



## **New Fairfield Aquaflyers Handbook**

Welcome to the Team!

The goal of the New Fairfield Aquaflyers swim team is to provide children between the ages of 5 and 18 with a fun, challenging, and competitive team experience. They will learn better stroke techniques, develop strength and become great sportsmen, all leading to a successful season. New Fairfield Aquaflyers become disciplined, self-confident and have a high level of self-esteem.

Our program would not be able to operate and remain successful without help from our dedicated parents. This handbook will help you and your child understand the Aquaflyers' program and what to expect throughout the season.

The coaches, board members, and parents are committed to providing quality instruction as well as individual and team growth where fun, personal achievement, and good sportsmanship are our ultimate goal.

Please give us your suggestions and ideas. If you have questions or concerns not addressed in this handbook, please feel free to contact the board at [nfaf.president@gmail.com](mailto:nfaf.president@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

New Fairfield Aquaflyers Board of Directors

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Aquaflayers provides a competitive swim team to athletes in the greater New Fairfield area. Our coaches embrace all levels of swimmers providing each individual with the best possible environment and resources that allow them to see goals and progress from novice to nationals and beyond. We are committed to helping our athletes develop the character, self- discipline and skills to succeed not only in swimming but also academically and in life.

The Aquaflayers emphasize the seven pillar principles of respect:

**Responsibility**

**Excellence**

**Sportsmanship**

**Participation**

**Encouragement**

**Competitive Spirit**

**Team Unity**

### Team Goals

- Provide professional instruction in all the skills and techniques associated with competitive swimming
- Athletes will be taught personal responsibility, accountability and respect through positive reinforcement and recognition of the team member's pursuit towards accomplishing defined goals
- Through training and positive practice habits, committed to excellence in competition, both individually and as a team
- Promote sportsmanship, team unity and competitive spirit among teammate and with other teams
- Encourage and require family participation. Only through cooperative agreement and conjoined efforts can a program and its athletes fulfill their goals and mission.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook has been developed to help swimmers and parents understand their responsibilities to the team.

**PLEASE REVIEW ALL MATERIAL CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT AS IT PROVIDES VALUABLE INFORMATION AND ANSWERS MOST QUESTIONS.** We have also included information regarding the USA Swimming Program. Important phone numbers and email addresses are listed at the end of the handbook to assist you if you should have any questions. The New Fairfield Aquaflyers team, and all of our competitive swimmers, are members of the USA Swimming Program.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF THE TEAM**

The New Fairfield Aquaflyers swim team is composed of boys and girls ages 5 to 18 years. The program is designed so that every swimmer has the opportunity to participate in competition. Our recreational swimmers participate in in-house (intramural) “mini-meets” throughout the season and our competitive swimmers compete against other swim teams throughout Connecticut as part of USA Swimming.

## **SEASONS**

New Fairfield Aquaflyers (NFAF) is a part of CT Swimming and USA Swimming. There are 2 seasons: Short Course from September to mid-March and Long Course from April to end of July. Swimmers are encouraged to participate in both seasons, but it is not a requirement.

## **REGISTRATION**

Registration takes place through Team Unify.

Competitive swimmers will be registered with USA Swimming. All the information needed to do this is part of our regular registration form. The USA Swimming registration fee is included in the Aquaflyers' swim team fee. We need each swimmer's FULL name, date of birth, and citizenship. We will need a copy of your child's birth certificate if you are new to the team or moving up to a competitive team from the Minnows.

## THE LINGO of SWIM

Clinic – is an excellent opportunity for swimmers to build skills and focus on particular areas of skill development. When offered, they are usually before the beginning of short course and long course. There is limited availability so register early

DQ – means that a swimmer was disqualified in a meet and that his/her time will not count or be recorded. Swimmers should talk to their coaches about why they were "DQed". As a parent this is not catastrophic though your swimmer may feel it is.

Dryland – is the time in practice for stretching and warm up of muscles prior to swimming – swimmers should be at practice in time for dryland training, as determined by the coach.

