

General

Revised 5/4/15

What is the Orcas Swim Team and why would I want my child to participate? The Orcas are the only youth swimming organization serving the Oroville area. We are about fun, positive competition and healthy sporting activity for kids.

Where is the Orcas team located? We practice at Nelson Pool located at 2280 6th street in Oroville, CA.

How well does my child have to swim to join the Orcas Swim Team? We ask that your child be potty-trained and be able to swim across the length of the 25 yard pool unassisted. We don't expect our beginners to have great form, just the basics for how to move forward in the water. Our coaches will do the rest!

Is swimming in competition required? Not strictly speaking. However, the Orcas are a swim team and the team's intent is to bring as many swimmers as possible to meets. Competition is an important aspect in the improvement process of our athletes. This is where the results of their hard work pay off.

Do I have to "try out" for the team? There are no tryouts. We accept all swimmers who can swim across the pool and are potty trained. Swimmers will be evaluated by coaches at practice to be placed into practice groups.

How long is the swim season? Practices begin in mid-May and we finish with the North Valley Aquatic League Championship meet in the first week of August. Please see the calendars posted at Orovilleorcas.com for more specific detail.

What if I'm involved in other sports or activities? Most of our swimmers are balancing other activities with swimming. Please be aware that rate of improvement will be directly related to the time swimmers spend working in the water. Do not expect to practice twice a week and drop time at meets.

What is "Champs"? "Champs" is also used a shorthand for the "North Valley Aquatic League Championship Meet" that is held at the end of the summer swim season. To attend Champs, a swimmer must qualify by swimming at a minimum of two invitational meets during the season.

What strokes do the swimmers use in competition? Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

My child has some special concerns; can my child still join? If your child has a medical condition, such as asthma or diabetes or a preexisting injury, please make sure you let us know by disclosing this on the medical form upon registration. Our policy is to accommodate all interested swimmers whenever possible. The swimmer's safety is our first priority. We may require a doctor's release to participate in swimming activities. If your child is extraordinarily talented, we will recognize this and provide appropriate

challenges to develop them.

Where can we find answers to our questions?

Over the season we field many questions about Orcas Swim Team and the sport of swimming in general. We have various methods of communication available to help you answer them.

This FAQ. Please check here first.

Your folder. The file box will be placed on the table at Nelson pool during practice. Each family has it's own folder.

Email. You should get an Orcas update by email once a week during the season. Feel free to email orcaswimn@hotmail.com anytime.

Coaches: You can always ask your coach after practice or at a time that is convenient for both of you. You can email them anytime and they will return your email in a timely fashion.

Board members. There will be a board member on deck at practice at all times. Please get to know them, ask questions. You may also call President Nick Oliver at 990-6071 or Vice President Charlene Pritchard at 403-7687.

Registration

How do I register?

Completed packets (Registration agreement, medical form and registration fee) may be dropped off at Feather River Recreation and Park districts office, aka the Gymnastics Center, at 1875 Feather River Blvd in Oroville during normal business hours. The forms are available at the FRRPD office, at Orovilleorcas.com or by emailing orcaswimn@hotmail.com Registration with USA swimming is not included in the Orcas registration fee. It does not need to be paid at the same time, but must be completed and proof of registration provided before the first practice. The cost is \$47 plus any online processing fee. The link will be provided by email and on the website.

What is the cost?

The Registration cost is \$150 until April 30, \$170 until May 31 and \$190 thereafter. Additional costs include USA swimming membership, \$47. A team cap is included with registration, but team suits must be purchased separately.

What is the USA Swimming Membership?

It is required that all swimmers have a current USA Swimming membership. This membership not only supports swimming throughout the country, it also provides accident and medical insurance for every swimmer and every club. Each swimmer is covered at any organized practice and at every competition that is USA Swimming sanctioned.

What forms of payment can I use?

We currently accept only Cash or Check.

Is there a trial period available?

The Oroville Orcas has a strict no-refund policy on registration fees. If you have any concerns, please discuss these with a club representative before registering.

Practices

How often and when is practice? Practices are held Monday through Thursday evening. Orcas practice is 6:00-8:30, although there are several practice sessions of varying lengths within that time. Which session your swimmer is assigned to will be determined the first week of practice.

Session times will be posted on Orovilleorcas.com once the practice season is underway.

For the swimmers protection, they should arrive at the pool no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their workout time. They should also be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice is over.

Where are practices held? Practices are held at Nelson pool located at 2280 6th street in Oroville.

What equipment will I need for practice?

You will need a swim suit. We recommend a one-piece suit for girls and tight swimming shorts (jammers) for the boys. You will also need a pair of goggles and a swim cap. Swim fins and buoys will be provided. Plastic water bottles are also recommended.

