

*AUBURN MERMAIDS
COMPETITION
SYNCHRONIZED SWIM
TEAM*



*2018 PARENT
HANDBOOK*

Table of Contents

Pg 3 - The “Mermaid Mission”

Pg 4 - A note from your coaches

Pg 5-What it means to be a Mermaid

Pg 6-Coach Responsibilities

Pg 7-Swimmer Responsibilities

Pg 8 - Parent Responsibilities

Pg 9 - Volunteer Opportunities

Pg 10 - 2018 Dates & Details

Pg 13 - What to Expect at a Meet

Pg 15 - Directions to VFCAL Competitions

Pg 16 - Necessary Equipment

Pg 17 - Synchro Hair Care

Pg 18 - Fundraising

Pg 19 - End of Season Watershow

Pg 20 - FAQ

Pg 23 - Contacts

THE MERMAID MISSION

The Mermaid Coaches and Parent Board are working to build a synchronized swimming program that teaches and trains swimmers of all levels, emphasizing individual progress, team unity and whole family participation. Good sportsmanship is a top priority. We strive to empower young people to be competitors and valuable team members both in the pool and throughout their lives.

A note from your coaches:

Dear Auburn Mermaid Team Members and Parents,

Welcome back to all our returning swimmers and families, and to those of you who are new to the team, we are so glad you are joining our Mermaid Family!

Synchronized swimming is a little known but wonderful sport. Our swimmers are not only great athletes but also performers. The sport requires strength, flexibility, grace, musicality, and most of all hard work. We are blessed and honored to be able to carry on the coaching tradition of many great women in the Mermaids' history including the amazing Marsha Skinner, Tiffany Skinner, Nancy Bender, and Sherri Patton as well as many parent coaches and retired swimmers from this Mermaid community. We plan to carry on their tradition of Synchronized Swimming excellence and help further grow the Auburn Mermaid team.

In order to make this a successful season for all our swimmers we ask both swimmers and parents alike to please bring an understanding and cooperative attitude to all practices and competitions. We want to make sure we are modeling great sportsmanship and team work at all times. Please know that all the coaches volunteer many hours of their time to this team because we love the sport and we love your kids! We are all in this together!

We look forward to working with you all this season and want to thank you in advance for making the Auburn Mermaid Synchronized Swim Team a part of your summer and a part of your child's life!

See you on deck!

The Mermaid Coaches

What It Means To Be A Mermaid

The Auburn Mermaids Synchronized Swim Team is a recreational swim program that officially runs April 30th thru mid-July. We also have preseason conditioning and skills clinics during March and April.

Our Mermaid program happily welcomes youth ages 5 to 18 with a minimum swimming ability of swimming across the pool with any swim stroke, unaided.

Swimmers will be taught sculling, eggbeater, musicality, water stunts, and individual figures which make up the core curriculum of synchronized swimming.

All swimmers learn a routine and swim in our end of season water show.

When swimmers are deemed ready by their coaches, they will participate in Wednesday/Friday evening competitive meets (4 per season) and our end of season Championships meet with both figures and routines.

The team relies on parent volunteers to fill many necessary roles throughout the season including coaching, judging competitions, snack bar management and staff, costume design, camera crew, and many others.

Coach Responsibilities

- Supervise the safe, efficient and effective operation of the pool facilities during the workouts and meets.
- Operate under the rules and bylaws of the Valley-Foothill Competitive Aquatic League (VFCAL)
- Coach and instruct participants on techniques and skills needed to compete in VFCAL meets and perform in the shows.
- Maintain a positive atmosphere at practice that is conducive to a good instructional program.
- Organize and direct team practices. Maintain discipline and control of the team members during practice sessions, meets and shows.
- Develop positive attitudes and motivate team members through team meetings, goal setting and individual swimmer counseling.
- Prepare entries for VFCAL league meets and championships, determine who will swim in routines and figure competitions. The head coach has the final decision on who will swim in routines.
- Prepare all swimmers for the annual show. The head coach will ensure that each swimmer has a minimum of one routine to swim in the show, in addition to the finale.
- Determine who will be trained to swim in each routine. This will be based on the ability of each swimmer, not age or number of years in synchronized swimming. Coaches have the option of moving swimmers in and out of routines, based on ability and practice attendance.
- Attempt to resolve swimmer and/or parental concerns on an individual basis.
- Supervise the proper use of all swim equipment used in practices and meets.
- Perform first aid if necessary.

