

Alamo Area Aquatic Association

North East Aquatic Team

Parent Guide

Blossom Athletic Center

Bill Walker Pool / Josh Davis Natatorium

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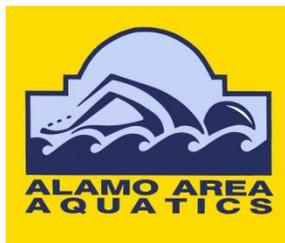
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AAAA-NE Mission

The Team's mission is to offer children and youths an opportunity to be a part of a competitive swimming program and to provide the best learning environment possible for every swimmer to achieve success.

Philosophy

The Team is organized to offer a competitive swimming program for young athletes five years of age and older, which also provides instruction and training throughout their lifetime. AAAA-NE offers professional instruction for swimmers of all ability levels. The athletes are grouped according to skill, proficiency, ability and age. All children grow and develop at different rates, therefore, their rate of progress, in terms of mastery of skills, will likely be different for each child. Swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend as many practice sessions as possible and ALL practice groups do keep accurate attendance records. It is understood that children are often involved in multiple activities and we encourage them to explore those interests and engage in as many extra-curricular activities as they can. Keep in mind that each swimming workout that is missed will affect a child's ability to master their swimming skills. We encourage parents to be involved with the program and ask questions when necessary.

Facility Rules/Restrictions

- All Northeast ISD facilities are tobacco and vape free.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
- Cameras and / or cell phones are NOT ALLOWED in the restrooms or locker rooms at any time.
- Athletes must be supervised by a coach while in the weight room. Proper attire is required before entering the weight room facility. (Close-toed shoes, shorts, shirt). The weight room is for athletes only and is off limits for outside patrons and parents.
- Lockers located in both Walker and Davis locker rooms are reserved for NEISD High School athletes ONLY. All unauthorized locks will be removed and the contents removed.
- Parents must remain in the stands during practice times. Parents are not allowed on the Davis deck at any time. In the Walker facility, parents must remain in the bleachers. Parents are not permitted behind the blocks, on the bulkheads or on the opposite side of the pool from the bleachers.
- Parents are not permitted to interrupt coaches during practice times. If you need to speak with your child's coach, please schedule an appointment before or after practice time.

Team Administration

AAAA-NE is operated and managed overall by the North East Independent School District and is a member of the Alamo Area Aquatic Association (AAAA), South Texas Swimming, Inc., and USA Swimming (USA-S). All team members are registered with USA Swimming.

The Head Coach, who is also the NEISD Assistant Aquatic Coordinator, manages the day-to-day operations of the team. There are also ten to fifteen assistant coaches and other administrative and technical personnel who work together to support the team.

Training Facilities

AAAA-NE utilizes the Josh Davis Natatorium and the Bill Walker Pool, located at the North East Independent School District's (NEISD) Virgil T. Blossom Athletic Center. The Center is also known as North East Stadium and is located at the intersection of Jones-Maltsberger Road and Starcrest Drive just north of the San Antonio International Airport. It is also bounded on the west by East Bitters Road. The Zip Code is 78216.

The Bill Walker Pool was constructed in 1962 and features sixteen 25-yard lanes and a six 20 yard-lane training pool during the fall and winter short course season and is converted to eight 50-meter lanes for the spring and summer long course season.

The Josh Davis Natatorium opened in April of 2001 and is configured with eight 25-yard and 25-meter lanes with 0.75 meter buffers outside lanes one and eight. There are four 1-meter diving boards and two 3-meter boards. The facility was designed especially for competition swimming and has a minimum depth of seven-and-one-half feet (2.75 meters). The diving plummet depth is 14 feet (4.25 meters). The facility has off-deck seating for approximately 1500 spectators and serves as the home pool for NEISD's seven high school swim teams. Each year the Natatorium plays host to several UIL District and Regional, NCAA Conference Championships and the TAPPS State Championships. The facility also has a strength and conditioning room, as well as offices and classrooms for aquatic related instruction.

