

Columbus Aquatic Club

Team Handbook

This handbook is designed to provide general information about our program and team policies. All parents should review this handbook prior to the start of each season.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Columbus Aquatic Club was founded to promote the sport of competitive swimming on and around Columbus, Georgia. We believe that competitive swimming provides not just a lifelong fitness activity, but also teaches valuable life skills, such as discipline, determination, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, and sportsmanship. We seek to promote these skills and foster lifelong fitness through competitive swimming activities in the greater Columbus, Georgia area. The Columbus Aquatic Club is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants and maintains protection policies and guidelines to protect our swimmers.

VISION

We will create a culture of EXCELLENCE within our athletes, families, coaches and team by instilling values of Self-Discipline, Work Ethic, Respect, Responsibility and Commitment to a Goal. We will distinguish ourselves as a team through our professional appearance (both athletes and staff), continual team growth, and our athletic performance and achievements.

ABOUT THE TEAM

We are a year-round USA Swimming team that competes in both the short course and long course seasons. The short course season starts with training in August. Throughout the course of the season, we compete in a variety of different meets: Dual Meets, Mini Meets, Invitational meets, USA Championship Meets, Qualifying Meets and National Meets.

We offer a Masters Program geared towards adults looking to better their swimming skills and fitness levels for Triathlons, Masters Swimming, or anyone just looking to be a part of a swimming team and train for their own health and well-being.

We offer a learn-to-swim competitive program in the summer called TigerSharks. This program is geared towards swimmers of any age who are new to competitive swimming.

The year is broken up into two seasons and meets are offered respectively each season:

Short Course Season: Late August / September through March

Long Course Season: April through August

COACHES

Coaches are tasked with developing and implementing training programs for our swimmers and handling all meet entries. All Coaches are required to be USA Swimming certified and up-to-date on all required training, certifications and background checks. For questions relating to swim performance, practice concerns, or meet entries, parents may email the coach. Coaches are not available for questions during practice or meet times, however they are happy to schedule a time to speak with you. Please email your swimmer's coach to coordinate a time to discuss any concerns.

Head Coach: Lori Riegel (Seniors, Masters, Cat 1) coach_Lori@swimhurricanes.com

Kayla Mumpower (Cat 3, Cat 5) coach_kayla@swimhurricanes.com

Melissa Johnson (Cat 2, Cat 4) coach_melissa@swimhurricanes.com

Aimee Bradbury-Johnson (Cat 1 and Pre-Comp) coach_aimee@swimhurricanes.com

Austin Murray (Floating) coach_austin@swimhurricanes.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is responsible for handling all administrative functions of the team to further our club's mission. These volunteers are required to be registered through USA Swimming and complete the required background checks and Athlete Protection Training and commit to volunteer for one year. Board members are responsible for hiring coachings, managing the team finances and relationships. They also handle all inquiries regarding membership, dues, billing, registrations, and all general team or practice questions.

The Board hosts one General Member meeting annually in the fall and quarterly Board Meetings. All parents are encouraged to attend and participate. Parents of team members are voting members of the club and receive one vote per family.

Current Board of Directors:

President: Jennifer Herbek jennifer_Herbek@swimhurricanes.com

Vice President: Jennifer Ladson jennifer_ladson@swimhurricanes.com

Treasurer: Danielle Miller Danielle_miller@swimhurricanes.com

Secretary: Shannon Nimmons *pending email address

Program Director: Kristin Turner Kristin_turner@swimhurricanes.com

Membership Director: Andria Bailon andria_bailon@swimhurricanes.com

VOLUNTEERING

Parent volunteers are critical to an efficient, well-run swim team and particularly for our meets. We need the assistance of every swim family! Volunteer sign-ups are completed and hours are tracked through the TeamUnify website. All opportunities are first-come, first-served basis, so please commit early. Volunteers are needed throughout the year to assist with team events,

meets and fundraising. Families should plan to volunteer at least one shirt during each hosted meet that your swimmer participates in.

