

Hornet Age Group Swim Club

Parent Handbook

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Welcome to the Hornet Age Group Swim Club!

The members of the Hornet Age Group Swim Club (HOSC) are very pleased that you have taken interest in our program. This guide will help you understand our team a little better and answer a few of your questions. Please don't hesitate to contact our board members or coaches after practice if you have further questions. Please note that this document does not supersede the Club's By-laws. A digital copy of the By-laws is available to members upon request.

Our organization is a local club composed of young swimmers and their parents who enjoy swimming. HOSC is a member of USA Swimming. Our club is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization. We are sanctioned by Illinois Swimming, Inc., a Local Swim Council of USA Swimming.

HOSC's mission is to help swimmers improve their swimming abilities as well as develop confidence, strength, and discipline while having fun through competitive swimming. Our team is open to all youth in our community who are interested and willing to learn how to become a competitive swimmer, and who live within the High School District 86 or city of Darien boundaries. We provide professional coaches who are educated and experienced in competitive swimming. These coaches create an atmosphere that is safe, fun, and educational for all levels of swimming. Our coaches also create a structure that will provide swimmers the opportunity to achieve the very highest levels of competitive swimming.

TRYOUT PROCEDURES

1. If the team has space available, tryouts can be done any day that HOSC has a practice scheduled. The coaching staff is always willing to have new swimmers come and check out our team.
2. Minimum requirements for our team include being at least 5 years of age and able to swim one length of the pool and a proficiency in a minimum of two strokes.
3. Following the initial tryout, the coaching staff will assign each swimmer to a specific group based on age, ability, and experience. Swimmers in White group and above are expected to attend a certain number of meets. See Group Descriptions for more information.
4. Practice time will vary depending on which group the swimmer is placed. Practice time will be posted on the website. The coaches will inform the swimmer parent what time their specific practice time will be.
5. Each group has a different attendance policy. Check the website for the number of times per week your swimmer should be attending practice.

GROUP DESCRIPTIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy here at HOSC is to have FUN while working hard to become the best swimmers we can be. Our coaching staff promises to do their very best to be great educators and role models. Every group will work each day to become better at some aspect of competitive swimming. Our coaching staff will assign each swimmer to a group and will always have the swimmer's long-term success as a competitive swimmer in mind when making any changes. Swimmers may be moved up or down at any time during the season at the discretion of the coaching staff. Group criteria may change at any time depending on the needs of the program and/or swimmers.

GREEN GROUP:

The Green Group is for age 8 & under swimmers who can demonstrate at least two competitive strokes for one length of the pool and are mentally and physically ready to be part of a team. The focus for the Green Group is to learn the strokes, starts, flip turns, and, of course, to have fun! Only dual meets are offered at this level. It is required to come to practice at least three days per week.

WHITE GROUP:

The White Group is for age 12 & under swimmers who have demonstrated at least three competitive strokes and know how to do a freestyle flip turn and a competitive start. The white group will focus mainly on stroke, turn, and start refinement. Training and the pace clock will also be introduced at this level, as will the understanding of teamwork. The White Group will be divided up into specific lanes in accordance with age and ability. Swimmers in this group must participate in at least two dual meets and one ISI. It is required to come to at least three practices per week.

YELLOW GROUP:

The Yellow Group is for age 14 & under swimmers who have passed out of the white group or equivalent program, can demonstrate all four strokes legally, and can correctly demonstrate all competitive turns and starts. The Yellow Group continues to refine strokes and also will have structured training sets designed to improve their conditioning, speed, and confidence. Dry land will be incorporated into the training sessions. Swimmers in this group must participate in at least three dual meets and two ISI's. It is required to come to at least three practices per week.

GOLD GROUP:

The Gold Group is for age 9 & over swimmers who have passed out of the yellow group or equivalent program and are committed to the program. This group's main focus is to prepare the athlete mentally and physically for the challenges of the Black and Senior programs. The Gold Group is expected to make at least three practices a week and participate in at least two ISI's and three dual meets during each SCY/LCM season.

BLACK GROUP:

The Black Group is for age 11 & over swimmers who have passed out of the Gold Group or equivalent program, have demonstrated leadership skills, and have the mental/physical

ability to complete challenging sets of 20-40 minutes in duration. The Black Group continues to refine strokes using detailed drills designed for the experienced swimmer. Swimmers will be introduced to different types of competitive training such as distance swimming, sprinting, and other specific training philosophies. The Black Group focuses on race strategy and mastering the skills needed to compete in every event offered in competitive swimming. The Black Group is expected to make at least three practices a week and participate in at least two ISI and three dual meets during each SCY/LCM season.