Swimmer Responsibilities

- Follow the “Rules of the Pool” at our pool and at the pools we visit for meets:
 - Walk on deck - no running.
 - No rough play or profanity allowed.
 - Do not enter the pool without a coach or lifeguard at poolside.
 - No swimmers are permitted on the diving board.
 - No glass bottles, jars, mugs, etc. on the pool deck.
- Establish goals and actively train to achieve them.
- Work together with your teammates.
- Show up at practice on time and with a positive attitude.
- Once routine practices begin in May, make every effort to attend practices regularly. Successful routine practices rely on the presence of all routine participants. If you must miss a practice, be sure to let your coach and your routine partners know ahead of time. Some practices are mandatory for participation in routines for championships and the Watershow.
- Show respect for all coaches and lifeguards.
- Show respect for all coaches, members, and parent volunteers of competing teams.
- Be prepared for challenges and changes. Coaches will determine who will be in each routine, based on the abilities of the swimmers, not age or number of years in synchronized swimming. If you have a concern, please try to speak to your coach about it.
- Keep your ears above water when coaches are giving directions. Coaching many girls in the water is challenging due to the noise level of splashing water and all swimmers need to be extra good listeners.
- The consequences for talking back to coaches or not following directions will be as follows:
 1. A verbal reminder will be given.
 2. If needed, the swimmer will be asked to get out of the water for a short period of time to regain a positive attitude.
 3. Swimmer will be asked to get out of the water for the remainder of the practice and parents will be contacted.
- Most importantly, model good sportsmanship at all times.

PLEASE REVIEW WITH YOUR SWIMMER, SIGN, AND TURN IN THIS SWIMMER CONTRACT TO YOUR COACHES BY MAY 1st.

Swimmers Name

Date

Parent Responsibilities

- Make sure your swimmer has goggles, a swim cap, nose plug, towel and **WARM CLOTHES** at all practices – sometimes the swimmers need to get out of the water during practices (dry land practice) and when wet, it can be chilly, especially in the evening.
- Please be on time when picking up and dropping off your children from practice. Coaches sometimes need to leave the pool directly after practice. Please respect their time!
- Try to be a positive role model for your child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all swimmers, coaches and officials at every practice and meet.
- During practice, all parents should stay out of the immediate pool vicinity. Please watch from the bleachers. This is by request of the lifeguards as well as the coaching staff.
- Please refrain from talking to children or coaches during practices unless the coach approaches you first.
- Decisions regarding who shall participate in routines at both the competitions and in the annual show are at the sole discretion of the coaching staff, and will be determined by ability and attendance.
- Please address any concerns to the coach only after practice has finished and the swimmers have left the area. Issues should never be discussed while the swimmers are present.
- Please read and respond to e-mailed and printed information promptly. Most of the team’s information is sent via e-mail. Be sure to provide the team with whatever email address it will be most convenient for you to check both weekdays and weekends (in case of last minute weekend practice changes.)
- Please use the Mermaid email contacts for team related business **ONLY**.
- Parents who show disrespect to coaches, lifeguards, swimmers, or any member, coach, or parent of an opposing team will be asked to leave the pool deck immediately.

PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND HAVE YOUR SWIMMER TURN IN TO THE COACHES BY MAY 1st.

Parent Name

Date

All constructive suggestions for improving the Mermaids program are welcome. If you find yourself becoming defensive or emotional about an issue, please bring it up at a later, calmer time. Or, if the issue must be resolved immediately despite your agitation, please wait for at least two coaches, two board members or one of each to be present.

