

Hilton Head Aquatics
"H2A"
www.h2aswim.com

Hilton Head Aquatics is a year round swim club that is part of USA Swimming. Therefore, all athletes associated with H2A must also become members of USA Swimming. H2A is a non-profit organization with one head coach, one head age group coach and two assistant coaches. The team functions with a volunteer board, mainly consisting of parents from the team. This packet is information about the team and should answer many questions. Please read it in its entirety.

Registration

Swimmers who join H2A must also be a part of USA Swimming (www.usaswimming.org). Please take the time to visit the USA Swimming website so you are familiar with the organization. Registration for H2A is in August of every year, which is also when swimmers register through USA Swimming. By registering with H2A, the team will activate each athlete's membership with USA Swimming. Included in the USA Swimming fee is insurance for every swimmer wherever they may swim.

The steps you take:

1. Register your child with Hilton Head Aquatics during the set registration period (mid-August). Swimmers may register at anytime during the season, but everyone must renew their registration in August, as it is valid for one year.
2. If the swimmer is new to the team, they will have a placement with a coach to determine the best training group for the swimmer.
3. Every swimmer must fill out the required paper work in the registration packet. General information is required about the swimmer so he or she can be entered into the team database as well as have a USA Swimming ID, which is required for meets.
4. Volunteer information is needed as well, including the amount of time and/or money each family is required to give during the season. (More to follow on the importance of volunteering.)
5. READ the registration packet (plus this packet) and understand how valuable the team website is: www.h2aswim.com. It is imperative that families understand how the website works as it posts information and where swimmers sign up for meets and special events. (More to follow on the website and communication.)
6. Come to practice during the designated practice time.
7. Although there is an up front registration fee, every swimmer must pay a monthly rate to stay in the water. Each group's fee is different. Invoices are done via email and postal mail. It is the family's responsibility to pay on time. If there is a late payment of 10 days a \$15.00 fee is assessed. If a family has difficulties with the payments, please contact the head coach, board president or treasurer so the team can try to help.
8. Each group will have a parent meeting at the beginning of the season (in September). Yes, it is necessary for you to be there. Think of it as an open house for swimming. It's your child and it's important.

The steps H2A takes:

1. The board of directors will process the information given on each swimmer. That includes putting the names in the team database as well as team emails and billing. Also, H2A will send the athletes' names to USA Swimming so they can all be eligible for swim meets.
2. The board of directors will note who is willing to do what volunteering and you may be called or emailed to help.

3. The coaches and the board will keep the families up-to-date on practice schedules and information about the team throughout the season.

Practice

Each group practices at different times with different coaches. **It is imperative that parents and coaches are “on the same page” and speak to one another if there are any questions.** If a parent has a concern, he or she *must* approach the swimmer’s primary coach.

Practice Conduct – Swimmers and Parents

1. Swimmers *must* be on time. If practice begins at 3:00, they should be at the edge of the pool with caps and goggles on at 3:00. Please understand that coaches do have other groups and may run over practice time occasionally. Swimmers still need to be ready at the designated time.
2. If a child is consistently late or not in the water on time, the coach may take appropriate action. Part of the greatness of swimming is the time management and discipline it encourages.
3. Goggles should be adjusted and on the child’s eyes at the start of practice.
4. If a swimmer is misbehaving or not listening during practice, there will be consequences determined by the coach. Speak to your swimmer’s primary coach for any questions or concerns.
5. Parents are welcome to stay during practice; however, they must not interfere at any time during practice. Once practice begins, the swimmer needs full attention with the coach. Parents should not talk to their child (or any other child) during the practice and absolutely should not coach. Furthermore, parents should not “coach” their child at home (or a meet) either. If a swimmer is given conflicting information, they will be confused and will not improve. A parent is there for encouragement and support. If this is difficult, please do not stay on deck during practice. If a parent does not follow this, he or she will be asked to step back and/or leave.

Practice Attire

1. Goggles are required for all swimmers (not covering the nose).
2. Girls must wear swim caps.
3. Girls should not wear two-piece suits.
4. Boys should wear jammers or briefs, not board shorts.
5. Please avoid swim shirts. By the time the swimmer is in the Bronze group, he or she will not be allowed to wear it at all.
6. All swimmers should have water to hydrate at practice.

Training Groups

1. Every swimmer is carefully placed in a training group. Some swimmers will stay in one group longer than others, and that’s ok. It’s not a competition to see who can make it to the next level the fastest. The goal is for each swimmer to improve strokes first and then build to speed. If a swimmer does not have a base with the correct technique, he or she may not see the improvements desired.

2. When it is time for a swimmer to move training groups, the coach will approach the parent. Parents should not approach the coach and should not tell the swimmer to ask the coach when he or she will be “moving up.” Continually asking the coach or complaining to the coach will not “reward” a swimmer to the next level. There is no reason to put a swimmer in a group that is not appropriate; swimmers should be pushed but not in a group “over their head.”
3. Typically swimmers will move training groups in-between seasons: April or August. H2A has requirements for each group (as seen in the registration packet). This information is subject to change.