IM – Individual Medley and is composed of the 4 recognized strokes of swim – Freestyle, Breast, Back and Butterfly (sometimes called Fly)

Long Course – season runs from approximately April to the beginning of Aug. Long course is based on the length of the pool the swimmer competes in (50 meters) not the length of time of the season.

Scratch – means you registered for a swim meet but are not attending. Scratches create administrative and timing problems. The number of timers a team must provide is determined by the number of entries. When swimmers scratch it skews this number, reflects badly on the team, is unfair to all parents who are attending, adds expense and paperwork. Avoid scratching.

Short Course – the season runs from approximately late September to the beginning of March. Short course is based on the length of the pool the swimmer competes in (25 meters) not the length of time of the season.

TeamSnap – the website where you sign your swimmer up for meets, read schedule changes and updates, see rosters, etc. Make sure you look around teamsnap as this resource is invaluable. [www.teamsnap.com](http://www.teamsnap.com)

Warm Ups – at a meet there is a time before the meet when all swimmers are expected to warm up in the water. Check in time to a meet is usually well before this time.

## **TRYOUTS AND THE TEAM ASSIGNMENT PROCESS**

Group selection is determined by the coaching staff at the beginning of the season and is based on the

following criteria: Age, ability, and attitude, not necessarily in that order. Our team size is limited. Due to space constrictions, some swimmers are placed on a waiting list based on the above criteria and/or may tryout again for the long course in April or the short course in September. When possible, "Learn to Swim" program will be offered to children trying out who are not yet ready to join a regular practice team.

Tryouts for Short Course are held in late August / early September. Tryouts for Long Course are held in late March / early April.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Coaches:** The coaches are responsible for all decisions involving swimming activities. This includes practices and meets as well as the development of each individual swimmer. Our coaching staff is made up of one head coach, senior coaches, assistant coaches, and junior coaches. The head coach is responsible for organizing the overall practice schedule, for managing all other coaches and for finalizing the team's entries in competitive meets. All coaches are responsible for their assigned groups' practices and event assignment for each swimmer during meets. All coaches have the authority to maintain the discipline necessary to conduct the team in as safe an environment as possible.

**Board of Directors:** The board is composed of elected volunteer parents and adults. The board is responsible for conducting the business of the team. Responsibilities include securing and dispersing funds for coaches and team equipment, communications, fundraisers, and organization of non-swim related Aquaflyers activities and needs. Your assistance and participation in the board activities is welcome and appreciated.

### Parents:

- 1) REGISTER SWIMMER ON TEAMUNIFY - Parents must register each of their swimmers through TeamUnify (our team management system). This system is also used to sign swimmers up for swim meets and for all team communications. Send a note to [nfaf.president@gmail.com](mailto:nfaf.president@gmail.com) if you have questions.
- 2) ATTEND MANDATORY PARENT MEETING - Parents are responsible for ensuring the discipline of all their children while at meets and practices for the safety of all. Parents are expected to be positive role models for their children both at practice and during meets. There is a mandatory parent meeting at the beginning of each season to update and review organization expectations. Even if you are a "seasoned parent" you need to attend the parent meeting, for changes and updates.
- 3) TIME AT MEETS – Every family needs to participate and help with timing. A meet cannot run without timers. In order to be fair to all families everyone needs to take turns timing. This involves standing at the end of the pool with another parent with a stopwatch, clip board, and/or a plunger and recording a “manual” time for swimmers as they touch the pool wall. All timers are given instructions at the beginning of the meets (mini-meets are an excellent way to gain experience in timing). If you are unable to time, you must reach out to the timing coordinator. If your child is swimming in a distance event, you are responsible for timing that event. If you are not there to time that event, your child may be disqualified from that event. Parents need to declare what days their swimmer can attend the swim meet. Coaches will select swimmer events.
- 4) YOUR SWIMMER - Parents are responsible for ensuring the discipline of all their children while at meets and practices for the safety of all. Parents are expected to be positive role models for their children both at practice and during meets.

### General Things to Remember

1. Please **be on time** to pick up your swimmers. Coaches are not responsible for waiting with swimmers.
2. Please **do not coach your children during practice or meets**. Coaching is the coach's job and if parents get involved the result is a confused swimmer.

