racing, training, with the Courage and willingness to accept risk(s) and endure failings. Courage does not exist unless there is a situation that presents the opportunity for success and clear chance for failure. We encourage our athletes to **embrace** these opportunities and not fear the outcome, as all failures help to more clearly define our future path to greater success.

HEAD

We must have the Head for the **DEDICATION, DISCIPLINE** and SACRIFICE that is required to achieve true success, true greatness, in essence, to find out what is really in ourselves. **CONFIDENCE** is critical, as is **PATIENCE** through the ups and downs of life, sports, and relationships. Similarly, the Determination to Learn about a great many things in and around the sport is critical. We must Desire consistently moving out of our 'Comfort Zones'. "Get comfortable being uncomfortable" – someone really wise.

GUTS

Mental Toughness - What makes these champions so good? Usually it is a whole bunch of small reasons rather than a couple of big ones - and some of these reasons you couldn't even put your finger on. But one of these mysterious 'intangible' qualities they both possess is mental toughness. Mental toughness means to have the ability to pull out your best when your back is to the wall, and when everyone else is counting you out - you are counting yourself in. Mental toughness is persistence. Ultimately, greatness of GUTS requires **PERSEVERANCE**. Perseverance is the backbone of success in any endeavor in life. One cannot succeed at the highest levels without enduring some setbacks. These difficult times can create a lack of faith, low self-esteem, and an obvious drop in enthusiasm. Perseverance is the quality that transcends these difficult times. It allows the individual to find the true strength of their character.

TEAM

All for one, One for all, mentality. Each member has the obligation to add to the greater good. Therefore, all may benefit from the Great Good of the Team. Make yourself special, and, in turn, you make the team more special.

SPORTSMANSHIP

What is sportsmanship?

Sportsmanship is defined as:

- playing fair
- following the rules of the game
- respecting the judgment of the officials
- treating opponents with respect

It is important that we as coaches value and reward sportsmanship. Take time in your practice to discuss what sportsmanship is and why it is important.

IM (All 4 Strokes) – We will teach and practice all 4 strokes. None of the swimmers will have specialty strokes until they are older.

“Can Do” Attitude – Our swimmers need to believe that they can compete in any stroke at any distance.

COMMUNICATION

Questions regarding the club should be directed to LAC President, Nancy Hauck: Annemarie.hauck@pfizer.com.

Questions regarding your child's swim ability should be directed to your age level coach first & they will relay any concerns to Head Coach Casey Coble: laccoachcasey@dejazzd.com

Questions regarding any monetary issue should be directed to Lisa Cameron: lbcccpa@dejazzd.com.

MAILBOXES

Each active family is assigned a folder in the team boxes just outside the locker rooms. Handouts and medals will be put in these folders, so you should plan to check yours.

BULLETIN BOARD

All information regarding team functions or meets is posted on the team bulletin board outside the girls locker room. Be aware of deadlines, swim meets and activities. These also can be found on the website.

THE LAC WEBPAGE: [http: www.lancasteraquaticclub.com](http://www.lancasteraquaticclub.com)

The website is your main source of information. You will find the list of scheduled events where you are able to declare for swim meets, sign-up for jobs, see your children's swim times histories, maintain you own contact information and newly added payment processing, keeping your account up to date.

In addition, you will find Coach Casey's monthly update on the happenings of the team and general information known as 'Coach Casey's Corner,' an updated calendar of events that can be printed. For away meets which require an overnight stay, you can register for your room through our 'hotel block' tab.

Try to frequently check the site for updates in changes to practice times, meet schedules or news of the team.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS FOR PARENTS AND SWIMMERS

We will be having parents' parties on a regular basis during the year. You can ask questions at these as well as get to know the other parents on the team. We hope to see you there. Being a swimming parent can be a great opportunity to make friends.

PREPARATION FOR MEETS

Equipment

Swimmers should arrive in their team colored bathing suit (blue) with sweats over top. Please wear LAC apparel or something like colored. The swimmers should pack in their bags:

1. two towels (one for after races/during meet; 2nd for changing)
2. swim cap (LAC)
3. goggles (2 sets in case one breaks)
4. a complete change of clothes (if you put these in a plastic bag, they shouldn't get wet during the meet)
5. a drink (Gatorade/water, etc)
6. Granola bars, fruit, carbs

Warm-up

Team warm-ups are usually held one hour prior to the start of the meet. Swimmers should be on deck dressed to swim 30 minutes before the pool warm-up for dry land stretching and to check in with the coach so the coach can turn in the correct scratches for the day. If you are late, you run the risk of being scratched from your events. It is important to be on time or inform the coach of possible delays. During this time you may write your child's event on their hand:

Event #, Heat #, Lane #, and event; example: #20,H:2 L1 50 free.