Meets

Swimmers practice a lot, so swim meets are a great reward. H2A recently purchased a timing system so we can host meets at the Rec Center. The coaches are aware that traveling to meets is a big expense, so we try to keep meets close and on the island. Although there is a lot of information below, you may come up with many more questions. Please be certain to ask your swimmer’s primary coach to clarify. Most meets are 3 days long – Friday night, Saturday and Sunday.

Short Course vs. Long Course

1. Short Course Season: 25-yard length pool (size of the Rec Center) that runs from August to March.
2. Long Course Season: 50-meter pool (Olympic size) that runs from April to August.

Signing up for Meets

1. Every season has a schedule of meets that H2A will attend. The schedule also identifies who can participate. For example, in order to swim in the State Meet, swimmers must have a state cut. *It is the family’s responsibility to look at the schedule and sign up for meets.*
2. The swim meet schedule will be sent out via email and it’s on the website (as is most everything!). Once the swimmer’s family decides on the meet(s) to attend, they must sign up online under “events.” There is a deadline for signing up. Do not expect exceptions to be made if the family does not sign up in time (although in some cases it may be able to happen). There must be a deadline because the host team needs to have an accurate count to control the meet. Please respect that.
3. Once the athlete plans on participating in a meet, they must submit a \$50.00 check for meet fees. It is necessary to pay the fees in advance; the meet fee is due when the sign up closes. Dates are posted on the website.
4. After signing up for the meet, the coaches will put the swimmers in the events. Remember, the coach is the one who knows what the swimmers can do. Parents do not have an input on the events chosen to swim. This is between the coach and the swimmer.
5. If necessary, the family should get hotel reservations at the team hotel. The head coach reserves blocks of rooms and families need to reserve their own rooms. The team hotel can be found on the website.
6. The week before the meet, an email will be sent with meet information. Included in this is the warm up time, meet start, t-shirts for the meet and more. Families are responsible for this information and must have swimmers at the pool *early* for warm ups. Warm up times are given for swimmers to be ready to get in the water at that time.
7. If the family decides they will not attend the meet and have already paid for the meet, their money will not be refunded. H2A pays the host team with the meet dues and will not get the money back. Please do not expect to be refunded.

At the Meet

1. Swimmers should be prepared during the weekend of the meet. This includes getting an appropriate amount of sleep and nutrition.
2. Swimmers should have snacks and water at the meet. Candy is not an appropriate nutrition choice. Fruit, protein bars, peanut butter, bagels, pretzels are some choices. Swimmers should refuel frequently, but not over-do it.
3. Swimmers should be early to the meet for warm ups. It is not appropriate for swimmers to arrive at the start of warm ups. They should be prepared and ready to get in at the start of warm ups.
4. Swimmers should wear a team cap and team suit. Caps can be bought (silicon or latex) from the team; coaches will always have extras. The team suit should be bought through Augusta Swim Supply, the team supplier.
5. Swimmers should be with their team members during the meet, not wandering.
6. All swimmers need to talk to their coach before and after they swim.
7. Swimmers may get disqualified. This is a learning process and the swimmer will learn from the disqualification. Parents should not question officials or coaches. Coaches and swimmers will work on this together.

Meet Behavior

1. Swimmers should be positive at the meet.
2. Swimmers should talk to their coach throughout the meet.
3. Parents are not there to coach their child. Parents should *not* give technique or race instruction to their child. This will only confuse the swimmer. Parents are there for support.
4. Parents should have appropriate behavior in the stands. This includes discussion of time standards with other parents. This is a team sport and swimmers and parents need to remember that.
5. Parents should not advise a swimmer or groups of swimmer to get in the water. Coaches are responsible and capable of doing this.

Time Standards

1. Every age group has time standards. Time standards are there for swimmers to reach goals. Parents and swimmers should be aware of these standards, but they should not make these the only focus for swims.
2. Time standards determine different meets swimmers can attend, all the way up to Olympic Trials.

Non-profit = Volunteering

A non-profit organization is successful only because of volunteers. It is the responsibility of every team member to volunteer throughout the season.

How to volunteer

1. The H2A website has ways to sign up to help with different events. Look at the emails that are sent out and see what is needed for volunteering.

2. Volunteering may be as small as bringing granola bars for the concession stand or as big as working the computer at a meet.
3. It is absolutely necessary for people to volunteer at every stage. Even though your child may be young and not fully committed, he or she is still on the team and your help is still needed.
4. Board members cannot and should not be the only volunteers.
5. Sign up for a committee during registration. See the registration packet for further information on volunteering.
6. H2A is a not-for-profit organization and depends upon our volunteers! Fundraising is one of the most important aspects of our organization.