Do the boys have to wear "speedos"? No, although they are still around, most boys opt for the knee-length "jammer" suit.

Should I stay and watch a swim practice? We encourage you to stay and watch. Please refrain from talking with the coach during practice. Practice is when the coach spends time with the swimmers. Please hold you questions for the coach until before or after practice. We also ask that you do not disturb your swimmers or otherwise disrupt their ability to concentrate on the coaches instructions.

Does a child have to swim in a particular number of practices during the week in order to swim in a meet? No, the swimmer would still be allowed to swim in any dual or invitational meets the team is participating in. The Orcas understand that families are busy. We offer 4 practices each week. Maximum progress over the course of the season will come with attendance at all practices.

Does my child need to wear the team swim suit during practice? during a meet? What brand and where do I buy it? It is not recommended to wear the team suit to practice. The team suit, because of their custom design and technical material are more expensive and should be reserved for meets. Information on the team suits will be posted on the team website and distributed by email.

How do you place swimmers in practice squads? The number of practice squads and which practice squad a swimmer is placed on is at the discretion of the Orcas coaching team. This is done at the beginning of the season and may be revised if necessary due to late registrations. The coaching team may recommend the swimmer to change practice squads during the season if it is beneficial to their continued improvement.

Practice guidelines:

While at practice, the swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During practice sessions, swimmers are to stay in pool area.

Coaches need to be contacted if swimmer is to be out of the water for an extended period of time due to vacation, illness, or injury.

Swimmers are responsible for their own equipment, as well as the care of any borrowed team equipment

Meets

Are swim meets required?

It is not required to swim either Invitational (weekend) or dual (Wednesday evening) meets. We do strongly encourage swimmers to measure their improvement through competition by participating in meets. Dual meets offer a lower-pressure competitive atmosphere. Swimmers times are measured for 25 and 50 yard events. Invitational meets offer stroke judging and a chance to swim against faster swimmers as well as a greater variety of events.

How do I know what swim meets are coming up?

The season meet schedule is posted on our website. Emails will also be sent to parents of registered swimmers weekly.

How do I sign up for a swim meet?

Instructions, including a tutorial, will be posted at Orovilleorcas.com. You may also ask the board member on duty during practice.

Do swim meets cost extra?

Invitational meets cost extra. Dual meets do not. Each Invitational meet sheet, which breaks down the "splash fee" and per race fees, will be distributed and posted on the website.

How do I know my child is ready to participate in a swim meet?

Orcas coaches can best answer this question. If the child can swim across the pool, they can swim in a meet.

Do I get to choose the events my child swims at a meet?

Dual meet events are chosen by team coaches. Invitational event selection is up to the parents and swimmers, though coach consultation is available if needed.

What is the required team uniform?

We encourage our swimmers to wear the official team suit. If this is not an option, a solid black suit is the next best option. A team cap should be worn during all meets to identify the swimmer as an Orca.

This is my first Invitational swim meet. What do I need to know?

- Make sure that you sign up for the meet before the deadline. Generally the deadline is a few weeks before the meet and it's difficult to get added to the meet once the deadline passes.
- If you would prefer, you can let the coaches determine what events your child should swim in. If it is a multi-day meet and you won't be attending all days, add a comment so the coaches only pick events for days your child is expecting to swim.
- The cost for meets is generally \$2 per child plus ~\$4 per event. Costs can be higher or lower though. There is usually a .pdf attached to the Swim Meet even page that indicates the costs. Relay costs are split 4 ways.
- For longer meets, many families bring blankets and/or lawn chairs to relax in between races. Also bring a water bottle, healthy snacks and something warm to wear for swimmers. There are usually concessions available for purchase with cash.

What is swim meet protocol?

- Arrive 15 minutes before scheduled warm-ups
- Check in at meet check in table
- Write event numbers, heat, and lane on body
- Check in with Orcas coach poolside
- Sit with team at meets
- Buy a meet program
- Warm-up with team
- Have swimmer speak with coach prior to and immediately after each event
- Disqualification (DQ) is a part of learning the sport of swimming. This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive an award for that event nor can their time be used as an official time
- All questions regarding meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of the meet, should be referred to the coaching staff
- Sessions typically last 4 hours
- If relays are included, they are usually at the beginning or end of session. Please check with your coach to verify your swimmers relay status.
- Swimmers are expected to stay hydrated and fueled during competition
- Swimmers should come prepared to meets. This includes their team suit, cap, goggles, sweats, socks, and towels (please bring more than one of the pre-mentioned, as they can fail or become soaked). Blankets, chairs, and other items to stay comfortable between events is highly recommended. Games, books, cards, and other items to keep swimmers occupied with teammates is also highly recommended. Please pack healthy food and snacks, and water.
- Parents: the pool area is usually very warm. Dress appropriately. Meets can be long; a book or project can keep the time between races from going slowly! Bring Shade.

