



Swimming is a FAMILY Sport
www.SwimDogs.net

SWIM DOG FAQs

(September 10, 2011)

Hopefully, you will find the answer to your question here:

1. What is Swim Dogs?

Swim Dogs is a non-profit, low-keyed, competitive swim team based out of George Washington High School.

Swim Dogs consider swimming a family sport and strive to create an atmosphere that is welcoming and educational for children and their parents alike. We encourage them all to participate in practices and competitive swim meets.

Our practice philosophy is technique first, conditioning second. We see no reason to continually practice and train bad habits.

Our Mission Statement can be found by clicking on the "MISSION" tab on the Swim Dogs' website (www.SwimDogs.net).

2. Our family has a very busy schedule...Is it okay if my child swims only one or two days per week?

At Swim Dogs, we do not take attendance, so there are no practice requirements.

However, if you expect you or your child to improve, then we would recommend two days of practice per week at a minimum.

Coaches Dana and Mark have developed a series of drills and exercises that are used as building blocks in a progression towards better competitive swimming. If a swimmer comes only once per week, they are missing out on these tools, and it is like they are starting from scratch every week. This also impacts the progress of the team as a whole.

3. Due to other commitments, my child is going to swim fewer days than their assigned practice group. Can I get a discount?

It is unlikely, but schedule and fee adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. My two children want to split one membership. They will not be in the pool at the same time. Is this okay?

Due to the cost structure of our program, this cannot be offered at this time. Also, please see #2 above.

5. Due to DPS and Holiday closures, there are some months that the team has fewer scheduled practices. Will there be a discount for those months?

Our consistent monthly fees are based upon the total cost of running our year-round team. Some months we swim more, and some months we swim less.

6. We are not planning on swimming in any meets. Therefore, why are the USA Swimming and/or USMS (Masters) fees required?

USA Swimming and USMS provide Swim Dogs its insurance and liability coverage. There are NO exceptions.

Each individual swimmer must have a current membership to practice with the team. Membership is required to compete in any swim meets.

The Registration Forms for USA Swimming and USMS can be found on the Swim Dogs' website (www.SwimDogs.net).

The annual dues from either of these two organizations are required for Swim Dogs to keep its sanction as an official team in Colorado.

USA Swimming is intended for Age Group Swimmers but even our parent swimmers can sign up with USA Swimming allowing them to compete in sanctioned meets with their children.

USMS is the Masters (adult) swimming organization, and if any of our parent swimmers want to compete on the Masters' circuit, then they will need to have a current USMS membership.

Even if you do not plan on competing in any swim meets, you are required to have one of these memberships to practice.

7. Will Swim Dogs be competing in any swim meets?

Yes. We anticipate hosting several dual meets and one master's meet annually. In addition, we will participate in approximately one USA-Swimming sanctioned meet per month.

8. What is the Swim Dogs' Advisory Board?

The Advisory Board meets once per quarter and is made up of two parents, one masters, and one age-group swimmer. Contact Coach Dana or Mark if you would like to be a part of the Advisory Board.

Swim Dogs is a coach-owned and run team. The Advisory Board's function is to assist with any issues and discuss the future direction of the team.

9. Do I need any special equipment?

Yes! As with any sport, swimming has its own special equipment making it easier to learn:

REQUIRED

Swim suit (no cut offs or baggy shorts)

Goggles ---- THAT FIT!!!

Fins (look for the special fins for competitive swimming)

Swim Cap or Hair Band (for long hair)

OPTIONAL

Pull buoy

Kickboard

Fortunately, swimming equipment is much less expensive than football, hockey, baseball...

10. Why do the Swim Dogs occasionally have a waiting list?

Due to our limited staff and facilities, it is sometimes necessary to cap the team.

To get on the waiting list, send an e-mail to Coach Mark (Coach@SwimDogs.net). Include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Also mention a little about the prospective swimmer like name, gender, age, years of experience, and anything else of interest.

It would also be good to know how you learned about Swim Dogs.

11. When do Swim Dogs practice, and how long is the Swim Dogs' season?

Swim Dogs practices Monday through Friday at the George Washington High School.

Each practice group is divided into skill levels to accommodate a wide variety of swimmers. The Late Practice Group is for advance swimmers.