3. Swimmers **may not enter the pool or the pool area without a coach** present and without the coach's approval. This is a safety rule.
4. All swimmers are expected to be on the pool deck and ready to work 5 minutes prior to practice start time.
5. **Parents and siblings are not allowed on the pool deck during practice.**
6. **Street shoes are never allowed on the pool deck.**
7. **Animals are not permitted on the pool deck or viewing area.**
8. **Food is not permitted on the pool deck or viewing area.**
9. **Keep the doors (going into the viewing area) closed at all times** (keeping heat in pool area – you may feel hot but opening the doors drops cold air onto your son or daughter).
10. **Swimmers must stay on the bench until their practice session begins.**



## Volunteer Opportunities:

- ☐ **Equipment and team uniforms** - Team swimsuits, sweats and required equipment will be sold at the beginning of the season. This event is coordinated by the board.
- ☐ One **overnight meet** during the short course season where all competitive swim teams participate. A volunteer is needed to help coordinate overnight and team dinner or social gathering.
- ☐ **End of the season banquet**
- ☐ **End of season picnic**
- ☐ **Ribbons writers** for intramural meets (mini-meets). All swimmers receive ribbons when they participate in mini-meets. We need volunteers to help to prepare the ribbons (showing swimmer's name, event, and time) and hand them out to our swimmers.
- ☐ **Connecticut Swim Officials.** For the New Fairfield Aquaflyers to secure spots at USA Swimming meets, we look for 2 – 3 adults to become certified Connecticut Swim Officials. This is a serious and important role for the competitive swimming community and will require official training and a long - term commitment.
- ☐ **Fundraising** – assist with annual Swimathon, silent auction/raffles at the banquet and other fundraising activities.
- ☐ **Article writing** - After a meet, a volunteer(s) is needed to draft articles for the local newspapers.
- ☐ **Other** - Photography, equipment swaps, and timer coordinators

**Swimmers:**

All members of the team have an **obligation to each other**. You will be asked to attend a specific number of practices and meets. At meets, a swimmer may be asked to swim a stroke he or she doesn't particularly like, but it is all in the best interest of the team and the swimmer's personal development. Swimmers are expected to conduct themselves respectfully to all. Swimmers should encourage other members of their team when not swimming in an event themselves.

**Be an advocate for yourself.** Talk to your coach if there is something you need help with.

**Know and understand the seven pillars of respect:**

**Responsibility** – to show up on time and prepared with all equipment, be ready for practice, and be ready to listen, to focus and to work

**Excellence** – be ready to do your best

**Sportsmanship** – encourage your teammates and players from other teams, listen to feedback from coaches in a positive way

**Participation** - attend meets and practices

**Encouragement** – provide encouragement to your teammates

**Competitive Spirit** – understand that part of competing is mindset - push yourself to your limit

**Team Unity** – support your teammates

## PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Practice schedules are set by the coaches. These schedules are based on New Fairfield school closures and high school swim meets. All regular practices will be held at the New Fairfield High School Pool. During holidays, it will be at the discretion of the coaching staff to schedule practices for some of the competitive teams at an area pool. It is expected that all swimmers arrive no more than 10 minutes before their scheduled practice time, report on deck and sit quietly on the bench while waiting for practice to begin.

### ***Swimmer's Practice Checklist and Equipment Requirements***

- Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Swim cap (if required by coach)
- Flip flops / slip-ons for pool deck
- Towel
- Bottle of water (reminder no glass on pool deck)
- Fins (all competitive swimmers)
- Paddles (Sharks and Barracudas)
- Pull buoy (Sharks and Barracudas)
- Mesh bag (Sharks and Barracudas)

### **Cancellation of Practice / Holiday Schedule:**

**Practice is canceled when New Fairfield schools are closed due to inclement weather** . As soon as schools shut down, our practices are canceled! An e-mail and text message announcement will be sent out when practice is canceled. Practices may be held on a limited basis during school vacations and holidays (you will be notified as decisions are made). Please use common sense when deciding whether or not to come to practice in adverse weather conditions.