Are meets held every weekend?

No, the Orcas swim in 5-6 team meets each season. The meets will be posted on the calendar on the team website and registration information will be distributed by email as it becomes available. You may swim in as many or few of these as you like. Entry to the NVAL championship meet at the seasons end requires swimmers to have participated in two meets during the season

Is there a lot of travel involved?

We have 3 home and 3 away dual meets. All invitational meets will require travel. Rideshares are usually available.

What is a dual meet and what other kinds of meets are there?

A dual meet is held between two swim teams. One swim club is the host team and the other is the visiting team. Swimmers participate in two individual events plus relays. Times are recorded, but there are no stroke and turn judges.

Invitationals feature many swim teams, swimmers may participate in as many events as the meet rules allow and stroke and turn judges are on deck for all events.

Where can I find directions to the swim club we are visiting?

For Dual meets, the weekly email update will have the address of the pool we are swimming at. The meet sheet of each invitational meet will have directions to the pool.

What can I do to help prepare my child for a meet?

Make sure they are well fed, well rested and bring everything necessary for success

What is a "heat"?

An event may be divided into multiple "heats." Usually a dual meet will only have one heat in each event with 2 to 8 swimmers depending on the number of swimmers and the size of the pool. The championship meets with multiple teams often have multiple heats of each event to accommodate the large number of swimmers.

What is a relay? And what stroke(s) do the swimmers use?

Relays consist of four "legs" with a different child swimming each leg. The distance varies with the age group from 100 meters (four lengths of the pool) for the younger age groups to 200 meters for the older age groups. You can review the full list of events to get a feel for where the relays occur in the meet.

There are two types of relays: medley and freestyle. The medley relay has four different legs: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle. The freestyle relay has four legs of freestyle.

How is it determined what swimmers will be on a relay?

The coach makes this decision. There are a variety of factors involved.

What does DQ mean?

Disqualification - this can happen for a variety of reasons including starting early (false start), leaving the diving block early in a relay, performing an illegal stroke, performing an illegal turn, not touching the wall with two hands during a breaststroke turn, etc. If you'd like to learn more, see the Swim Meet Officials section below.

Are kids DQed a lot?

It depends who you ask. The younger swimmers, especially the 8 & under age group tend to have more problems early in the season. As they are learning, they may feel that they are being DQ'ed every time they get in the water. But you'll see a DQ from time to time in every age group.

If your child is disqualified, try not to get upset about it. Your swimmer will be unhappy enough about it without having your emotions adding to the situation. If you think there was an error made, then discuss it calmly with the coach. Do NOT discuss it with the officials. Let the coach do that if it is appropriate.

How do swimmers earn ribbons and medals at meets?

This will be described in the meet sheet, available when registering swimmers for invitationals.

How can I best help the team?

Support your child by bringing them to practice, preparing them for the meet and cheering for them and the team at the meets.

Volunteer to help out at a swim meet or with other swim team duties. It's an all volunteer effort and there is always something more that can be done.

Consider becoming a stroke & turn judge, starter or referee. The officiating is all volunteer and it always helps to have more people trained to step in when others have scheduling conflicts for a meet. You may also enjoy the meet more when you know the rules well.

Who participates in championship meets?

One of our team goals is to send as many swimmers as possible to the Championship meet(s). The Championship meet is a special experience and extremely important in the athletes development. If a swimmer works hard to qualify please send him/her to the meets the coach is encouraging him/her to attend. It is a let down to miss the championship meet if a swimmer has properly prepared for it and it will cause a decrease in motivation for future preparations. To insure that our swimmers are properly prepared for their championships:

Meet attendance and participation throughout the entire season is important. Invitational meets offer the experience necessary to prepare for the championships.

Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains on. Consistency is the key word.

There is always a higher level to strive for; for many swimmers the state championship is not the ultimate goal. It is a seasonal goal that will lead to Zones, Junior and Senior Nationals and beyond. The goal is to be as prepared as possible and perform to the best of one's ability at the meet, not just to qualify for the meet.

Swim Meet Officials and Timers

How is a meet officiated and who are the officials?

A swim meet will have a referee who runs the meet, a starter who announces the event and starts the swimmers, multiple stroke and turn judges, a head timer and multiple timers for each lane. You'll get the hang of the flow of events at an "A" meet very quickly. The pace is rapid since there are 66 events. The "B" meets are less formal and tend to be more chaotic, but just like the "A" meets, they're fun!