Team Sponsorship



Alamo Area Aquatic Association is sponsored by Arena USA. Associated with this sponsorship, each swimmer is **required** to be outfitted in our Arena Team Apparel as follows: Navy Blue Arena Warm-up Pants, Navy Blue Arena Warm-up Jacket, Navy Blue Arena Backpack, Navy Blue Arena swim suit, and a Yellow AAAA Team Swim Cap. An AAAA Team patch will be provided with purchase of above items.

Competitive Seasons

AAAA-NE is a year around (11 month) program that is divided into two competitive seasons: Short Course (25 yards) and Long Course (50 meters).

The Short Course Season runs from early September through the end of March and is signified by swimming competitions held in short course competition facilities that are 25-yard or 25-meters in length. Racing distances include: 50, 100, 200, 400, 500, 1000, 1650 yard events.

The Long Course season runs from April through August and is signified by competitions that are conducted in pools measuring 50-meters in length. Racing distances include: 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, and 1500-meters. The Olympic Games and US National Championships are conducted in a 50-meter course.

Team Structure

AAAA-NE is divided into three main programs: **Senior, Age Group, and Developmental**. Each of the three groupings is designed to provide a competitive swimming experience that is age and skill-appropriate for each athlete. Group and Team size are limited to ensure a safe learning and training environment.

Each of the three divisions and the groups within them are designed to teach and promote specific competitive swimming skills appropriate to each level of training. Swimmers are advanced from group to group as they meet qualifying standards and other qualifying criteria listed below. The initial decision for advancement from one group to another rests with the lead coach of each group and then is discussed and confirmed with the staff. A swimmers age, skill level, and maturity will be key factors in the decision to advance an athlete to another group. Other factors will include commitment level, practice attendance, athletic and training abilities, meet performance, talent level, space availability and coaches discretion.

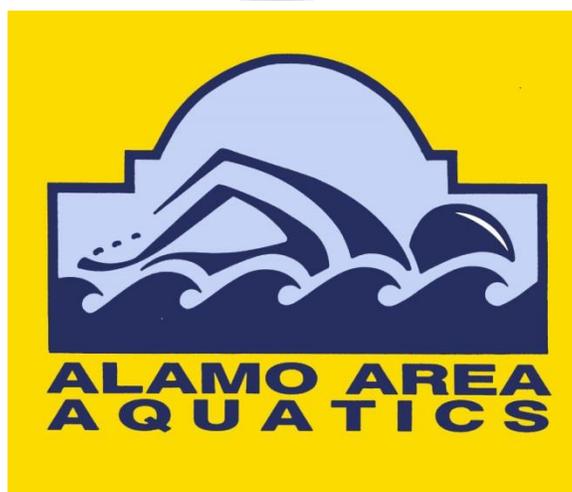
The Developmental division of the team is geared toward the six to 11-year-olds who have not mastered all four strokes. The Age Group division is geared towards the six to-14-year-olds (through eighth grade) who are proficient and legal in all four competitive strokes, while the Senior division is designed for the 14-18 year olds (ninth through 12th grade). Collegiate swimmers who may return during their various academic breaks will be placed accordingly. Workouts, season plans, meet schedules and expectations will be based on the athlete's age and skill level.

The Developmental Division is divided into three practice groups based on skill level (**Bronze One, Bronze Two, Bronze Three**). Each group is associated with specific stroke skills which will determine in which group an athlete will be placed.