FUNDRAISING

While a portion of each swimmer's registration fee and monthly fee is earmarked for team activities, equipment and maintenance, the team may also be invited to participate in other fundraisers. These events will be voluntary and are intended to be simple and fun ways to support the program and build team camaraderie.

COMMUNICATION

- Website: <https://www.teamunify.com/team/gacac/page/home>
Please check our Team Unify website frequently! This is the best source for accurate and updated information regarding meets, account balances, invoices, payments, meet results, record breakers, newsletters, etc.
- E-mail and SMS: Emails will be sent out through our Team Unify software. This is our primary means of communication. Text updates will also be used to convey time-sensitive information. It is imperative that you are receiving these communications. Please ensure your email and SMS info is accurate on your account.
- Facebook: Columbus Aquatic Club <https://www.facebook.com/swimHURR/>
- Instagram: Swim Hurricanes <https://www.instagram.com/swimhurricanes/?hl=en>
- OnDeck App: <https://www.teamunify.com/swim-team-management-software/swim-app/>
Many of the TeamUnify website functions are available through the ON DECK app, such as quick account updates and meet entries. Billing and Registration related tasks are only available via the website.
- Parent Meetings: Will be held periodically throughout the year. These meetings provide an opportunity to get face-to-face time with the coaches, get the latest info on team activities and ask questions.
- Newsletters: The Columbus Aquatic Club emails a monthly newsletter during the season to keep the team updated on meet entries, registration deadlines, team activities and other items that require attention. Newsletters will be distributed via email and available on the website.
- Safety: Coaches are not allowed to accept "friend" or "follow" requests from minor athletes. Coaches and Swimmers should include a Parent on any texts or chats. Group chats between a coach and swimmers should include at least one other adult. Parents are encouraged to review our social media policy and USA Safe Sport for more details.

TRAVEL

There will be meets scheduled throughout the course of the year at various locations. Occasionally, some will involve significant travel. Occasionally, in an effort to keep these meets as “team” oriented as possible, we will book a block of rooms and/or a bus for swimmers attending the travel meet. These travel meets are chaperoned by coaches and parent volunteers, and can be great fun for our older swimmers, as well as a good value due to the shared cost of rooms and transportation. We will communicate these opportunities well in advance and host parent meetings to share relevant details as the specific travel meets approach.

PROGRAM FEES

Swimmers may join the Columbus Aquatic Club at any time of the year. Registration can only be done after your child has been evaluated by the coach. Evaluations are done by appointment only. (See “Join Us” Tab on our website for evaluation information.)

Annual Team Registration is \$160 for Cat 1-Seniors, \$130 for our Pre-Competition Group and \$50 for Masters Swimmers. This covers your swimmer's yearly team admin costs, a team swim cap, T-shirt, and team banquet fee. For Returning Cat 1-Seniors, it also includes the USA Swimming Membership renewal (\$89). First time swimmers will be required to obtain their USA Swimming *Premium Athlete* membership (\$89) online through a team-specific link from USA Swimming. A discount code is included in registration to offset this expense for first time USA Swimming Members. The link for the USA Swimming Membership will be sent after Team Registration is complete. Pre-Competition Group Swimmers may utilize the USA Swimming *Flex Athlete* membership (\$30). They will be upgraded to the *Premium* category when they move up to the Competitive training groups.

Member Dues are calculated on an annual basis for the swim year that begins in August and ends in July. They are billed in 9 installments from September to May for year-round swimmers. Swimmers joining after September will be billed on a monthly basis for the duration of the year. Swimmers receive a 5% discount for paying the annual dues in full on October 1st.

Roster Group	Monthly	Annually
Pre Competition	\$94	\$804
Category 1	\$94	\$804
Category 2	\$108	\$923
Category 3	\$129	\$1103
Category 4	\$155	\$1325
Category 5	\$176	\$1505
Seniors	\$222	\$1898
Masters	\$78	\$663

*****All dues and other fees are paid monthly, on the first of the month*****

Meet Fees are applied for each meet your swimmer attends. They will range in price from \$10-\$20 entry fee, plus an additional \$4-\$10 per event. For events away from our home location, we will apply a coaching fee of \$20 to help cover our coaches' travel expenses.