I see some parents timing the events. Can I do that too?

Sure. At "A" meets, there are three timers required on each lane. At "B" meets there are usually only two timers and one is all that is required since the times are unofficial. See the head timer if you are interested in timing. If there are already sufficient timers the head timer may take your name to have you as an alternate if someone has to leave or take a bathroom break.

If you are a timer, make sure you use the strobe light instead of the horn for starting your stopwatch. This is why you may see timers craning their necks around the swimmers or other timers to make sure they can see the strobe light.

Although each lane has three timers, there will be two timers from the opposing team timing your swimmer. Likewise we will have two of three timers doing the timing for the opposing team's lanes.

Why do the timers have to go to the other end of the pool for some events?

The 8 & unders and 9-10 groups have some 25 meter events. They dive off the blocks (or start from the wall for backstroke) and swim one length of the pool. The timers have to see them touch the wall so they are located at the opposite end of the pool from the starting blocks.

By the way, it is legal to start from the side of the pool instead of a starting block. You may see this with some of the younger swimmers who are not comfortable diving yet.

The 11-12 year-olds and older have all 50 or 100 meter events. They start and end on the same edge of the pool by the starting blocks.

Being an official looks like fun and/or I want to help the team by being an official. How do I find out more?

There are free clinics to teach you the rules at the beginning of the season. Please email the team at orcaswimn@hotmail.com for more information.

Hey, my kid was just DQed! What can I do about it?

Talk to your coach. Do NOT talk to the officials.

I'm sure that kid just did an illegal turn on his backstroke, but he wasn't called for it. Who do I complain to?

It's not really a parent's place to find fault with the officiating. If you feel strongly that there is a problem with the officiating then you should talk with one of the swim team representatives or the coach. They can best decide how to proceed, but the officiating is really under the direction of the hosting club's referee.

That's a strange looking freestyle stroke. Is that legal?

Almost anything is a legal freestyle stroke. If you want the official word you should attend one of the officiating clinics.

Coaches

Who does the coaching and what are their certifications?

We have a staff of professional, experienced coaches who love what they do. They are all certified through USA Swimming and are required to maintain CPR, Coaches Safety & First Aid plus other coaching certifications.

What is the coach's role?

We are teachers. We want our swimmers to be well rounded and learn solid values from their participation on our team. We are responsible for stroke instruction and training. Each squad's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group. The coaching staff will also make decisions on competition schedule and events entered.

At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. Immediately following each race, the coaches will offer constructive feedback regarding the swimmers performance. Relay team members are selected by the coaches.

Parents

How can I best help the coach help my child?

Bring them to practices regularly, prepared and on time. Be supportive and let them enjoy the sport. Let the coaches do the coaching.

How do I let a coach know when we can't attend practice or be at a meet?

Please let the coach know as soon as possible. It's helpful to put it in writing since the coaches are trying to coordinate many swimmers on the team and a verbal notice is more likely to be forgotten.

What if I have an important message to tell the coach during a swim meet?

Wait until the coach is not busy and then briefly tell them your message. The coaching staff is focused on supporting the swimmers during the meet so please leave them free to do that as much as possible. There is a board member on duty on the pool deck at all times.

It looks like there is a lot to do to run a swim team. Can I help?

Yes! Please see a swim team representative for additional ideas. Finally, talk to your friends and neighbors and bring them out to join the team!

What volunteer opportunities are there for me as a parent?

Oroville Orcas Swim Team is a parent-run, volunteer organization. We rely on families to participate in our fundraising activities throughout the season. These can include:

Hosting swim meets in June and July

Volunteering at our home swim meets

Obtaining sponsorships from area businesses

Assisting fundraising efforts (Swim-a-thon and Spaghetti Dinner)

May parents attend practices? What is our role?

Spectators are discouraged from being directly poolside. You are welcome to watch practice from a reasonable distance. While at practice it is best for the children to have one authority figure in sight so that they are paying attention and developing a good athlete/coach relationship. It is important that your child has one coach and does not receive mixed messages or different advice than what our professional coaches are giving them. We ask that you respect this relationship and we recommend that you come to us with any questions or concerns as they come up. The best thing you can do for your child is to encourage his/her commitment and let them know you support and love them no matter how they perform. Our coaching staff will take care of all of the correction and teaching. Swimming is a difficult sport and the kids will learn a lot about success and failure and how to deal with both.

I can't be at the swim meets. Can I help in other ways?

Yes! See a swim team representative for ideas.