



FAQ's

Q. Tell me about ShAC?

A. ShAC, Swim Houston Aquatic Center, was founded in 2017 based on a vision of a husband and wife coaching team that wanted to provide a venue which features both a long course and short course pool for swimmers of every age and ability, offer a first rate learn-to-swim program, as well as serve its surrounding community. With over 30 years of coaching experience each, Gilbert and Karol Legaspi have established ShAC as one of the most successful USA Swimming clubs in Texas. While we may be a small, family owned and operated business, we have a place for swimmers of every age and ability, with a clear progression curriculum that will enable each swimmer to achieve their maximum potential. Family members Karen, Tony, and Micah lead the ShAC programs ranging from learn-to-swim lessons for toddlers to adults while Karol and Gilbert train swimmers from developmental levels all the way up to Olympic hopeful training. www.swimshac.com. We also serve our community by opening our doors to many swim clubs and premier water polo clubs in the Gulf who may not have access to long course pools as well as provide a venue for our Houston Fire Department to train critical rescue protocols.

Q. What is USA Swimming?

A. USA Swimming is the national governing body for the sport of swimming. They provide support for the sport all the way up to the Olympic level. The website for USA Swimming is www.usaswimming.org.

Q. What is Gulf Swimming?

A. Gulf Swimming is a Local Swim Committee (LSC) within USA Swimming. USA Swimming divides the country into 59 LSCs. Gulf Swimming provides club support, championship meets, and trains and certifies officials at the local level. Gulf Swimming sanctions the local meets, which are used for qualifying times for the championship meets. The website for Gulf Swimming is www.gulfswimming.org. Approximately 60 teams are members of Gulf Swimming – these are the teams we compete against locally.

Q. When is the swimming season?

A. The Short Course (25-yard pool) season runs from September until March. The Long Course (50-meter pool) season runs from April until August.

Q. What are Practice Groups?

A. ShAC divides their swimmers into Practice Groups by age, ability, and commitment level. Our coaching staff regularly evaluates all swimmers based on predetermined standards and decides when a swimmer is ready to be promoted up to the next practice group.

Q. How many practices should my child attend?

A. We realize that kids are involved in a variety of other activities and each individual's commitment to swimming will vary. Every Practice Group has a *recommended* attendance for that level. As your child progresses, the recommended attendance becomes greater.

We recommend that your child be prepared for practice ten minutes before the scheduled time. A practice begins with a warm-up and continues into drills, speed sets and main sets. Each is an integral element to practice. If you are aware of a scheduling problem, please consult with your child's coach beforehand.

Q. What equipment does my child need?

A. All swimmers will need a racing style suit, goggles, and cap (if the swimmer's hair is 1" or longer). Most swimmers have a team suit used only for meets and a few practice suits that may also be old worn out team suits. In addition to these basics, each Practice Group has specific equipment required for workouts. Your child's coach will communicate to you the specific equipment your child needs.

Q. Why are they doing all those funny looking drills and playing games?

A. Each of the four competitive strokes is a very complex combination of muscle movements. The athlete must master the correct movements in the stroke to not only conform to the rules of each stroke but to be efficient as well.

Stroke drills are used to separate specific movements in a stroke so that the athlete can master that movement without having to concentrate on the entire stroke at one time.

By repetitively mastering each movement through drills, the swimmer is able to put together these mastered movements into a more efficient stroke.

Drills are also a way to help diversify the practice. They are used in conjunction with normal training as a "warm-down," or active recovery. It also reminds the swimmers how to do their strokes correctly when they become fatigued. By mastering these drills, they are helping to ensure that they continue to improve in form and efficiency.

Q. How do I get all that cool ShAC merchandise?

A. ShAC has a variety of merchandise and other accessories for swimmers and their families. We also do special merchandise orders throughout the year. Inquire with the front desk on what is available.

Q. What are Time Standards?

A. USA Swimming has established National Age Group time standards to allow for a stepping stone approach that swimmers can grasp. This is a great way to see progress even if a swimmer doesn't win their event.