Communication

The coaches and board members work very hard to give information to the families as quick and easy as possible. It is the member's responsibility to read the information. Please always ask questions. Open communication is the best.

Pool Communication

1. Every family has a folder on the pool deck. Please make sure to check the folder every time you are on deck. There also is a folder for each coach and one for "Payments." Please leave your monthly dues in the folder. The treasurer will collect payments.
2. Team bulletin boards are located outside the pool on the fence. Schedules, reminders and team events are posted here.

Weekly Emails

1. At the beginning of the week, the head coach will send out an email with the weekly announcements. This is done with a lot of time and thought so the families are aware of upcoming events and changes. Please read this and do not skip over it. Every swimmer needs to know the information.
2. The weekly announcement will include any practice changes. Practice changes can occur because of swim meets, school schedules, pool issues and more. When changes are made, information is sent out in advance for families to plan accordingly.
3. **Read the emails.** This is the best and only way to get in touch with everyone at one time. If you do not read the information, the coaches cannot be responsible for what you miss.

Team Website

1. Tons of information is on the team website and kept up-to-date by coaches and board members. Please use this great resource.
2. Families sign up for events on the website.
3. Take the time to look at the website so you are aware of what is available. If help is needed, please ask.

Concerns through the Chain of Command

1. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's primary coach first. If you do not get what you are looking for, go to the head coach. If you still do not feel satisfied, go to a board member.

2. It is not appropriate to gossip on the pool deck or with other families about coaches, the board or the team in general. Concerns should be addressed.
3. Hilton Head Aquatics is a great program with a lot of positive energy. The coaches and board members do a lot to make everything functional and exciting for the swimmers. Everything that we do is for the swimmers. Always be sure to ask and speak directly to your child's coach for any questions. It is not appropriate to discuss matters with another coach or parent, keeping your child's primary coach in the dark.

** Occasionally you may get an article in the weekly announcements from the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA). Below is an appropriate article.

News For SWIM PARENTS

Published by The American Swimming Coaches Association
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What the Coach Looks For In a Swim Performance

There are many things a coach is looking for in a swim performance. In general, a coach is looking for these four things: proper attitude, a best time, proper technique, and winning. Few swimmers achieve all four aspects in a single race. When they do, that is a job well done -- but it is not a "great job" or an "unbelievable job" or a "fantastic job." To use those terms can make a performance greater than it really was and therefore make it more difficult to repeat. We use "mild praise" because we know, and we want everyone else to think and to feel, that there is always room for more improvement. Doing three of the aspects, or two, or even one is cause for some level of praise.

Proper attitude: Coaches look for the "I want to be coached" attitude. Coaches look for swimmers ready to express themselves about their swim in analytical fashion and then be eager to listen to advice. Coaches look for athletes to say, "I'll try to do better next time." Sometimes a performance is less than what the athlete was hoping for and the emotional response can be a factor that inhibits looking at the swim objectively and analytically. In such cases the coach may ask the swimmer to warm down for an extended time or to simply take some quiet time before looking at the race. When this happens we look for the athlete resolve to make appropriate changes that will lead to a better performance next time.

A Best Time: A best time usually represents an improvement in endurance, strength, and technique. It measures the swimmer first against themselves and second against the rest of the world. Intermediate through more advanced swimmers above the age of 11 should strive to know their best times.

Proper Technique: How was the start, the strokes, the turns, the pace, the race strategy?

Winning: Winning means racing with someone and finishing ahead. In some cases that means winning the event. However, in every heat there are several races -- there is a race for 1st, there may be a race for 3rd, there may be a race for 5th or even for seventh. Coaches look for swimmers to be in a race, whether it is for 1st or 7th, and to try their best to "win."

The coach expects to speak with each swimmer before and after each swim. Parents, please be sure to direct your child to the coach before the event. When you see your child after the event ask them if they have spoken with the coach about their race and if not, direct them to the coach as soon as possible. The coach should be the last person to talk to the swimmer before the event and the first to talk to the swimmer after the event.

Before the swim the coach will talk to swimmers about technique, pacing, race strategy, and best times. Younger aged swimmers and less experienced swimmers will need direct reminders from the coach but as they age and grow in experience the coach will expect more information coming from the swimmer. Ideally, the coach would like to have the swimmer tell the coach what they plan on doing in their event as a quiz to see how well prepared the swimmer is. After the event the coach will ask them how they viewed their swim, listen to their responses, and then review the swim as the coach saw it.

In this process it is important that parents play the role of emotional support -- give warm towels, and hugs, a "good luck, darling" to your swimmer and ask them to check in with the coach before and after their swim. When the swimmer returns from their post race discussion with the coach it's appropriate to ask them how they thought their swim was as well as to ask what the coach thought of the swim. Please leave the race strategies, breathing patterns, stroke, start and turn reminders, time analysis and race analysis to the coach. Any questions or comments parents have for the coach should be addressed directly with the coach at an appropriate time when the coach is not watching other swimmers.