Family discounts: Monthly Membership Dues are discounted by 20% for the second swimmer, 50% for the third swimmer and the 4th swimmer is free. The highest groups are always billed as the first swimmer, followed by the next in line when determining billing. Masters Swimmers are eligible for the family discount. Discounts do not apply to the Annual Team Registration or Meet Fees.

Note: If you decide to discontinue swimming during the year, a \$50 administrative fee will be charged to return to the team. Your team registration will remain valid for the duration of the year (August - July.) Swimmers may be asked to complete an evaluation for practice group placement when returning.

***In cases of financial hardship, please contact the Head Coach, Treasurer, Business Manager or President to discuss solutions.*

BILLING INFORMATION:

Payments are made through automatic drafts via credit card or ACH on the 1st of each month. If dues aren't paid by the 15th of each month, a \$25 late fee will be applied. If you elect to do manual credit card payments, a transaction fee will apply. We are unable to accept payments by cash or check.

Requests to change your billing must be emailed to the Treasurer by the 20th of the month, otherwise the change will be implemented the following month. Dues will not be prorated. Meet fees are non-refundable after the commitment deadline.

Please note: If your account is past due, you will be suspended from club participation and will not be able to participate in practices, meets, spirit wear orders, or other club activities until your account is paid in full.

Billing and Automatic payments are managed through your TeamUnify Account. Monthly invoices will be sent by email at the end of each month and recently account activity can be found in your TeamUnify account. You can access your account at <https://www.teamunify.com/team/gacac/page/home> – sign in and choose “My Account” and then “\$My Invoice/Payment”.

To Manage Electronic Payments – Detailed instruction for the two types of e-payments are below. Credit or Debit Card transactions will incur a 3% transaction fee, ACH payments have no associated fee.

Add a Payment Method:

To automatically draft your payments for you on the first of every month from either a credit card or bank account:

- Sign in to <https://www.teamunify.com/team/gacac/page/home>
- In the side menu click **My Account**> **Account Info** > **Payment Setup** OR **My Account** > **Set Up Autopay**.
- Click **Add New Card** or **Add Bank Account**.
- Fill in the credit card or bank account details. The **Copy From Account Info** button speeds up the process.

- Use the radio buttons to indicate how your payment method should be used:
Fees Associated with Your Account: This electronic payment method will automatically be used for your monthly auto-pay. You can enable this by toggling on the button to enroll in auto-pay.

On-Demand Payments: This electronic payment method will automatically be used for on-demand payments. Accounts must have at least one On-Demand Payment Method selected.
- When finished, click **Save**.

Account On Demand (Manual) Payment

To make a payment at any time you choose via credit card:

- Sign in to <https://www.teamunify.com/team/gacac/page/home>
- Go to **My Account > Invoices & Payments**
- Click on the **Make Payment** tab.

***In cases of financial hardship, please contact the Head Coach, Treasurer, Business Manager or President to discuss solutions.*

There will occasionally be additional fees for things like socials, spirit wear and the like. If these are not billed through Team Unify, we will provide alternate payment instructions. Coaches will not be able to accept payments.

USA SWIMMING MEMBERSHIP/US MASTERS SWIMMING MEMBERSHIP (required):

As a USA Swimming club/US Masters Swimming club, all athletes, coaches, and board members are required to maintain a valid membership with the governing body.

Youth athletes must hold a valid USA Swimming membership. Memberships for returning swimmers will be automatically renewed by the team. New Swimmers must process their swimmer's USA Swimming Membership directly through the USA Swimming website via a unique team link that is provided after team registration. In addition to providing insurance coverage for our club and support of the Board and Coaches, there are other benefits to USA Swimming for athletes. USA Swimming maintains an extensive Times database, offers training advice and resources, motivational programs, and the opportunity to enter the nation's most prestigious meets.

