

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Hamilton Lakes Hornets all about?

The Hornets are one of twenty-three swim clubs within the Community Swim Association's summer league. Our swim team is designed for children ages 5 to 18 from novice to the most competitive swimmer. The team provides an opportunity for children to socialize, develop swimming skills, learn to be a valuable and contributing member of a group, and enhance their self-esteem through a healthy activity. Swimmers will learn about the overall format of a swim meet, gain experience in competition, and build social skills in a positive and safe environment. As a prerequisite, children must be able to swim at least 25 meters in under 90 seconds on their own in either freestyle or backstroke.

What is the Community Swim Association?

The CSA is Greensboro's summer swim league comprised of twenty-three local swim clubs. The teams are grouped into divisions based on how they finished in the previous season's City Meet. The teams within the divisions compete against each other in five dual meets at club pools. Some of the smaller clubs even compete in tri-meets.

What is preseason swimming?

Some swimmers in the CSA summer league swim year-round with USA Swimming teams such as GCY, GSA, and Star. These swimmers are also eligible to swim for CSA teams such as the Hornets. However, most swimmers in the CSA league enjoy swimming only in the summer and might wish to work on conditioning and stroke development in the spring before the regular season practices begin in May. To help them meet that goal, we offer several weekends of preseason practices in April and early May. The early swim fee will be \$5.00 for 8 and under (30 minutes) and \$10.00 for 9 and up (1 hour). The cost goes toward the rental of the indoor pool we use for preseason practice.

What do swimmers do during regular practice?

Our regular season practices begin in the middle of May. Before the school year ends, we practice afternoons from Monday to Thursday and mornings on Saturday. After the last day of school, we practice on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday mornings and Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons. Practices consist of a combination of warm-ups, distance conditioning, stroke development, block starts, turns, dry-land exercises, games, and cool-downs. Swimmers are divided into age groups during practice. Boys and girls of the same age group swim together. Coaches develop practice routines that are fun, engaging, and appropriate for swimmers' ages and ability.

What if I need to speak with a coach?

Communication is always welcome. That is how we improve as a team. We do, however, ask that you please avoid having lengthy conversations with coaches during practice times since it can be distracting and cut into our limited time at the pool. Please consider arriving early before practice if you need to talk to a coach. As an additional option, we encourage you to talk with one of the swim parent representatives at practice, at meets, or by email at hornets@hamiltonlakes.org . The swim rep can forward your question or comment to the head coach so the coach can contact you.

What if it is raining?

When it rains, we will usually still hold practice and meets unless we hear thunder. Swimmers are encouraged to wear running shoes and appropriate clothes for dry-land training when practicing in the pool is not possible. The City Meet at the Greensboro Aquatic Center can continue as scheduled even during thunderstorms because it is indoors and grounded to prevent the conduction of lightning.

What if I am going to miss a meet?

If you plan to miss or be late for a meet, please let the head coach or swim rep know in advance. A sheet will be posted in the clubhouse for swimmers to note which meets they are likely to miss. Telling the team in advance allows proper entry of swimmers for all events. There are a limited number of substitutions allowed at a meet. Unexpected absences create difficulties for coaches and sometimes result in forfeited points.

What are the age groups?

Swimmers only compete with other swimmers within their age group. There are six age groups: 6 & under, 8 & under (though we unofficially call this group 7-8), 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18. A 6 & under swimmer could swim in the 8 & under group if they are so inclined, but most five and six year-olds swim in the 6 & under group. The group you swim in during the entire season (from the first dual meet to City Meet) is determined by the age you are on June 1 of the current season.

What is a dual swim meet like?

Dual meets are fun, entertaining, and fast paced. Lots of volunteers are needed to make it happen. We need timers, parents to help organize the younger swimmers, card sorters, ribbon labelers, judges, etc. Count on being asked to help at a couple of meets. There are various swimming events centered on the four strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. Swimmers age 8 and under swim mainly 25 meter events in the four strokes. For 8 and unders, the longest individual distance is the 50 meter freestyle. (Swimmers in the 6 & under group only swim 25 meter freestyle and backstroke events.)

Swimmers age 9 and over swim mainly 50 meter events in the four strokes. For 9 and overs, the longest individual distance is the 100 meter freestyle and the 100 meter individual medley.

At a meet, an individual swimmer can compete in no more than five events: up to three individual events and up to two relays. About a day or so before a swim meet, entry sheets are posted in the clubhouse showing the events and relays assigned by the coaches to each swimmer.