**During some thunder and lightning storms, the pool closes** (even though the High School remains open). Due to the unpredictability of these types of storms, it is difficult to get the word to parents when the pool has closed prior to practices. An email and/or text message will be sent as soon as possible for cancellations.

**Please recognize** - We share the pool with the New Fairfield Dive Team and the New Fairfield High School Swim team. When their meets are "home" it may impact our practice schedule. When this happens, you will be notified via email. You should expect some practice cancellations during the season. The coaches may schedule make-up sessions at the end of the season for any practice teams uniquely impacted. We strongly recommend that parents of younger swimmers walk them into the building for practice to ensure that no changes have been made to the practice schedule. None of us want a young swimmer to be left at the high school unattended because practice has been canceled and the parents were not aware.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

With such a large group of swimmers, very strong discipline standards will be enforced. For safety reasons, **improper conduct will not be tolerated at any time**. This includes practices, meets, and while a swimmer is in any part of the facility including locker rooms, cafeteria, the pool deck, halls, EVERYWHERE. Our practice and meet schedules do not allow for “horsing around” or improper behavior. Disciplinary action will be taken to correct disruptive behavior. Depending upon the seriousness, violations may result in:

1. Sitting the swimmer on deck for a time-out
2. Calling / talking to a parent
3. Suspending a swimmer from practice or use of locker room
4. Scratching a swimmer from a competition
5. Temporary or permanent suspension from the team.

Remember – Inappropriate behavior by one or more team members reflects/represents the entire team's image to others.

**The locker room is not a playground.** Locker rooms are to be used for changing before and after meets and practices. The coaches cannot be expected to police the locker rooms. Remind swimmers that the use of this facility is a privilege and not a right. Practice cleanliness in the locker room – if you wouldn't do it at home – don't do it in the locker room. **All personal belongings must be picked up after each practice. Any belongings left at the end of the day are subject to removal and disposal by building maintenance.**

- The following rules are set forth by the coaches and parents board and must be followed by all swimmers:
- Participants are expected to adhere to all rules posted in the New Fairfield High School facility and in away competition venues.
- Swimmers may not enter the pool deck until a coach has arrived.
- No entering the pool or swimming at any time unless authorized by a coach. Participants must pass an ability test to be a member of the team.
- Coaches, assistant coaches and deck assistants are in charge; defiant actions toward these people
- will result in disciplinary action.
- No horseplay, spitting, splashing, shouting, or running allowed at any time.
- Swimmers are expected to be at practice 10 minutes before and leave the facility no more than 15 minutes after scheduled practice time.
- Unsportsmanlike or inappropriate behavior will be grounds for disciplinary action, such as removal from meets or practices at the discretion of the coaches.
- Swimmers must stay with coaches as an organized group at all meets.
- Swimmers are expected to be in complete uniforms at meets – NFAF swim caps and swim gear. Save your fashion statements and fun gear for practice and private use.
- No swimmers are to be waiting outside in the hallways, in the spectator's area, in

the locker rooms or in the gym. Swimmers should arrive 10 minutes before practice and sit quietly on the bench until their practice begins.

- Swimmers must sign up for meets in advance and are expected to participate.
- Swimmers who sign up for a meet and unexpectedly cannot participate, must inform their coach at practice or by phone no later than the Wednesday prior to the meet. The team pays an entry fee for every event that a swimmer is signed up for.

## **SWIM WEAR AND EQUIPMENT**

All competitive swimmers are required to wear a New Fairfield Aquaflyers team swim suit with our logo and swim cap with our logo to all competitions available at: METRO SWIM

Please keep in mind that the board member in charge of swim gear has no control over inventory, pricing, stock issues or delivery times and they are volunteers. As a board we do our best to locate and provide a vendor that will provide quality customer service.

**All swimmers must wear competitive-style swim suits of their choice to all practices** (not their team suits). These “practice” suits are available from Metro Swim or from local merchants such as Gulbenkian Swim, Dick Sporting Goods, or from a variety of on-line vendors including Swim Outlet and Swimmer's Choice.