Masters Athletes will register directly with US Masters swimming annually.

USA SWIMMING SAFE SPORT PROGRAM

USA Swimming is committed to fostering a fun, healthy, and safe environment for all of its members. For that reason, we have in place a detailed *Code of Conduct*. Safe Sport also provides policies, education, a reporting structure, and tools that are intended to serve our members as we work together to maintain this environment. For information on USA Swimming Safe Sport policies, please see: <https://www.usaswimming.org/safe-sport>

All Adult USA Swimming Members, including coaches, board volunteers, officials and athletes over the age of 18 must complete Athlete Protection Training annually. Safe Sport training courses are also available to parents and athletes at <https://university.usaswimming.org/landing>.

TRAINING GROUPS:

Coaches perform initial assessments to place swimmers in the practice group most appropriate to their swim development and conduct periodic assessments to review practice group assignments. The practice group explanations below are general guidance for parents to consider but are not an exhaustive list of all factors considered when placing swimmers.

Pre-Competition

Designed for swimmers who have completed beginning swim instruction but aren't quite ready for the full competitive swimming program. Swimmers must be able to swim 5 yards unassisted and float on their back. Swimmers must be 4 years old, happy in the water, and able to follow instructions. Swimmers will work on extending their distance and developing a proper freestyle and backstroke. Pre-Competition swimmers will hold a limited USA Swimming membership to cover them for practices, but will not compete in meets. This practice group will be limited to 4-6 swimmers to ensure individual attention.

Category 1

The focus of this group is on learning rhythmic breathing for freestyle, kick and streamline development, basic freestyle and backstroke drills, and the introduction of dives/starts in a fun environment that fosters teamwork and acquiring new skills. The Category 1 group meets three times a week for 1 hour including drylands.

Category 2

The focus of this group is consistent kicking, introduction to breaststroke and butterfly, body balance and awareness in the water, refine starts and turns, learning to read a pace clock and introduction to race strategy. The Category 2 group meets 3 days per week for 1.5 hours including dryland.

Category 3

The focus of this group is refining technique for all 4 competitive strokes, consistent kicking to include development of underwater kicks, refining starts and turns, and learning proper lane etiquette. The Category 3 group meets 4 days per week for 1.75 hours including dryland.

Category 4

The focus of this is strong kicking with an emphasis on underwater kicks, learning more advanced drills for each stroke, ability to read pace clock for longer training sets, and strong emphasis on race strategy. This group meets 5 days per week for 2 hours including dryland.

Category 5

Category 5 swimmers continue to hone their technical skills while also increasing their endurance with more intense training. This group focuses on the details, especially turns and underwater; specific race strategies and intentional goal setting. This group meets 6 days per week for approximately 2.25 hours, including dryland and 1 morning practice.

Seniors

Designed for high school-aged athletes with a strong commitment to the sport, this group focuses on excellent kicking, especially turns & underwaters; consistent training to specific race strategies; goal setting; self-commitment to becoming a better athlete; and bringing an attitude of eagerness to excel to new levels in training and racing. This group meets 6 days per week for a total of 15.5 hours that include dryland and 1 morning practice.

Masters

Affiliated with US Masters Swimming, our Masters group is designed for anyone 18+ that loves swimming and wants to stay active and improve in technique. All levels are welcome and competition opportunities are available for those interested.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE:

In case of inclement weather, you will be notified via email and/or text through our TeamUnify account of closings and/or changes to the schedule. We will always take every opportunity to practice or devote time to dryland training, so weather calls may result in last minute changes that are beyond our control. If the weather is questionable, parents are encouraged to make the decision that is best for their family.