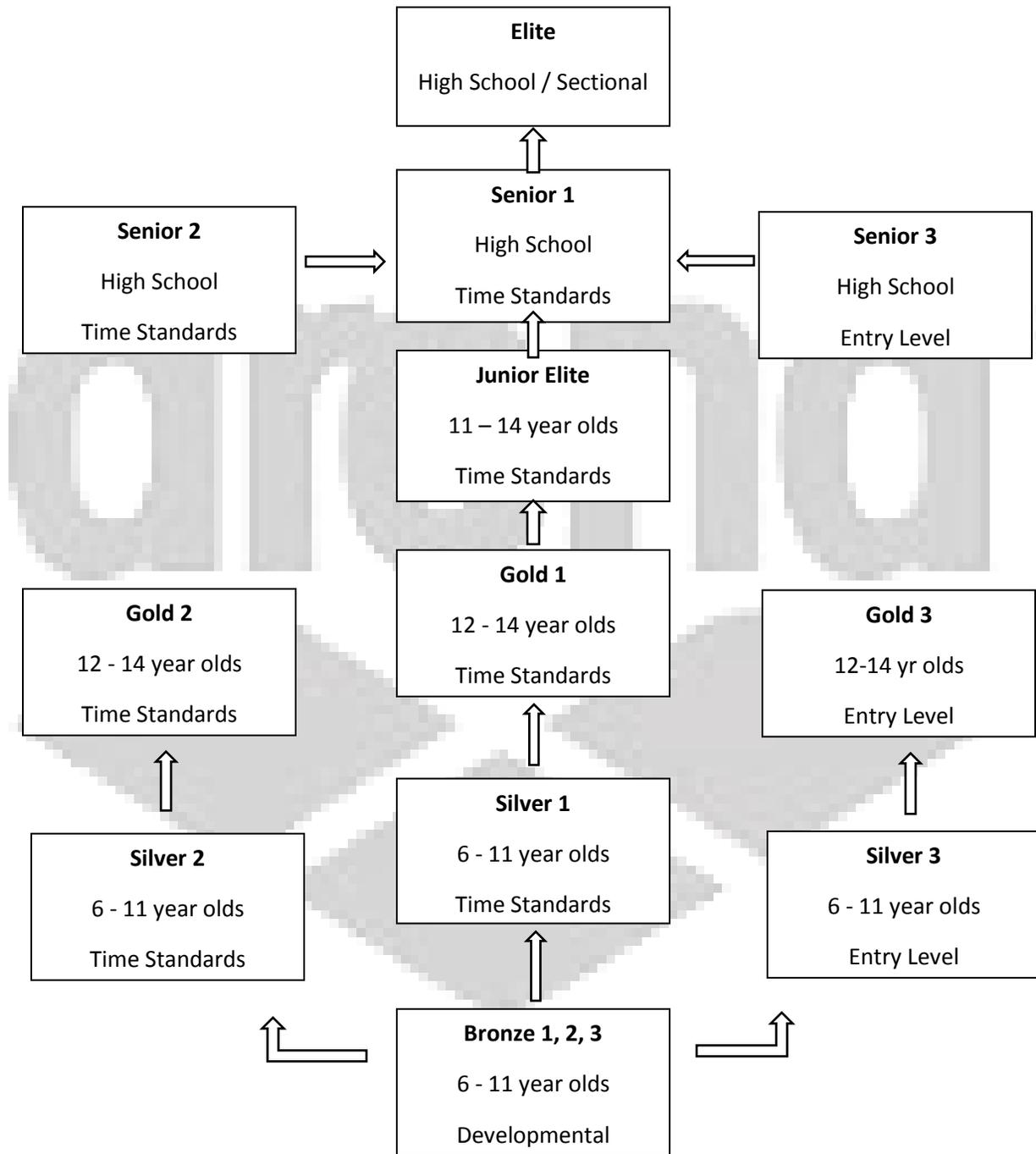
The Age Group Division is divided into seven different practice groups based on age and skill level. There are three groups for swimmers 11 years of age and younger (**Silver One, Silver Two, Silver Three**), three practice groups for swimmers ages 12-14 (**Gold One, Gold two, Gold Three**), and one group for swimmers ages 11 through 14 (**Junior Elite**). While age will be a pre-determining factor in which group a swimmer will be placed in, the combination of skill mastery, maturity, performance, and achieved time standards will ultimately determine with which group he / she will train.