Remember, all Board members are volunteers and the Mermaid coaches are involved in the program because of their love for synchronized swimming and the team.

Communication challenges are difficult to overcome; the Mermaid coaches and Board will continue to try to meet those challenges to the best of their abilities. By working together with positive attitudes we can have an outstanding team experience!

Volunteer Opportunities:

All swimmers' families are responsible to volunteer 15 hours during the course of the season to the team. A \$125 check must be given to ARD when registering your child for the team at the start of each season to ensure volunteer hours. The checks will only be cashed at the end of the season if volunteer hours have not been met. There are many different ways to meet those 15 volunteer hours. If you can give more time it is always appreciated!!!!

Judge/Ref/Score Keeping

The team will need at least 10 judges plus 2 refs and numerous other score keeping officials in order to staff our meets and championships. To be a judge you must be able to attend the judging clinic (1 Sunday in May - Date TBD) and be available for 2 or more meets. Score runners & recorders need no previous experience or training, just availability to attend competitions.

Snack Bar Attendants

We will have 2 home meets in Auburn this season so we will need lots of help in the snack bar preparing food, bbqing, and running the cash box. Shifts will be available for signups prior to each competition.

Costume Creation

Our team costume coordinator will need volunteers for sewing projects as well as gluing and head piece creation.

Photography/Filming

The team will need parent photographers at events as well as parents to film and show girls routines during our weekend routine practices.

Fundraiser Help

We will have a few fundraisers throughout the season and possibly off season that will require parent volunteers as well. Please check our website or email the parent board for questions regarding fundraising.

2018 Important Dates:

March 2018

- Monday and Wednesday Conditioning - March 5th thru 30th from 6:15pm to 8pm.
- Saturday, March 3rd - All Team Clinic - 9am to 11am (beginners free and welcome!)
- Saturday, March 17th - All Team Clinic - 9am to 11am
- Saturday, March 24th - All Team Clinic - 9am to 11am (beginners free and welcome!)

April 2018

- Monday and Wednesday Conditioning - April 2nd thru 25th from 6:15pm to 8pm.
- Saturday, April 7th - All Team Clinic - 9am to 11am
- Saturday, April 21st - All Team Clinic - 9am to 11am
- Saturday, April 28th - All Team Clinic - 9am to 11am (beginners free and welcome!)

- April 25th - Back In Sync – Mandatory all parent meeting - 6pm poolside
- Regular practices (M-TH) begin April 30th - 6:15 to 8pm

May 2018

- Monday thru Thursday Practices – 6:15pm to 8pm
- Friday, Saturday, & Sunday practices will be routine specific. Calendars will be posted to our website (theauburnmermaids.com) in April.

June 2018

- Monday thru Thursday Practices – 6:15pm to 8:30pm
- Friday, Saturday, & Sunday practices will be routine specific.
- Wednesday, June 13th - Away Meet Vs Davis - 5pm
- Monday, June 18th - Home Meet Vs FEC - 5pm
- Friday, June 22nd - Away Meet Vs Cordova - 5pm

- Wednesday, June 27th - Home Meet Vs Sunrise - 5pm

July 2018

- Monday thru Thursday Practices - 6:15pm to 9pm
- Friday, Saturday, & Sunday practices will be routine specific.
- Friday & Sunday July 20th & 22nd - Championships @ Davis
- Tuesday, July 24th - End of Season Picnic & Watershow 5pm to 8pm (show begins at 7pm)

PLEASE NOTE: Swimmers must swim in at least 2 meets to qualify for Championships. If your swimmer cannot be at a minimum of 2 meets they are still encouraged to participate in the season, but will only perform a routine for the watershow. Please plan your vacation schedules with that in mind. Also, swimmers hoping to be in a championship routine should plan to be at all practices between July 1st and Championships weekend. These are critical practices. Exceptions can only be made on a case by case basis with prior consent of the coach (at the beginning of the season). Thank you for your cooperation!