PRACTICE RULES AND REGULATIONS:

- Arrive at practice with enough time to change, gather equipment and be ready to work by the group's designated start time.
- Parents are asked to walk their young swimmers (10yo and under) to and from the Aquatic Center.
- Swimmers must have an additional pair of goggles in their equipment bags.
- Only jammers, speedos or one piece training suits that are well-fitted and not overly worn (see-through suits) may be worn. Failure to have an appropriate training suit will result in being asked to leave practice.
- When bringing a snack for practice (or meets) note that the pool deck is a *nut-free area* and swimmers are responsible for keeping their area clean.
- Parents and other spectators **must** sit in the spectator areas or in the lobby.
- Code of conduct will be enforced at all practices and meets (see page 12.)

PRACTICE EQUIPMENT:

Pre-Comp	Goggles Swim Fins (long)	Mesh Equipment Bag* Water Bottle * Extra Goggles*
Cat 1	Goggles Swim Cap Swim Fins (long) Junior Size Kickboard	Sneakers (Drylands) Yoga Mat (Drylands) Mesh Equipment Bag* Water Bottle*

		Extra Cap * Extra Goggles* Sneakers (Drylands) Yoga Mat (Drylands)
Cat 2	Goggles Swim Cap Swim Fins (long) Junior Size Kickboard Junior Pull Buoy Junior Snorkel	Sneakers (Drylands) Yoga Mat (Drylands) Mesh Equipment Bag* (Optional) Water Bottle* Extra Cap* Extra Goggles*
Cat 3	Goggles Swim Cap Swim Fins (long) Full Size Kickboard Full Size Pull Buoy Snorkel Paddles (Check Brand Sizing- XS/S/M)	Sneakers (Drylands) Yoga Mat (Drylands) Mesh Equipment Bag* Water Bottle* Extra Cap* Extra Goggles*
Cat 4 & Cat 5	Goggles Swim Cap Swim Fins (long) Full Size Kickboard Full Size Pull Buoy Snorkel Paddles (Check Brand Sizing- S/M) Parachute	Sneakers (Drylands) Yoga Mat (Drylands) Mesh Equipment Bag* Water Bottle* Extra Cap* Extra Goggles*
Seniors	Goggles Swim Cap Swim Fins (short) Full Size Kickboard Full Size Pull Buoy Snorkel Paddles (Check Brand Sizing- S/M/L) Parachute	Sneakers (Drylands) Yoga Mat (Drylands) Mesh Equipment Bag* Water Bottle* Extra Cap* Extra Goggles*

Please label equipment to avoid loss and confusion with other swimmers!

** Optional gear items, however Coaches strongly recommend purchasing these for your swimmer as you are able.*

Full descriptions and details of each item are located in the New Swimmer Guide.

TEAM GEAR:

Uniforms: Team suits are not required, but are encouraged. Team caps are required at all meets. Swimmers may also wear a navy or navy/white suit for competitions. Team caps will be given to them at their first meet. Additional caps may be ordered through Spirit Wear orders. Please note: We suggest using the team branded gear only during meets to extend the useful life of the gear..

Spirit Wear: A selection of Team spirit wear and other accessories will be available for purchase via the team website. Details will be provided at the beginning of the season.

MEETS:

The coaches carefully select the meets that the team will attend as the opportunity arises. They will provide as much notice as invitations and opportunities allow. Parents can review the meet schedule and all relevant details on our TeamUnify site. Coaches will provide notes there on which age groups are eligible to attend the meets. (Pre-Competition Group does not attend meets.) Unless specifically noted, swimmers do not need to have a minimum qualifying time to participate in the meets. Some meets require short distance travel to attend. Swimmers are encouraged to attend as many meets as they are able – they are FUN team events and offer the swimmers a chance to celebrate their accomplishments.

During all meets, coaches are on deck with the swimmers. Coaches will send out arrival times for each session's required warm-ups. Swimmers should remain on deck from the start of warm-ups until the end of the session, or until the end of their last race, depending on the meet's particular COVID-19 procedures. Parents are not permitted on deck or in the locker rooms during meets per USA Swim Safe Sport policies.

Heat sheets, which contain each swimmer's specific event information, are generally available by the evening before each meet. This information can also be found on the Event page for Team Unify and in the OnDeck App.

