

*AUBURN JUNIOR
MERMAIDS
SYNCHRONIZED SWIM
TEAM*



*2018 PARENT
HANDBOOK*

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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.

What It Means To Be A Junior Mermaid

The Junior Mermaids Synchronized Swim Team is a recreational swim program that officially runs May thru mid- July. We also have preseason conditioning and skills clinics during March and April (for swimmers who can swim the length of the pool in depths up to 11ft without fear or need of assistance).

Our Junior Mermaid program happily welcomes youth ages 5 to 12 with a minimum swimming ability of swimming across the width of the pool with any swim stroke, unaided. Swimmers in our Junior program need a little more hands on coaching and are not quite ready to begin competing in weekly meets or championships. They focus on building the skills that will make them great future competitors.

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 on Tuesday, July 24th. This is a wonderful show to invite friends and family to come see and help you cheer on your swimmer!

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 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.
- 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.
- 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 emailed and printed information promptly. Most of the team’s information is sent via email. 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:

There are no mandatory volunteer hours or parent volunteer check due for the Junior Mermaids Program.

We need the assistance of all Junior Mermaid families for our fundraising. We ask each family to bring in a minimum of \$50 in fundraising dollars to the team to cover assistant coaches and costume costs. This money can be brought in by seeking a team sponsor (we provide the forms), participating in one of our team fundraisers (details will be available at our Back In Sync Meeting), or some families who are able choose to make the donation to the team. We do not want this to stand in the way of any swimmers and will help each family to achieve this fundraising goal as best we can.

Thank you in advance for your help and participation in our program!

2018 Important Dates:

April 2018

- Saturday, April 28th - **FREE BEGINNER CLINIC** - 9am to 11am @ ARD pool. - Followed by Junior Mermaid Back In Sync Parent Meeting at 11am poolside.

May 2018

- Monday and Wednesday Practices - 5:45pm to 7pm starting on Monday 5/7.

June 2018

- Monday and Wednesday Practices - 8:45am to 10am @ Placer Hills pool starting 6/11.

July 2018

- Monday, July 23rd - Water Show Dress Rehearsal - 6pm to 8pm @ ARD pool.
- Tuesday, July 24th - Team Dinner & Watershow 5pm to 8pm (show begins at 7pm)

Equipment:

- **NOSEPLUGS** - Worn at all times. They do fall off! It is recommended to attach your swimmers nose clip to the strap of their suit using a piece of ribbon or string. This will help prevent loss. We have nose clips for sale at practices for \$4.
- **GOGGLES** - These can be worn for practices.
- **SWIM CAP** -Any swim cap is fine (but required!) for practices.
- **SWIM SUITS** -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.mylocker.net/my/shop/auburn-mermaids227654/index.htm>

Synchro Show 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 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.

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. The \$80 per swimmer fee paid to ARD to register covers pool access, lifeguards, and 1 coach on deck for our Monday and Wednesday practices. All extra routine practices (Friday, Saturday, or Sunday) must be paid for by our Parent board. The board must also pay for assistant coaches, costumes, advertising and recruitment, team gifts, and misc. expenses such as sound equipment and pop ups for shows and competitions.

2017 fundraising will include:

- Routine sponsorships by individuals and businesses in Auburn.
- Round Table Pizza Discount Cards
- 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 after the competition team's Championships. The 2018 show will begin at 7pm on Tuesday, July 24th. It will feature routines in costume performed by every one 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 next season.

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 picnic.

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 Junior Mermaids?

A: Junior Mermaids is open to youth ages 5 to 12. Participants must be able to swim the length of the pool (any stroke) unaided in order to join our team. The skills assessment and Free Beginner Clinic (4/22) will just be a safety check to make sure the swimmer doesn't need another year of basic swim lessons prior to swimming with the Junior Mermaids. We will also further assess which of our younger swimmers are ready and would be better suited for the Competition Mermaids Team.

Q: What do swimmers need to wear/bring for practices?

A: Swimmers may wear any one-piece swimsuit they choose for practices. They will also need a nose clip, goggles, and a head cap.

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 our annual watershow. The costumes are provided by the parent board (with money from our team fundraisers). Costumes are returned at the end of the show to the costume coordinator for cleaning and storage and can be used again in future seasons.

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: 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. Schedules of any extra routine practices will be posted on our website calendar as well as through email updates.

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

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

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 2018 are \$80 per swimmer for the season. The preseason conditioning and clinics are an additional cost (\$50/month for conditioning and \$20 per clinic). Preseason is optional.

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

A: Beginning in May practices are Monday and Wednesday evenings from 5:45pm to 7pm. Beginning on June 11th Junior Mermaids will have morning practices Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:45am to 10am at the Placer Hills Pool.

Contacts

Team website: www.theauburnmermaids.com

Coaching Staff email: theauburnmermaids@gmail.com

Auburn Recreation District website: www.auburnrec.com