The Swim Dogs' indoor season runs from the beginning of September (just after Labor Day) to the end of April.

Swim Dogs has a summer program based out of the 50M pool at Lowry and GW.

12. Can I come to practices outside of my assigned group?

It is possible to work this out on a case-by-case basis. Please contact either Coach Mark or Dana to discuss this option. We will try to be as accommodating as possible.

In order to best manage our numbers, we request that you try to stick to your assigned practice group.

13. Our family has a mixed level of swimmers. What practice should we come to, and can we all swim in the same practice?

The answer here is basically the same as Questions #11 and #12. Talk to either Coach Mark or Dana to discuss your particular circumstance.

Many of the families in this situation rely on carpooling to allow for each family member to practice with the best-fitting group.

14. You guys do great with the very new, young swimmers. What is the minimum swimming requirement to be a Swim Dog?

Even though we work on the very basics of competitive swimming, Swim Dogs is not intended as “swim lessons.”

The minimum skill level for the new swimmer is the ability to successfully complete one length of the pool in both freestyle (front crawl) and backstroke without stopping on the wall or the lane lines.

15. Our family participates in lots of different activities. Some months, we would like to be able to drop off the team and return the following month. Will our spot still be saved?

When there is a waiting list, we are unable to reserve a spot for you on Swim Dogs.

Swim Dogs must be financially stable, and if we allowed people to jump in and out of the program while reserving a spot for them, we could risk our viability.

If you need to drop off the team for a short period of time, please talk with Coach Mark or Dana to discuss your particular circumstances.

16. What is the difference between the Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday Practice Groups?

Essentially, there is no difference. The Tuesday/Thursday practices start 30-minutes earlier at 5:30.

On Tuesday and Thursday, we have a specific coach assigned to our newest and youngest swimmers, so that they can get lots of individual attention. If you or your child has no competitive swimming experience, we highly recommend this Practice Group.

17. My family (child) is only interested in fitness swimming and we do not care to swim in any meets. Is this okay?

You will not be forced to swim in meets. That being said, however, we are a competitive swim team, and as such, we value and highly recommend the competitive experience.

We choose meets that fit our team philosophy, and as our swimmers progress, we strive for more competitive offerings. Last year, we had a dozen swimmers who qualified for the Colorado State Championships. Alas, we still have swimmers who have never competed. We will keep pushing them!

A great way to get a taste of competition is to enter one of our “hosted” meets. These are very low-keyed and always fun! We have two or three of these per year.

18. My child is destined for swimming greatness. Can you push them to their potential?

We are a relatively new team, so at this point, we do not have any nationally ranked age-group swimmers. However, it is only a matter of time before we do. In our four years, we have several swimmers placing in the Top 10 in their respective age groups and one USA-S Sectional Qualifier.

Our master’s swimmers are among the world’s best with several World, National, and State Champions and Record-Holders.

19. What is the “Three Cs” philosophy?

As we enter our fifth year, Dana and I have identified “Three Cs” to Swim Dog’s continued success:

- *Commitment:* Our entire coaching staff enjoys coaching everyone who wants to be at practice.
- *Consistency:* While we will never “require” attendance, we need you to practice a minimum of two times per week.
- *Competition:* Swim meets are an integral component of competitive swimming. Start with our low-key, hosted meets at GW and go from there.

Before signing up for the new season, please discuss the “Three Cs” with your family. It is important for everyone to buy-in to this philosophy. Swim Dogs will always strive to be a fun, low-keyed, technique-based team, and we will balance these values with our desire for continued improvement.

20. Do Mark & Dana do any private instruction?

Coaches Mark and Dana are available for private swimming instruction whether you are a master's or age-group swimmer. We have state-of-the-art underwater camera equipment for instant video review and feedback.

21. Do Mark and Dana teach life guarding classes?

Mark & Dana are Red Cross certified lifeguard instructors, and they have helped place many Swim Dogs with local, pool-related, summer employment. Children must have turned 15-years of age before the conclusion of the lifeguard class.

22. My children are interested in water-related employment during the summer. Can Swim Dogs help us?

See #21 -- Our students have worked at Denver Park and Rec, Crestmoor, Eastmoor, Colorado Athletic Club, Virginia Vale, Windsor Garden, Cherry Creek Country Club, and Others. We will do our best to recommend our students to our extensive contact list.