SENIOR GROUP:

The Senior Group is for age 13 & over swimmers who have passed out of the Black Group or equivalent program. New swimmers may register for this group only after meeting with the head coach. The Senior Group continues refinement of strokes using advanced drills specially designed for the experienced swimmer. Practices will focus on all aspects of training: including distance, sprint, stroke, IM and resistance. Advanced training concepts will be introduced slowly throughout the season. Practices will not only be physically challenging, but also mentally challenging. The Senior Group is expected to make four practices a week and attend two ISI and three dual meets during each SCY/LCM season.

TRAINING LOCATION

Hinsdale South High School is the primary training location for the club. HOSC also rents pool time from the Darien Swim and Racquet Club. Other locations may also be used in case of conflict with Hinsdale South.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Registration fees cover coach salary, coach travel expenses, pool rent, membership fees, meets, some of the costs of equipment as well as other operating expenses.

1. Registration fees provide the financial base for HOSC and are due at registration. All swimmers are required to pay an annual USA Swimming Membership and Insurance Fee. Late fees are assessed for anyone, who is not a new swimmer, signing up after registration dates.
2. Entry fees for meets are held in escrow which is also due at registration as a separate payment. As the escrow is depleted, parents will be required to pay additional money into escrow as their children attend meets. Entry fees are paid to the hosting team at least one month in advance, so once the sign-up sheets are removed from the bulletin board, no refunds are given for missed meets, including illness, change of plans, etc.

NOTE: HOSC reserves the right suspend a swimmer from practice and/or meets if your registration fees are not paid, or if your escrow account is in arrears.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent involvement is **required** for our club to function properly. Specific responsibilities include:

1. A parent **MUST** volunteer at Home swim meets and time trials. This may include working in the concession stand, setting up or breaking down the meet, helping to organize the meet, working in the bull pen, etc. This is detailed in the Volunteer Policy signed by all parents at registration. The policy states that if you do not fulfill your volunteer obligation, you will be required to pay \$100 per missed session in order for your child to continue in the program. Failure to pay the Volunteer Penalty Invoice will prevent future competition or session renewal.
2. Every parent **MUST** volunteer to time at away swim meets, if needed.
3. Everyone can stay informed by reading the website, bulletin board, email, and newsletter communications.
4. Keep up with your financial obligations to the club.
5. Support your coach and the team with a positive attitude. If any problems exist, please discuss it privately with the coach or appropriate board member.
6. Always express positive support to your swimmer.
7. Let the coach do the coaching!
8. Swimmers should be picked up no later than 10 minutes after their practice session ends.
9. Due to insurance considerations, parents are **NOT** allowed on the pool deck during practice.

SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of a successful organization must share in the responsibility of maintaining the stature and prestige of the organization. In order to help build our program, you must share in the following responsibilities:

1. Attend practice on a regular basis and **be on time**. You may not “hang out” at the pool before or after your scheduled water time.
2. Attend all meets that your coach recommends for you.
3. Communicate with your coach if you cannot fulfill your obligations.
4. Take an active role in promoting the positive aspects of HOSC swimming.

5. Participate and support all club activities.
6. Always wear the team apparel at swim meets.
7. Help out setting up and putting away all equipment for meets and practices.
8. Be aware of your teammates accomplishments and congratulate them.
9. Approach each practice and each meet with a positive attitude. Encourage others who are down.
10. Support your coach and his/her training program.
11. Establish high goals and actively train to achieve those goals.
12. Appreciate and respect those that you compete against and those who make it possible for you to compete.
13. Swimmers need to stay off the deck when they are through practicing and they should not distract coaches when it is not their practice time.
14. Swimmers are not allowed in the pool office and are not allowed to use the pool phone.
15. HAVE FUN and SWIM FAST!

DISCIPLINE

- Discipline problems will be dealt with individually.
- Swimmers **MUST** respect their coaches, personal property of others, and the Hinsdale South High School pool facilities.
- Deviant behavior will be dealt with immediately in form of discussion with athlete, discussion with parent, and possible temporary or permanent suspension.
- Illegal or inappropriate behavior while representing the Hornet Age Group Swim Club may result in the swimmer's family being held responsible for financial restitution for any damages or fines levied as a result of the offense.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is an essential part of a well-organized team and is vital to total team function. Team communication vehicles include:

MAIN FORUM:

- **Website** - Our website address is www.hornetswimclub.org
- **Email** - Email announcements are sent out for additional notices. Check your email regularly.

