

Comets Swim Team



Parent's Handbook

2007

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Welcome!

Your decision to join the City of Pembroke Pines Comets swim team family will reap many fine rewards. Competitive swimming provides benefits to young athletes such as self-discipline, good sportsmanship, time management skills and physical fitness. Competition allows the swimmer to experience both success and defeat in a positive environment. All of these skills will be useful in later life. As a parent, you play an important role in the success of both the child and the team.

About the Comets

Founded in 1999, the Comets are funded by the City of Pembroke Pines and have grown from a group of 30 swimmers to over 200. The Comets have become one of the top teams in the **Florida Gold Coast** (the region that oversees our team). Our coaching staff is among the best in the sport. The Comets are a year-round competitive team.

Mission Statement

The Comets swim team seeks to create an environment in which every participant has an opportunity to learn, grow and mature as an athlete. Sports, especially swimming, require discipline of mind and body, teamwork, a competitive spirit, and above all, a sense of commitment. We aim to foster not only a sense of competitiveness among our athletes but also values such as good sportsmanship, goal setting, responsibility and personal drive.

This handbook will introduce you to some of the fundamentals of the Comets experience. Please visit our website often. www.swim4comets.com for additional information, news on upcoming meets, an introduction to our coaches and much more. ***And don't forget to sign up for email notification. Much of the "breaking news" will come to you via email.***

First Things First

Initial Registration Fees: All swimmers must register with USA Swimming. A fee of \$55 dollars is collected at registration and will be collected annually. USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. This registration fee goes directly to USA Swimming and is non-refundable. Part of the fee goes to Florida Gold Coast, the local governing body. To learn more about both groups, go to www.usaswimming.org or www.fgcswim.org .

Monthly Dues: Each swimmer pays a monthly fee directly to the City of Pembroke Pines. The monthly fees are as follows:

Senior Level Teams

National Development	\$88
Gold	\$82
Silver	\$69
Bronze	\$63

Age Group Teams

Asteroids	\$57
Meteorites	\$53
Dippers Big/Little	\$44/\$30
Masters (adults)	\$38/\$63

A full description of each team can be found on our website.

Escrow Accounts: When your child joins the Comets an "escrow account" will be set up with an initial balance of \$30.00. Each time a child participates in a meet, a fee is charged. Fee entries will be deducted from this account. ***It is your responsibility to maintain the full balance in your escrow account.*** You will receive a monthly invoice outlining the status of your training fees and escrow account.

Please bring your checks, made payable to the City of Pembroke Pines, into the office. Do not mail!

(If your swimmer will be away for more than one month please fill out a "Notice of Intent to Withdraw" and you will not be charged training fees. The form can be found in the office.)

Equipment

You can order swim equipment through the Comets office. Just check the website for a list of items and prices. Please call the office with your order and to check availability. You will be billed for your purchases.

Communicating with the Coaches

If you need to discuss an issue with a coach, please call the office to set up an appointment or email officemanager@swim4comets.com.

Our coaches are very busy with the swimmers during practice time and pool deck is not the best place to discuss individual comments or concerns.

Practice Schedule

The practice schedule for each level is posted online. Any changes due to weather etc. will be announced via email. Remember, we practice rain or shine!

Have you signed up for your email notification yet? You will find that information on our website homepage.

Required Practice Equipment: sunscreen, kickboard, pull-buoy, fins, paddles (see coach for sizing), goggles, water bottle, drag suit and running shoes.

Competition

It's not all about winning: While winning remains our team objective, the swimmer's individual improvement is the primary focus. Sportsman-like behavior is of equal importance. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort and mature attitudes are taught and expected. Swimmers are taught to set realistic but challenging goals for swim meets and to relate these goals to training effort.

A meet schedule is established by the coaches with the expectation that ***swimmers will attend every meet available at their classification level.***

1. Many of the meets the team will attend are based on the time standard of the athlete. **Time standards are posted on our website under "resources."** All new swimmers start out as "C" or beginning swimmers with no times. Swimmers then work their way up to "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", "AAAA."

There are also two "seasons" on the swim calendar. **Short Course**, which runs from September to April and events are measured in yards (swimmers swim the short length of the pool). **Long Course** season runs from April to August and the events are measured in meters (swimmers swim the long length of the pool).

It is wise for a parent to know the general category their child is in. To find out ask a coach for a print-out of a swimmer's best times in yards and meters. Then compare with the motivational time standards list.

A record of each swimmer's best times can also be found at **Team Manager Online**. A link to that program is on our website. (Swimmers will need to ask a coach for the current password.)

