



Hello everyone,

Thank you for your interest in the Hershey Country Club Swim Team. This is my first year coaching the team and I am very excited. I have coached other teams in the past and swam competitively for a good majority of my high school years and into my 20s.

Many of you have participated in the team in previous years and we welcome all the new additions. So I wanted to take a moment to go over some of the changes to the program and my general philosophy and expectations so we can all start the season the same foot.

First of all, this is a really fun team. The major goal is that everyone has a great time. This is a wonderful opportunity for the kids to meet other children and start to build that camaraderie that comes from being on a team and working toward the same goals. To that end, it is not expected that anyone is a professional swimmer in order to join. We have several that are starting to swim for the first year and we have lots of returning swimmers. If you commit to participate on the team you will be given ample opportunities to swim; regardless of skill.

Secondly, I am not worried about ribbons, placing, medals or trophies. Yes, those are all nice things and we will definitely strive to achieve that. However, the most important accomplishment is individual growth. I am more excited about seeing a swimmer improve their skill, master a flip turn, or drop time off their race than I am anything else. While swimming is a team sport, it is driven by individual achievement and commitment to improve oneself. All I ask is forward progress!

Third, previous policies stated that you were required to swim at all practices in order to participate on the team. This will no longer be the case. The fact is that there are a variety of skill levels. Many swimmers are already swimming on much more competitive leagues. If your children are swimming with another competitive program we will still allow you to participate with the team in meets and any other practices you are able to attend. After all, the goal is to build relationships. No one will be ostracized because they are not able to make every practice because they are swimming on other teams.

Forth, I have arranged the schedule to try and be as accommodating as possible to the greatest number of people. I am sure this will still conflict with some schedules. Please don't let that prevent you from participating. Contact me and we will see if there is any way we can make arrangements. There are many families with swimmers in multiple age groups. Rather than try and shuffle multiple schedules we are implementing a swim practice period of two hours. During that time, all swimmers are welcome to participate. They can stay as long as they want. This will allow for more flexibility in schedules and hopefully a higher level of participation.

By having the entire team together for practices, the younger kids can learn by observing the older kids and there is a greater chance for the team to bond. It is my hope that the kids will be able to attend at least an hour a day. Anything helps though. We will also have several older swimmers that are too old to swim on the team as well as two assistant coaches help with practices. I am a big believer in getting in the water with the kids. There is only so much you can teach from the side of a pool. We will group the

kids by reasonable age brackets and skillsets. We will work with those groups to improve them as much as possible.

This brings me to my last point. Since many swimmers don't swim competitively on any other team we will be ensuring that those swimmers get enough attention on the basics to provide the greatest, sustainable results. This will include things like starts, turns, breathing, and basic stroke mechanics. As they improve on the basic skills we will work on fine tuning performance and strategy. I can't emphasize enough that we are only worried about everyone improving. If we do well there, the rest will follow.

I hope you will all come and enjoy this summer with us. We have a great schedule and it is a great time to enjoy the summer and the great families in our community. We welcome anyone that wishes to participate; including parents and older siblings. There is a lot that goes into the team and the meets so the more the merrier.

I look forward to meeting all of you.

Sincerely,

Coach Sam

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