ADDITIONAL:

- **Bulletin Board** - Meet signups, announcements, and meet schedule are posted on the HOSC bulletin board located upstairs at the Hinsdale South pool.
- **Newsletter** - This is emailed periodically throughout the swim season and covers team announcements, meet schedule, coach's column, and any other special announcements.
- **Board Meetings** - All parents are invited to any open session board meeting – dates and times announced on the website.
- **Membership Meetings** - General membership meetings are held during the year for discussion of objectives, upcoming home ISI's, financial and fundraising reports, and swimmer/parent activities.
- **Individual meetings** - Can be arranged with the coach.
- **Family Mailboxes** – Mailboxes are located in the balcony. They are used for award/ribbon disbursement as well as forms that cannot be emailed.

With these areas of communication offered, it is your responsibility to keep informed.

If you have any questions or comments, you can reach the Board at info@hornetswimclub.org and Coach Bryan at coachbryan@hornetswimclub.org.

HOSC POLICY CONCERNING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

The swimmers, coaches, and parents of HOSC desire to lead our swimmers towards positive lifestyles that are conducive to achieving their best in swimming, school, their professional careers, and in their family lives. The team has seen fit to have a drug policy that all HOSC swimmers will abide by for the good of the team and each individual as well.

*All HOSC swimmers will refrain from drinking alcohol, using any form of tobacco, or abusing any drug.

*All swimmers will be truthful in all matters dealing with this policy. To purposely hold back information from the coaching staff is not acceptable. The coaching staff must be made aware of problems that concern any member of our team.

PARENT/SWIMMER/COACH RELATIONSHIP

To have a successful program, there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your swimmer makes depends to a great extent on this three-way relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section carefully as you join the Hornet Age Group Swim Club.

PARENTS' GUIDELINES

Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn, and this requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches, who must both remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great as or greater than that of the faster learner.

When an athlete first comes out for the team and starts practicing, it is possible for his/her times to worsen rather than improve. In the case of younger team members, this is likely due to the emphasis placed on stroke technique in these groups. It takes a great deal of the swimmer's attention to master these skills. These new sets of habits are the basis for later improvement. As training proceeds, additional stress is placed upon the muscles. The muscles will at first break down under the demand of additional work and this can explain an initial lack of improvement. As the need for improvement is realized, the muscles will gradually strengthen and the athlete's performance will improve.

Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer's career. Plateaus can be both in competition and in training. A plateau signifies that the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently automatic to leave the attention free to attack newer, higher-order skills. It is important to explain to the athlete that plateaus occur in all fields of physical learning. The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement, and go on to achieve greater performance and approach their personal potential.

10-and-unders are the most inconsistent swimmers, and this can be frustrating for parent, coach, and swimmer alike! Be patient and permit these swimmers to learn to love the sport.

Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal and perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced early development. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as swimmers prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.

It is the coaches' job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves.

Parents' attitudes and behaviors often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your

child to practices and meets, fund-raising projects, meetings, etc. Don't look at these functions as chores.

If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, contact one of the coaches or a board member before or after practice or via email.

No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach, and handled by the coach.

Be sure that your child swims because he/she wants to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.

The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to two Latin words, "com" and "petere", which means together to strive. Avoid "playing" your child against their nearest competitors, thereby, creating vendettas within the team and swimming community. Close competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.

The communication between coach and swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice. It is imperative that the coach has the swimmer's full attention at these times. It is **imperative** that parents refrain from making stroke corrections or trying to coach their swimmer. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim, it causes considerable, and often times, insurmountable confusion as to which the swimmer should listen to and respect. Your child's coach is the expert, so please let them do their job. There are many ways to do anything – the right way for any Hornet is the way his coach teaches him.

Remember, particularly in the case of younger swimmers, that attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can "win" or succeed all the time. There will always be some disappointment. Every swimmer can gain from this experience whether or not he/she ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time. The secret is not only to produce great swimmers but to produce great young people who swim.

SWIM SEASON

HOSC is a club member of USA Swimming. There are two swimming seasons in a yearly cycle. During the fall and winter, we will compete in the Short Course season held in 25 yard pools. During the spring and summer, we will compete in the Long Course season held in 50 meter pools.

At the end of each season there will be state, sectional, and national championships that the swimmers will try to qualify for during the season.

A typical swimming calendar for the year will look something like the following:

Mid September - Mid February: Short course season with approximately 2 meets each month.

Mid February- Mid April: This is the Championship part of the season.

May-August: The Long Course season is in progress with approximately 2 meets per month. The championships will be held in late July / early August.

Mid August- Mid September: HOSC will usually take a 3-4 week break to let swimmers, coaches and parents recharge physically and mentally for the next season.

MEET SCHEDULE

The HOSC meet schedule is posted online. Meet sign ups are posted on the bulletin board.