What to expect at a meet:

Swimmers have the opportunity to compete with other swimmers in the Valley Foothill Competitive Aquatic League (VFCAL) meets in the Sacramento area. This is not mandatory but most of the swimmers who compete, love the experience.

League meets are held in Auburn, Sacramento or Davis on Wednesday or Friday evenings in June and July (see schedule) and Championships are held on the 20th and 22nd of July. All swimmers who are able to perform figures according to minimum standards set by the coach can compete with the coach's permission.

Swimmers must attend at least two Wednesday/Friday night meets in order to be eligible to compete in the Championships in July. Our coach would like to know as soon as possible who will be participating in the meets so that she can plan for championships routines.

During meets four individual figures are performed at stations in the pool and the girls are judged on the accuracy of the figure (Scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being a perfect Olympic-level execution). Typical scores at local meets range from 3 to 6. The elements and figures are also put into a routine that is performed to music. Our league rules indicate that routines cannot be practiced before April 30th so there is a lot of work to be done between then and July 20th. Some swimmers perform these routines at the Wednesday/Friday evening meets, but mainly they are preparing for the Championship weekend that is held in July. Because it is critical for all girls in a given routine to be present at the practices leading up to championships, the following practices are mandatory for swimmers planning to compete at championships: July 9-19.

What to Bring to Wednesday/Friday Night Meets

- Black team suit
- Plain white swim Cap
- Goggles
- Nose plug(s)
- 2 to 3 towels
- Warm clothing
- Portable chairs
- Snacks/drinks – food is usually available for purchase from other teams
- Easy-Up tent for rain or sun protection (optional)

What to Bring to Championships

- Above items
- Gel Kit for hair (See Synchro Hair Care)
- Make up
- Routine suits and headpieces (labeled with swimmer's name)
- Books, games etc. for downtime
- Anything to keep you cool – it can be very hot!

Directions to VFCAL meets:

- To Fulton El Camino (FEC) - Cottage Pool - 3097 Cottage Way, Sacramento. Take I-80 West to Sacramento. Merge onto Business 80. Exit on Fulton Ave and turn left. Continue on Fulton Ave to Cottage Way and turn left. Continue to 3097 Cottage Way. Pool will be on left. Approx. 30 min drive.
- To Sunrise - Rusch Community Center - 7801 Auburn Blvd., Citrus Heights. Take I-80 West to Sacramento. Exit at Riverside Ave (exit 102) toward Auburn Blvd. Turn left onto Riverside Ave. Riverside Ave becomes Auburn Blvd. The park and pool will be on the right. Approx. 25 min drive.
- To Davis - 2000 Shasta Dr, Davis CA. Take I-80 West toward Sacramento. Merge onto CA-113 via Exit 70 toward Woodland. Take the Covell Blvd ext (Exit 29), toward Road 31. Turn Left onto W. Covell Blvd. Turn Left onto Shasta Dr. Park and pool will be on the left. Approx. 1hr drive.

Equipment:

- **NOSEPLUGS** - Worn at all times. During competitions, especially routines, it is necessary to have at least 2 to 3 nose plugs – one on your nose and one or two clipped to the top of your suit. They do fall off! We have them for sale at practices for \$4.
- **GOGGLES** - These can be worn for practices but not for competitions or shows.
- **SWIM CAP** - A white swim cap is necessary for figure competitions. They are not worn during routines. Any swim cap is fine (but required!) for practices.
- **SWIM SUITS** - Our team suit is a simple black tank suit. You can purchase any brand you would like. All swimsuits and caps should have the swimmer's name written on the tag - 18 suits in a locker room all look the same! Girls may wear any **ONE-PIECE** swimsuit for practices...black is not necessary.
- We have a team site through **Swimoulet.com** which sells all the suits, goggles, head caps, and other swim gear you might need. If you purchase through our team site the team will also receive a credit that helps with the cost of our costumes!
<http://www.swimoutlet.com/auburnmermaids>
- We also have a team site through **Mylocker.com** which sells personalized team wear such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, hats, blankets, shorts, etc. Our mermaid logo is already loaded onto the site. Our team receives a small commission check based on sales placed through our site. To order visit:
<http://www.myllocker.net/my/shop/auburn-mermaids227654/index.htm>