Here is a sample of some of the meets that swimmers will participate in:

Local Florida Gold Coast Meets

1. 8 & Under Sizzlers These meets are open to swimmer 8 years of age or under on the day of the meet. No time standards are required.
2. Broward County BC Meets –These all-ages meets are developmental meets, with no qualifying times necessary to compete.
3. Broward County ABC Meets – These meets are generally for swimmers participating in their first meet and are open to all swimmers of all abilities.
4. Division II Championships – This twice yearly meet is a championship meet for those swimmers who have not yet achieved a JO (Junior Olympic) qualifying time. This meet is a swimmer's opportunity to earn JO times.
5. Junior Olympics – These meets are limited to those swimmers who have earned Junior Olympic qualifying times. JO's are held twice a year, usually a week after the Division II championships.

The Comets also participate in several national level meets every year. Senior swimmers work directly with their coaches in regard to dates and times.

Meet entries are posted on our website (and Team Manager Online) on the Comets website two to three weeks before a meet. There will also be information on the host pool...directions, warm up times etc. If parents **WANT** the swimmer to attend do **NOTHING**. If your swimmer cannot attend, please notify the coach in writing, or send an email to officemanager@swim4comets.com. You will be sent a confirmation email. If you don't get one, please call the office.

Coaches assume that if they have not received notification saying the swimmer cannot attend, then they can enter athletes into the meet.

Up until the date when coaches email the entries to the host team changes can be made. However, once the entries have been sent to the host team the entries cannot be revoked and the swimmer's

account **will be charged** whether they actually attend the meet or not. This is due to the fact that each meet host bills the team for the swimmers that are entered and we in turn pay in full prior to the start of the meet. If a swimmer was entered in a meet and they did not show up there is no way for us to recover the entry fees. Every Comets swimmer should maintain a log (manual or electronic) of his/her times for every event. Such a log allows a swimmer to set personal goals and monitor his/her progress. All swimmers are encouraged to create a "My USA Swimming Page" at the USA Swimming website at **www.usaswimming.org**.

What to bring to a meet...other than enthusiasm

Team swim suit	Water bottle
Team caps (2)	Waterproof sunscreen, sunglasses, hat
Goggles (and a spare pair)	
Towels (one per event)	Ice chest with nutritious snacks
Team t-shirt, sweats or parka	Chairs
A warm-up suit or track suit	Games or books to pass the time
Small amount of cash	Umbrella/shade provider

Heat Sheets: You will be able to purchase a "Heat Sheet" at each swim meet. This is a list of events and the order in which they will take place. The heat sheet is very helpful in determining when your swimmer will be competing. It's also a way to keep track of times and it makes a great souvenir.

Volunteering and Fundraising

Although the Comets are funded through the City of Pembroke Pines, additional fundraising is critical. There are two major fundraising activities.

1. **Home swim meets.** Each year our head coach competes for meets to be held at the Comets training facility. Meet entry fees are charged to all swimmers who participate and additional funds are collected through ticket sales, heat sheet sales, concession stands etc. The more organized and well run our facility, the more meets we will attract and the more funds we will raise to benefit our swimmers.
2. **Swim-a-thon:** This is a fun, family centered event and swimmers look forward to participating every year (usually in April). It's like a walk-a-thon...swimmers collect pledges for each lap (or a lump sum). **Each family is required to raise a minimum of \$50 dollars.**
3. Various other fundraising activities take place each year. You will be notified by email.

Volunteering

There is no better place to learn the ins and out of swimming and swim meets than on the pool deck!

Parent participation is the key ingredient in our success and the responsibility is shared equally by parents from all team levels.

Setting a goal to volunteer for a minimum of 15 hours per year will insure a wonderful swimming experience for the swimmer and family. The more you participate, the more you will learn and the more you will contribute to the success of the team!

You can volunteer to help in one or more of the following areas:

Timing and officiating
Hospitality/Concessions
Ticket sales
Special function planning
Communications

Watch your email for upcoming meets, events and volunteer opportunities.

BONUS: IF YOU VOLUNTEER AT A HOME SWIM MEET, YOUR SWIMMER WILL NOT BE CHARGED THE ENTRY FEE.

Booster Club & Parent Support

The only members of the Comets that receive a salary are the coaches and office staff. All meets, activities and fund-raising events are organized and staffed entirely by volunteers.

The Comets swim team booster club is made up of dedicated parent volunteers that believe in the mission of the swim team. It's no surprise that the top performing swim clubs across the country also have incredible booster clubs. This is because parents that volunteer their talents to the swim program help the team set high goals and strive to reach them. By counting on the extra resource that parents offer, coaches can set more ambitious goals and plan to offer extended services to their swimmers.

Planning and organizing events like team trips, training camps, social activities, hosting meets, and setting up fundraising activities all require a high level of energy, resources and manpower; often more than the coaches can offer working alone.

Notification of Booster Club meetings will be sent directly to your email address. Please log on to the Comets website for a full list of committees.

We hope this handbook has been of some assistance to you. We look forward to having your family join our family! Please visit our website often for great links, tips for parents of swimmers and lots of other useful stuff!

If you have questions or concerns about your swimmer, you will find a list of the coaches email addresses on our website.