**All swimmers are required to wear goggles** (an extra pair to leave in the swimmer's bag is recommended) for practices as well as all meets.

Some swimmers may be required to wear swim caps at practices (at the discretion of their coach). Any latex or silicone swim cap is acceptable at practices.

**Put your child's name and your cell phone number on all belongings.**

## MEETS

Parents have a major responsibility helping to run in-house mini-meets and assisting where necessary at USA Swimming meets. Specific needs are addressed below.

### *Intramural (In House “Mini Meets”):*

Timers are needed for each of the six lanes. For new families, this is a good way to get used to timing at an official meet. If your child is swimming, you will be assigned a lane and time.

### *USA Swimming (Away Meets):*

Timers - If your child is swimming, chances are you will be assigned a lane and time on more than one occasion. If you cannot time, you must identify another adult to take your time slot. If your child is swimming a 400 meter event, you are required to time that event or your child may be disqualified from the event.

Swimmer Results: Each swimmer's results for any USA Swimming meet can be found at Connecticut Swimming website (<http://www.ctswim.org>). Click on the Database Query link on the left side of the home page. Open the “Query What” box, and select Swimmer – Best Times. Enter the first few letters of your swimmer's last name and click Search. Follow the directions from there to keep track of your swimmer's progress.

All swimmers are expected to remain with the team in the designated area while they are at the swim meet. It is the swimmer's responsibility to check the posted schedule for their assigned event, and to be available at least one event prior to get their lane assignment and heat number. After swimming an event, swimmers are to see the coach before returning to the team area. If a swimmer must leave the deck during the meet, they must notify one of the coaches.

### *Competition Schedule:*

The Short Course meet schedule generally begins in late September and runs through March. All swimmers on competitive teams will be notified of meets and asked to commit in advance to the meets in which they can compete. We try to attend at least one overnight meet per season. Following the last meet, we begin the Championships schedule. All competitive swimmers can swim at the Regional Championships in their basic events (12 & Under – 50 yards in each stroke; 13 & Over – 100 yards in each stroke). Beyond the basics, a swimmer must have achieved a qualifying time earlier in the season to swim an event. For those swimmers who qualify, Senior Championships are held in early March and Age Group Championships are held in mid-March.

### *Tips for Swim Meets:*

Swimmers are expected to report to an Aquaflyers' coach 15 minutes before scheduled warm-ups. If you are unexpectedly detained and think you will be late arriving, get word to the designated timing parent to let the coach at the meet know you are on your way. An e-mail is sent out before each meet with the name and phone number of the

designated parent who will be on duty for each swimming session at the meets.

*General Meet Information:*

Swim meets are organized into sessions, which may last up to 4 hours each. The length of each session is dependent on a number of factors – the number of swimmers, the number of heats, possible technical or equipment difficulties. Coaches do not have any control over the length or delays in the meets. There are often, but not always, two sessions (morning and afternoon) on Saturday and Sunday (sometimes Friday evening). Sessions are usually organized by gender and age groups. So, one session may have 11-12 boys and girls together or the boys in one session and the girls in another. Each meet is done differently and you should look at the meet and session information carefully to know when your child will be swimming. Also recognize some meets specifically only swim certain strokes. If you are a family with multiple swimmers, you may be in for a long day if you have swimmers in more than one session a day. Many families in this situation find it beneficial to carpool with other families.

Warm ups are usually 60 minutes prior to the session start and are listed in the meet information. Your child should arrive at the pool 15 minutes prior to warm ups, as the coach will need this time to hand in any final scratches to the officials. Upon arrival at the meet venue, parents **MUST** check in with the designated timing parent. There is usually a program or “heat sheet” available for purchase (\$3-\$10) at the meet concession stand. Heat sheets are not printed until all scratches are handed in so an up to date heat sheet can be generated. Heat sheets provide a list of the events and swimmers in each event for the spectators. The swimmers in each event are listed fastest to slowest with the slowest swimmers swimming first. If a child does not yet have an official time for an event they may be listed as NT (Not Time) or the coach may have estimated a time for them. Keep in mind that these programs are usually printed before final scratches, so your child may swim in an earlier heat than you imagine. Most facilities have a scoreboard to see the swimmer’s time after each race. The times are also posted at the venue and are available within several days on the CT Swimming website (<http://www.ctswim.org>) All meets have a refreshment concession stand, sometimes run by the facility but more often as a fundraiser for the host team. The pricing and variety of items will vary. Swimsuit vendors may also be present with a variety of goggles, suits, T-shirts and other swim items available. At most meets, we are required to provide timers, in a number proportionate to our number of entries. **All parents are expected to help with the team timing requirement** and should look for information on timing assistance/assignments for each meet in an e-mail. There will be a designated timing parent assigned to coordinate timers at each session.