Synchro Hair Care:

Synchronized Swimmers are unique in that their hair must be put in a high bun and coated with gel (Knox Gelatin) when they are competing at Championships and in the show. The hair must be a lot tighter, and stiffer than you might think. Not one strand should escape while swimmers are in the water. Headpieces should be attached with a minimum full card of bobby pins to remain strong against the pull of water. This is not necessary for Wednesday/Friday league meets where a white swim cap is worn.

SYNCHRO “Gel” Kit Contents

- Unflavored Knox gelatin: 4 to 6 packets. Mix ratio – 2-3 packets, minimum to ½ cup hot water.
- Paper (disposable) hot cup: to mix gel in.
- Plastic spoons.
- Pastry brush: 1” size or disposable paintbrushes.
- Brush: to put hair up in ponytail.
- Fine-tooth comb.
- Hair doughnut to form bun. Can be purchased at any beauty supply store.
- Hairnets.
- Hairpins.
- Bobby Pins: (small size) to pin on headpieces. Need AT LEAST 1 pack per routine.
- Rubber bands: an assortment of sizes.
- Vaseline.
- Washcloth and old towel or sheet.
- Thermos for hot water.
- Makeup: Lipsticks, eye shadows, eyebrow pencils, blush. (One of the judging components for Artistic Impression is manner of presentation. When the girls are wearing makeup, just like in the theater, their smiles and expressions are more pronounced.
- Mirror.
- Nail polish remover.
- Shampoo / conditioner (optional), to be used by the swimmers to get the “Gel” out.

Hair must be washed with warm water to get the gel out.

WARNING: Gelatin will clog plumbing. DO NOT pour any down the drain!

There is a great video on our Auburn Mermaids website (www.theauburnmermaids.com) that shows step by step how to do your swimmers hair for competition. Look under “Parent Info,” “Synchro Hair.”

Fundraising:

Fundraising is very important for the Auburn Mermaids. As an ARD program, we benefit from less expensive pool time than some of the other teams in our league, however there are many other costs involved to keep our team running.

The \$170 per swimmer fee paid to ARD to register covers pool access, lifeguards, and 1-2 coaches on deck for our Monday through Thursday practices and at home competitions. All extra routine practices (Friday, Saturday, or Sunday) must be paid for by our Parent board. The board must also pay for costumes, advertising and recruitment, team gifts, and misc. expenses such as sound equipment and pop ups for shows and competitions.

2018 fundraising will include:

- Routine sponsorships by individuals and businesses in Auburn.
- Round Table Pizza Cards
- Snack bar sales at 2 home meets.
- Our end of season picnic, raffle, and silent auction.
- “I Love Synchro” water bottle sales

We look forward to working with you all on these fundraisers so we can keep our team affordable for Auburn youth!

End of Season Watershow:

This event is the girls' opportunity to show friends and family all their hard work from the season!

Our annual show will take place the Tuesday (7/24) after Championships. The 2018 show will begin at 7pm. It will feature routines in costume performed by everyone of our swimmers as well as an all team finale. The show is free to the public and we encourage team members to invite friends who might be interested in joining our team as well.

Prior to the start of the show we will have a team dinner and awards ceremony in the park. Please plan to arrive by 5pm. Tickets for the dinner will be sold in the weeks prior to the show and we encourage family and friends to participate and help us raise a little money for the team. There will also be a silent auction and raffle at the dinner.

This is a very fun event and very important to the girls. We look forward to seeing you all there!

FAQs:

Q: What qualifications must a swimmer meet to join the Mermaids?

A: The Mermaids is open to youth ages 5 to 18. Participants must be able to swim the length of the pool (any stroke) unaided in order to join our team. Swimmers new to our team must attend one of our Free Beginners Clinics to qualify for the competition team or be placed in the Junior Mermaids program.