SIGNING UP FOR A SWIM MEET

1. Swim meet sign-up sheets will be posted on the bulletin board upstairs at the Hinsdale South Pool. Please sign your swimmer's name and days they can attend.
2. Ask coaching staff if you have a question on which meet to sign up for. The coaches will inform each swimmer about upcoming meets that they should sign up for.
3. The coach will sign up the swimmers for events that they would like to see the swimmer in. As the swimmer becomes more experienced, the coaches will also sign each swimmer up for events that will help them become better and more well rounded athletes.

MEET PROCEDURES FOR SWIMMERS

1. **EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** suit, extra towels, goggles, caps, sweats, water bottle, food. A blanket or chair to sit on at meets is optional.
2. **DIET BEFORE MEET:** The coach recommends that parents do not abruptly change the swimmer's diet. At all times keep a balanced diet. High carbohydrate foods the day before the meet is good. Keep the junk food to a minimum. At the meet a swimmer should eat enough food to stay fueled. Always drink lots of water or sports drinks to stay hydrated.
3. Check in with coach upon arrival to the meet, or for an ISI, proceed to positive check-in.
4. Swimmers are expected to arrive at the meet on time. The starting time will be listed on the HOSC website.
5. Swimmers are expected to be ready to stretch together as a team at the designated time.
6. Swimmers should check in with the coach after each event that they swim.
7. Swimmers should sit in team area and be accessible to the coach at all times.

8. Swimmers are responsible for getting themselves to the starting area when their event is called. For swimmers eight years old and younger there is usually a “bull pen”. This is a specific area designated for the younger swimmers to go when their event is announced in order to help them get to the proper lane.

9. Swimmers must check with the coaching staff before leaving a meet!

10. Unlike other sports, if you are unable to attend a swim meet at the last minute, the coach does not need to be informed. Swim meets are done by positive check in, so if your child does not check in, they will be scratched from their events.

TEAM ATTIRE

Please ask the coach for information on purchasing our team suits and caps. This will usually be done as a group in the Fall, and then on your own at other times throughout the year. Team caps are recommended at competitions if the swimmer wears a cap. Team suits are recommended, but not required. Optional team apparel such as t-shirts, hats sweat shirts, sweat pants, towels, etc., can be purchased through one of our parent volunteers. Check the website and bulletin board for further information.

UNDERSTANDING TIME STANDARDS

For many meets, a certain time must be achieved in order to qualify for that particular meet. In competition, a swimmer is a “C” level swimmer in each event until an “A” or “B” time is attained in a given event at a meet. “A” and “B” time standards are posted on our website. As your swimmers improve they can also find Sectional, Zone, Junior National, US Open, and National time standards on the USA swimming website. Please ask one of our coaches if you have further questions about time standards.

DEFINITION OF GENERAL TERMS

A meet- Swim meet which requires swimmers to have previously achieved an “A” time standard in the event they wish to enter.

A/B meet- Swim meet which requires that the swimmer have an “A” or “B” time in the event they wish to enter.

A/B/C meet- Meet open to any level of swimmer.

Events- A particular swimming event by age, distance, and stroke.

False start- An illegal start by one or more swimmers when moving or starting prior to the start signal.

Finals- The top swimmers from the prelim round will swim again in the finals in order to determine the final order of finish.

Consolation finals- The next fastest group of swimmers will swim again to determine the final order of finish.

Heats- The different races will have heats of swimmers that will swim in their respective lanes. The next group swimming in those lanes is considered the next “heat” of swimmers.

Lane- The pool is divided into pathways for the swimmers to swim in separated by floating lines. Each separate path is called a lane and is numbered. Usually a pool will have 6, 8, or 10 lanes.

Long Course Season- Begins in April and ends in August. Competitions are held in a 50 meter pool.

HOSC- Hornet Age Group Swim Club

USA Swimming- United States of America Swimming organization

Scratch- To withdraw from a race, always check with the coach if this needs to happen. There are penalties enforced for not showing up for your races.

Short Course Season- Begins in September and ends officially with the state, sectional, and national meets in March and April.

Starting Blocks- The starting platforms at the starting end of each lane.

Timed Finals Seeding- All swimmers will be distributed in heats with the fastest group of swimmers swimming in the last heat, then next fastest group will swim in the next to last heat, and so on.

Times- Stop watches are used as back up times in meets that use electronic timing. The timers are very important in the process of recording legal times for the swimmers. Parents from each team are responsible to time in a specific lane during the meet.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS

By Rose Snyder- Reprinted from the USA Swimming Swim Parent Survival Guide

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 .02%.