In addition, there are meet-specific Time Standards for "elite" level swimming that are much faster than the National Age Group Time Standards. Some examples include TAGS (the state championship meet in Texas for 14u swimmers) and Sectionals, which includes swimmers from several LSCs in the Southern Zone.

Q. Where and when are meets held?

A. Attending meets are a great way to see the swimmers improve and to help them reach their goals. These are meets sanctioned by USA Swimming and are for the "Competitive Team" members.

Meets are generally held about once a month during each season throughout the greater Houston area. There are occasional travel meets.

Q. How do I enter my child in a meet?

A. First of all, find out from your child's coach if they feel your child has the technical proficiency to be a success at a meet. If the swimmer is ready, the coach will then sign the swimmer up for events. Each Practice Group has a specific meet participation recommendation. This recommendation can be found in the Group Structure document on our website.

Be sure to review the document called “Meet Announcement.” This is available on gulfswimming.org. This document contains important information such as the schedule of events for the meet.

Q. How long do meets generally last?

A. Meets are divided into “sessions” with there being 3-5 sessions over the course of 2-3 days in general. Sessions usually run about 4 hours, not including warm-ups. Often, sessions are divided by age group. Each age group may have 2-3 sessions available to them over the course of the weekend. It is your choice in how many sessions your swimmer will participate in.

Q. When should we arrive for swim meets?

A. Arrive at the pool **at least** 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information. Be aware that parking and seating will be limited. The earlier you arrive, the better opportunity you have for both.

Q. What should we bring to meets?

A. The ShAC website has lots of informational resources for “swim meet survival.” It is recommended that you review this information well in advance of a swim meet in order to be prepared for success.

Q. How do we know how he/she performed in their events?

A. Often you will be able to see your child’s time on an electronic scoreboard. However, what is displayed on the scoreboard is never the official result. Once an entire event is completed, the official results will be posted in an easily accessible area, generally near the viewing stands, so that parents and swimmers can find out how they did. Official results are posted on the gulfswimming.org website within a few days of the completion of the meet.

The host team provides award ribbons, generally for places 1-8. It can often take weeks for the host team to produce the ribbons and distribute them to each team, and for the team to distribute internally. Rather than use the motivation of a ribbon, swimmers and parents should focus on doing their best and following the coach’s instructions. Success is not necessarily a ribbon, but being technically correct and working hard.

Q. Can we leave the meet as soon as my child's events are over?

A. It is always a good idea to double check with the coach before leaving. Sometimes a coach may decide to enter a child in a relay, which sometimes will occur at the end of a meet. If he/she is not entered in one, then you are free to go.

Q. Who gets chosen to swim relays?

A. The coach will decide who gets to swim in a relay. Often, this decision is based on previously documented times, but also subject to the discretion of the coach on the meet day, based on how each swimmer has been performing during that particular meet.

Q. What if I have a question about the posted results or a judgment against my swimmer?

A. Parents are not allowed "on deck" at meets for any reason. All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

Q. Are parents required to volunteer?

A. Volunteering is a great opportunity to meet other parents and learn more about competitive swimming. ShAC hosts several swim meets per year. These meets are an excellent source of income for our team and help keep your fees low. It takes a small army to run a meet but it is worth it. ShAC has a minimum volunteer requirement from each family and uses the team unify website to track participation. Complete information can be found on the ShAC website under "*Volunteer Obligation*". In addition to swim meets, there are occasionally other opportunities to meet your family's volunteer obligation, such as social events, and committee work. As these opportunities arise, an email will be sent with more information. Families who opt to not fulfill their volunteer obligation will be assessed a fee.

Q. How do I communicate with my child's coach?

A. During practice, the coach's only job is to coach the swimmers. If you have questions or concerns, you are welcome to email your child's coach or speak with them after practice or by appointment.

Q. What can I do to best support my swimmer?

A. There is a LOT you can do! You are your child's biggest fan! Let the coaches provide the technical feedback, while you focus your praise and recognition on the *effort* rather than result.

Also, good nutrition is essential! More than any other sport, swimming requires excellent nutrition to support the amount of calories burned and the unique energy requirements of competition. Swimmers should be well-rested and arrive to practice on time.

Thank you for being a part of ShAC!