In the pool, the coach for safety reasons supervises warm-ups. A good warm-up is vital to a successful meet. LAC stretches as a team before we get in the water to swim. This awakens the body and mind and gets us ready!

After Warm-up and During the Meet

Immediately after warm-up, put on your warm-up or sweat suit including socks and shoes. Stay warm. If it is hot and sunny, stay in the shade.

Report to the coach before you swim. Be sure that you know what event, heat, and lane you will be swimming in.

Report to the bullpen and/or blocks in plenty of time to be by yourself and concentrate on your race.

After your race, get your time from the timers and report to your coach. Be sure to dress again in full warm-ups.

Meet Conduct

Sit with the team in the team area at all times. Support your teammates by cheering, offering congratulations, and being positive. Show respect for the meet officials, as well as other teams and coaches. Be responsible for yourself. Remember, you represent the LAC! Handle yourself with pride and dignity.

USA SWIM MEETS

United States Swimming is the governing body for all types of competitions involving American swimmers. They select the teams for all international meets, including the Olympics. USA Swimming grew out of AAU swimming when each sport under the AAU umbrella split out to form its own governing body. USA Swimming is headquartered in Colorado Springs, CO, at the Olympic Training Center.

LAC focuses on USA Swimming competition, which is comprised of Age Group swimming (10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18) and Senior swimming (any age as long as the requisite cutoff time has been achieved.)

A schedule of meets is posted on the website and is also posted on the team bulletin board. A few weeks before each meet, a schedule of events for each swimmer is posted. This preliminary schedule is called a "scratch sheet." Once this event is posted on the website a deadline to check in is posted. Please register your swimmer by the deadline date.

TYPES OF USA MEETS

Meets are often classified as A, B, C or some combination of letters. These classifications refer to the cutoff times for the fastest and slowest swimmers that are allowed to swim at that meet. These A, B, or C time standards are determined based on the fastest performances in the US during the last few years, as follows:

The 16th fastest swimmer is used as a base in each event.

105% of the base time is called AAAA

110% of the base time is called AAA

115% of the base time is called AA

120% of the base time is called A

125% of the base time is called B

In USA A/B meets anyone with an A or B time can compete, but C swimmers cannot. In B/C meets, anyone (even without a time) can compete, but A or faster swimmers cannot.

Other meets called All Ages meets have no cutoff times and are sometimes swum in single year age groups, e.g. 9 & Under, 10, 11, 12, etc.

THE PARENT-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes including self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to treat success and failure as two sides of the same coin, while becoming healthy and physically fit. As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, by coming to swimming meets and volunteering for your club at swim meets, or by participating in fundraising, etc.

Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive role models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates. Remember that you are teaching your child at all times.

Be Enthusiastic and Supportive

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. Let them know that first they are the child you love, and second, a swimmer. Tell them you will love them whether they swim well or not, and ask only that they give their best effort. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your child develop a positive self-image.

Positive Parenting Tips

1. Your child needs your emotional, physical, and financial support. Be liberal in providing this support.
2. Support but do not push your child.
3. Understand development – long-term development as an athlete, and growth and development as it impacts performance.
4. Be realistic in terms of expectations; factor in age and skill level; be aware of your child's perception of your expectations.
5. Emphasize performance and effort, not just outcome. The athlete only has control over his/her performance. Define and measure success as giving maximal effort and as personal improvement.
6. Keep winning in perspective.
7. Do not bribe.
8. Give plenty of encouraging and rewarding statements. Criticize sparingly.
9. View swimming as an arena in which to teach your child about commitment, hard work, and coping with adversity.
10. Work to form an effective Coach-Athlete-Parent Triangle.

11 COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS

I. 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 the performance of other athletes and don't push him based on what you think he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.

II. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.

There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

III. Thou shalt not coach thy child.

You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offers professional coaching. Do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide love and support. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. Never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.

IV. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.

You should be encouraging and never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. Remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for".

V. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.

New experiences can be stressful situations. 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 or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience.

VI. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.

Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions.

VII. Honor thy child's coach.

The bond between coach and swimmer is special. It contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

VIII. Thou shalt be loyal and supportive of thy team

It is not wise for parents to take swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team find that it can be a difficult emotional experience. Often swimmers who do switch teams don't do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

IX. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.

Most successful swimmers have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. 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. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

X. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

There are 250,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%.