LSC States, Sectionals and Zones: In order to participate in these higher level USA Swimming Championship meets, swimmers will need to achieve a qualifying standard that is specific to their age and/or age group. The time standards for Georgia Swimming can be found at <https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/lscszgs/page/times/time-standards>. Sectionals and National time standards can be found here: <https://www.usaswimming.org/times/time-standards>

National Championships: Participation in these meets is by qualification only. Swimmers will need to achieve a time standard specific to their age and/or age group. National championship meets most times require significant travel.

POST-SEASON MEET POLICY:

The CAC Board is committed to fostering the growth and success of its post-season qualifying swimmers. "Post Season" refers to all Georgia Swimming, USA Championship and USA National competitions and/or any other "championship" outlined and scheduled by the coaching staff and this policy concerns all swimmers who qualify.

Post Season Eligibility: In order to qualify for these competitions, swimmers must meet the minimum qualifying time standard. These meets require significant travel and expense to both the team and the swimmer. The CAC Board is committed to supporting its athletes and will send a coach with the swimmers who qualify for post-season meets. The Board will also consider fundraising options or grants on a case-by-case basis for national-level competitions to assist with some of the swimmer's expenses.

Code of Conduct

ATHLETE

As a Columbus Aquatic Club swim team member, I recognize and agree to the following Code of Conduct at all times while representing the CAC swim team.

While taking part in any CAC function:

I WILL:

- Always teach and practice good sportsmanship.
- Offer congratulations to my opponents, win or lose, and cheer for my teammates.
- Be humble in victory and courageous in defeat.
- Act and conduct myself with dignity and respect for others and the property of others. Respect all coaches on deck. This includes: Head Coach, Assistant Coaches, and Volunteers.
- Dress in a manner suitable to my position as a representative of the Columbus Aquatic Club.
- Be a positive role model to my teammates.
- Be a responsible goodwill ambassador between the sport of swimming and the public.
- Promote positive high team spirit and morale.
- Strive to do my best and encourage all team members to do the same.
- Follow the USA Swimming Safe Sport policies on Cell Phone Use and Social Media

I WILL NOT:

- Behave in a manner that reflects negatively on my teammates, the CAC swim team or myself.
- Wear inappropriate attire.
- Use angry or vulgar language including swearing, name-calling or shouting.
- Have physical contact with another person in any angry or threatening way.
- Use or possess illegal chemicals or alcohol.
- Smoke while underage.
- Use my personal device or social media accounts in a way that harms my teammates, the team, or myself.

I understand that violating the Code of Conduct may cause me to be sent home from practice or a swim meet or dismissal from the team. This Code of Conduct remains in effect as long as I am a member of the Columbus Aquatic Club Swim Team.

Because our groups are large and the safety of our swimmers is our top priority, I understand that the following disciplinary actions will be enforced at all practices, meets, and team events:

1. First Offense: Verbal Warning
2. Second Offense: Dismissal from Practice/Meet/Event
3. Third Offense: Ineligibility for next meet

PARENT:

As a parent of a swimmer and member of Columbus Aquatic Club, I will abide by the following guidelines:

- Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers, and coaches by supporting the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment, and Hard Work.
- I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself in a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials, and the coaches at meets and practices.
- Maintain self-control at all times.
- Know my role:
 - Swimmers – Swim
 - Coaches – Coach
 - Officials – Officiate
 - Parents – Parent
- I understand that criticizing, name-calling, or use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, board members, other parents, officials and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
- Enjoy involvement with Columbus Aquatic Club by supporting the swimmers, coaches, and other parents with positive communication and actions.
- During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials will be directed to a member of our coaching staff. Parents address officials via the coaching staff only.
- I will support the coaches decisions and if I have an issue will privately ask the coach

I hereby certify that I have read and agree to abide by the Swimmer Responsibilities and Codes of Conduct as outlined above.

Swimmer's Signature

Date

Swimmer's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date