**Generally, parents are not allowed AND SHOULD NOT go onto the pool deck unless you are timing.** Be prepared – unauthorized parents on the pool deck may be subject to removal by officials. Swimmers should always check with a coach before leaving the pool deck.

You may take your swimmer home if you choose when they are finished with their events but the team encourages swimmers to stay to cheer on his/her teammates.



## What to Bring to a Meet Checklist

- Aquaflyers **team racing suit**
- **Aquaflyers swim cap** - MANDATORY. (suggested to bring a spare – coaches sometimes have extras for sale) **NO INDIVIDUAL SWIM CAPS AT MEETS**
- **2 – 3 towels / swimmer**
- **Flip flops** / slip-on sandals
- **Warm, dry clothes to wear home**
- **2 pair goggles** (one as back-up)
- **Folding chair** (Stadium style cloth chairs) – most venues have deck space around the pool for swimmers to set up chairs. If you don't bring your own chair, you'll end up sitting on the pool deck and anything you bring will get wet. One chair/swimmer. It is also suggested that parents bring chairs for themselves should there not be enough room in the bleachers.
- **Something non-electronic to do or read.** There can be a lot of “down time” during a swim meet. Cards and fun multiplayer games are encouraged. There should be no electronics at swim meets. The coaches want to remind the swimmers that the use of electronic devices (cellphones, DS, iPads, etc) at swim meets is something our team does not endorse. The swimmers should be paying attention to (and cheering on) their teammates and not their devices.
- **Healthy snacks, drinks, and water.** There is usually a snack bar at each meet venue but if there isn't or if you don't bring money, you'll want your own snacks.
- Parents should also bring flip-flops for timing (each pool has its own footwear rules), folding chairs for themselves in case there is not enough room on the bleachers or you want to take a break from the pool bleachers, snacks, and something to do for themselves and non-swimming children.

USA Swim Meets are rarely canceled due to inclement weather. In the unlikely event that a meet is canceled or being changed, parents will receive an email or text message as soon as possible.

## HEALTH AND DIET:

A swimmer's health should improve during the season if he/she remembers to eat plenty of good food, get lots of rest, and dress warmly after practice. Well-balanced meals consisting of ample supplies of proteins, carbohydrates and fats are essential. Empty calories such as soda, cookies, candy, and chips are of no nutritional value and should be avoided. They provide no consistent energy and make it extremely difficult for the swimmer's body to provide and regulate energy output and nutrition. Instead eat fruit and vegetables for snacks. Drink lots of water. Sleep needs will vary with the individual, it is however, very important to get plenty of rest. During the winter, swimmers should dress warmly enough to avoid chills. HATS, COATS AND GLOVES are a good idea to keep in body heat. Remember that swimmers will be damp after practice and that the High School parking lot can make for a chilling walk after practice. Button up and wear that hat!!

### Top Foods for Swimmers:

Fruits	Blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, oranges, mangeds, bananas, cranberries
Vegetables	Broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, avocado, spinach, mixed greens, potatoes
Nuts	Almonds
Grains	Oatmeal, granola, whole grain bread, whole grain pasta
Fats	Olive oil, avocado
Proteins	Black beans, eggs, beef, salmon, shrimp, chicken
Dairy	Yogurt, milk

### Key Websites:

[New Fairfield Aquaflyers](#)

[CT Swimming](#)

[USA Swimming](#)