Q: What is the difference between Novice and Intermediates?

A: The Novice swimmers are new swimmers and those who have not yet met the requirements to move to intermediates. To become an intermediate the swimmer needs to either place first to eighth place in figures at Champs or place first in 3 dual meets.

Q: When is a swimmer considered to be on the Mermaids team?

A: A swimmer is considered a Mermaid team member when she regularly practices with the team.

Q: Is this team primarily for recreation or competition?

A: The Mermaids team belongs to the VFCAL. The VFCAL is a recreation league that comprises of weekly meets in June and July and a Championship meet (Champs) in July. There are 5 teams competing in the VFCAL.

Q: What does VFCAL stand for?

A: Valley Foothill Competitive Athletic League.

Q: Are swimmers required to compete in meets?

A: Swimmers are not required to compete in any of the meets or Champs.

Q: Who is allowed to participate in meets?

A: All swimmers that can perform the necessary figures for the meet and are registered with the VFCAL can participate in the meet.

Q: Can I do Champs and not the dual meets?

A: No. Participation in at least 2 dual meets, is required to compete at Champs.

Q: What do the swimmers do at the meets?

A: All swimmers perform figures at the meets. Some routines will be performed at the meets per the VFCAL schedule. All routines may be performed at Champs.

Q: Who determines which swimmers will do routines at the dual meets?

A: The coaches determine whether a swimmer is ready to compete in a dual meet and/or Champs.

Q: Do all swimmers competing at Champs do figures and routines?

A: No. 40 swimmers can compete in figures but not all swimmers do routines. Swimmers usually do not do routines their first year in competition. The coaches make all decisions about who will participate in routines.

Q: What do we wear at dual meets?

A: The swimmers all wear a black swim suit, goggles, nose clip and a white swim cap. This is the only required gear for our team. All these items can be purchased at our team store through Swim Outlet. See the "Team Gear" tab under "Parent Board."

Q: Where can I get a nose clip?

A: Nose clips are for sale on deck at practice. We have small and large size both available for \$4.

Q: When do swimmers need special costumes for their routines?

A: Swimmers will need costumes for routines at Champs and our annual watershow.

Q: Who decides the costume design?

A: The costume design is up to the coach and the teams costume coordinator.

Q: Who can I ask if I have questions?

A: You can ask any Coach, Board member or experienced parent. We are all willing to help and answer any questions you may have.

Q: How are routines decided? Who is included in a given routine?

A: The coaches decide who will be in a routine and which routine they are appropriate for.

Q: What types of routine are there?

A: There are routines for novice swimmers and intermediate swimmers. In each category a swimmer could be in a solo, duet, trio, combo and/or team routines(4-10 swimmers).

Q: How is information about routines communicated to the swimmers? To parents?

A: Coaches will tell the swimmers which routines they will be in at the beginning of the season (May) and parents are always welcome to talk to the coaches about any concerns regarding routine decisions.

Q: What is the season for synchronized swimming? When can girls begin training?

A: The official VFCAL synchronized swimming season begins the first week in May. The Mermaids preseason begins in March with training and conditioning.

Q: Approximately how much will it cost for my swimmer to participate? How is the fee determined?

A: The fees are determined by the Auburn Recreation District. The fees in 2017 are \$170 per swimmer for the season. The preseason conditioning and clinics are an additional cost (\$50/month or \$80/2 months including Saturday clinics). Preseason is optional.

Q: When are the practices? How long are the practices?

A: In March & April we have conditioning every Monday/Wednesday for 1.75 hours and a 2 hour clinic most Saturdays. Beginning in May practices are Mon-Thurs from 6:15pm to 8pm and will include some Friday, Saturday and Sunday practices depending on routine schedules. Coaches will send out/post a schedule.

Contacts

Team website: www.theauburnmermaids.com

Coaching Staff email: theauburnmermaids@gmail.com

Auburn Recreation District website: www.auburnrec.com