XI. Thou shalt be on time for practice

GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

Age Group Swim Meet. All USA registered swimmers 18 years old or younger who have met the qualifying time standard for specific events are eligible to participate in their age category. Age on the first day of the meet shall govern the entire meet.

Bonus heat. The first or slowest heat of finals, at swim meets where three heats of finals are swum.

Bullpen. Place where swimmers report at meets, before their event, to receive their entry cards and to be arranged into their heat and lane assignments.

Circle seeding. See pyramid seeding.

Consolation heat. The first, or slower, of two heats of finals at a championship meet.

Course. Designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Long course (LCM) is 50 M and short course is 25 YDS (SCY) or 25 M (SCM).

Deck seeding. Heat and lane assignments are determined for the swimmers at the beginning of each meet session, after scratches are taken out.

DQ. Disqualification. A swimmer is usually disqualified when he performs a stroke, touch or turn incorrectly or when he enters the water before the start (false start).

False Start. When a swimmer enters the water before a race or moves during the start, he may be charged with a false start. This results in disqualification, since USA has a "no false start" rule.

Dual Meet. Meets conducted between two teams, usually with a limitation on the number of entrants from each team.

Finals. The session of a meet where qualifying rounds were held previously to determine the finalists. Usually there are 1-2 heats of finalists and their order of finish determines the ultimate placement in a given event. Most trials-finals meets are on a championship level.

Heat. The group of swimmers who swim a race at the same time. Several heats may be held in a particular event.

Heat sheets. Printed listings of all swimmers by event number and entry time. These are also called the Meet programs or "Psych Sheets."

IM. Individual medley. The event where a swimmer swims butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and any other stroke in that order.

Lap. Two lengths of the pool.

Length. One length of the pool.

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LSC. Local Swimming Committee. One of several regional groups such as Connecticut Swimming charged with the conduct of all USA activities in that region.

Medley relay. Four swimmers on each team each swim one-fourth of the total prescribed distance in the order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

OVC. Official Verification Card. Issued by meet officials to swimmers achieving a Junior National or Senior National time.

Prelims, or Trials. In certain meets, the qualifying rounds for each event to determine the finalists.

Proof of time. A requirement at some meets to make certain that swimmers have legally met the entry time standards for that meet.

Pyramid Seeding. In trials or preliminaries of trials-finals meets, the swimmers in the top 3 heats are intermingled so that the fastest three swimmers are in the middle lanes of the last 3 heats, the next 3 in the lane next to that in each of those heats, and so forth. This is also called "circle seeding." In finals, those finishing fastest by time swim in the top 1 or 2 heats (Final and Consolation Final).

Referee. The USA official who has the final authority over all other officials at the meet. He makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the meet.

Seed times. The times a swimmer uses to enter a meet. These times appear on the heat sheet and the entry cards and determine the swimmer's heat and lane assignment in a meet.

Seeding. The process of assigning swimmers to lanes and heats by time. In general the swimmers with the slower seed times swim in the earlier heats. The order of swimming in the final heats depends on the type of meet.

Senior meet. A meet with only one age group called "senior." Swimmers of any age who have met the qualifying times may compete.

Straight seeding. Swimmers are assigned to lanes in heats from slowest to fastest. In a given heat, the fastest swimmers swim in the middle lanes and the slower ones on the outer lanes.

Split. The time a swimmer achieves in one or more laps of his race. Coaches use these times to help instruct swimmers in pacing. For example, the time for the first 50 yds in a 100 yd race is the swimmers 50-yd split.

Starter. The USA official responsible for starting each heat and calling the swimmers to the blocks.

Stroke and turn judge. A USA official, who determines the legality of swimmers' strokes, turns and finishes and disqualifies those who do not conform to USA rules.

Swimming World. A monthly magazine about competitive swimming.

Time Standards. A set of times developed by USA Swimming to assist swimmers in performance planning. They are based on percentiles of the 16th fastest time in each stroke in each age group.

Top 16. A tabulation of the top 16 times in the US in each age group and stroke. These are published annually in Swimming World. The "consideration" times that may be eligible appear in the USA rule-book and on the CSI website.

Touch pad. An electronic pad which stops a clock when the swimmer touches it at the end of the race. This is usually the official time, although corrections are made if the swimmer misses the pad.

Unattached. The status a swimmer receives when changing from one USA club to another. A swimmer must swim unattached for 120 days from the date of the last USA meet he swam for the previous club. During this time they may compete individually, but may not be entered in relays. Connecticut high school swimmers compete unattached for their USA clubs during the high school swim season.

USA. Abbreviation for United States Swimming, the governing body for all amateur swimming in the US. National headquarters are in Colorado Springs, CO.