All dual meets begin at 5:30 PM. Warm-up begins at 4:30 PM. Swimmers from each team congregate together in a designated area with their gear, towels, snacks, and water. Having the swimmers in one place rather than running all over makes it easier for organizers to call up and gather the swimmers before each event. Parents sit elsewhere around the pool deck and cheer for their swimmers. Bring your own lawn chair in case the deck seats are taken. A heat sheet (actually a lot of sheets stapled together) can be purchased before the meet for a couple of dollars. The heat sheet lists all the swimmers' heat and lane assignments. Many swimmers write their event numbers on their arm or leg with a permanent marker before the meet. This makes it easier for them to remember their event numbers.

What about heats and ribbons?

Swimmers within each age group and gender, e.g., girls 9-10 or boys 11-12, are grouped into heats based on their personal best times coming into a meet. In other words, a swimmer typically swims with other swimmers of similar ability. In dual meets, heats are ordered from faster times to slower times. (In the City Meet, heats are slower to faster.) In a dual meet, enough heats are scheduled to accommodate all swimmers entered in each event. All swimmers have an equal chance at scoring although only the top three swimmers from any one team can score points. This means that if Team A's swimmers post the fastest six times across all heats, Team A will score the top three places with Team B scoring places 4, 5, and 6 despite slower times. Ribbons, however, will be determined based on actual finish times across all heats. It is feasible that Team A in the above example will go home with the top six place ribbons.

Ribbons will be placed in each swimmer's folder in the clubhouse within a day or so after the meet. It is important to note that the winner of a heat might not have the overall fastest time across all heats. What is important is how each swimmer — regardless of experience or ability — progresses against the clock and their own personal bests during the course of the season. Regardless of where a swimmer places overall in an individual event, we place a special emphasis on recognizing swimmers of various abilities who do well in their heats or set new personal bests.

What about relays?

In a dual meet, each team can enter several relay teams for an event within each age/gender group. You will often have a Relay A, Relay B, Relay C, and so on. Swimmers are typically grouped within relays based on their personal best times. In the freestyle relay, all four swimmers will of course swim the freestyle stroke. In the medley relay, each of the four swimmers will be assigned one of the four strokes to be completed in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

What is City Meet?

CSA's City Championship Swim Meet, a.k.a. City Meet, is the season's culmination at the Greensboro Aquatic Center in July. All twenty-three clubs come together to face off in the pool to compete for trophies, medals, ribbons, and personal bests. The City Meet is fun, exciting, and a great experience. Greensboro is fortunate to have an incredible aquatic center that is second to none. The GAC is a very fast pool and swimmers will often set new personal bests there.

During the meet, teams congregate in the events center adjacent to the GAC. Swimmers play, chat, and eat in the events center while waiting on their next event. As event numbers are called, parent volunteers escort swimmers on the short walk to the pool to prepare to swim.

After they swim, swimmers go back to the events center to relax, play, and eat some more.

While most parents sit in the GAC's seating area overlooking the pool during the meet, parent volunteers are needed to take shifts supervising, organizing, and escorting swimmers.

How are the three days of City Meet organized?

The City Meet lasts three days. The Shark Meet is on Thursday while the Championship Meet is on Friday and Saturday. Both the Shark Meet and Championship Meet award their own team trophies and individual ribbons. About two-thirds of the league's swimmers compete in the Shark Meet on Thursday. About one-third compete in the Championship Meet on Friday and Saturday. The 6 & under age group only swims at the Shark Meet on Thursday.

Across all three days of the City Meet, no swimmer can compete in more than three individual events and two relays. Furthermore, no swimmer can duplicate an event, e.g., swim the freestyle relay on both Thursday and Saturday. On Thursday, there are no finals. Places are awarded based on timed heats. Heats are ordered from slowest to fastest. The best time across all heats in an event is awarded first place. A club may enter multiple relay teams for each relay event at the Shark Meet.

For Friday and Saturday, each team may enter no more than three swimmers per individual event and only one relay team per relay event. In individual events, a preliminary round of heats ordered from slowest to fastest is conducted to determine the top twenty swimmers eligible to compete in the championship final (places 1 to 10) and the consolation final (places 11 to 20). Relay events are timed heats with no finals.

Compared to other CSA clubs, the Hamilton Lakes Hornets have a history of placing very well as a team in both meets during City Meet weekend.