The Senior Program is designed for High School aged athletes and is divided into four separate practice groups (**Elite, Senior One, Senior Two, Senior Three**). Elite swimmers are selected by the Head Coach based on Sectional qualifying time standards, performance, skill, and level of commitment. All other Senior groups will be based on the posted qualifying time standards, performance, skill, and level of commitment. The sizes of the groups are carefully controlled to ensure maximum utilization of both coach and pool resources. Group sizes are restricted mainly due to the availability of pool space and time. Swimmers who are unable or unwilling to seek and maintain attendance and performance expectations will be dismissed from the team.

During the High School Swim Season (September through February), the AAAA-NE meet and workout schedules are carefully coordinated with the NEISD Aquatic Coordinator in order to maximize water time and coaching resources. Every effort is made to take into consideration the High School training schedule for each athlete when making group placement decisions. However, minimum criteria must be met by each athlete in order to be a part of the Senior Program.



Group Flow Chart



Link to website page that has Time Standards per group

<https://www.teamunify.com/SubTabGeneric.jsp?team=stneat&stabid=83023>

Group Placement Philosophy

Movement from one practice group to another is often a complicated and sometimes contentious issue. Such decisions are based on several factors not the least of which is coaching instinct. There is, however, a team-wide big picture philosophy which ultimately drives most group placement decisions. It is our goal in outlining this philosophy to inform the swimmers and their families so that a better understanding of the process and procedures governing group placements can be realized. AAAA-NE coaches have many years of experience in successfully placing swimmers in appropriate practice groups and they rely heavily on the collective wisdom of the entire coaching staff when these decisions are made. Some of the more important factors driving group placement decisions are: Commitment (attendance at practice, meet participation, prioritization of the sport, etc.), maturity (chronological age, physiological age and emotional development), training ability and technique. Times achieved in competition are generally not a primary factor, although time standards are an important consideration when moving a swimmer from one practice group to another.

The practice group into which a swimmer may be placed determines a “floor” rather than a “ceiling”. That means each group has different standards for membership (the floor), but does not have upper limits on achievement (the ceiling). In no way does group placement communicate a belief by the coaches regarding that swimmer’s potential. Your athlete’s group is not meant to be a predictor of future success nor an indicator of his / her worth to either the team or the coaches.

Finding the most appropriate practice group for your athlete is our goal, and doing so is our challenge. As swimmers grow physically and emotionally (often quite rapidly), their needs also change. The more we can think and talk in terms of appropriate groups and changing needs, the healthier our team culture will be.

We understand that group moves themselves can create change in your lives as parents. Changes in practice schedules potentially alter and affect other activities such as car pools, team costs, coaches, and expectations. But in a manner similar to moving from Middle School to High School or from one level of a school subject to the next, these moves can and probably should be looked upon as necessary steps along the path to success.

As a final note of consideration, we would like to discuss the athlete-coach relationship. Here at AAAA-NE, we believe that teaching each swimmer the ownership of the sport is critical to self-development and success. Their swimming is their own and nobody else’s. A major part of that ownership is establishing a relationship with their coach built on trust and open communication. Therefore, any discussion about practice group placement must be primarily, if not entirely, between athlete and coach.

A face to face conversation with the coach can go a long way towards alleviating any concerns or misunderstandings a swimmer might develop. We ask that you encourage your athletes to communicate with the coach if they have questions about their group placement, even at a young age. It might not be an easy talk for them to have, but all coaches will have increased respect for a swimmer who comes to them directly with questions. Taking that step for a young athlete is empowering. Rather than acting as an intermediary between coach and swimmer, try to support and encourage your athlete to communicate with their coach on their own. Belief in one’s team, coach, and group is necessary to achieve potential. The staff will always welcome questions and concerns from parents regarding group placements; however, we want to allow the coach-athlete relationship to flourish.



Group Placement Criteria and Considerations

- Level of Commitment
- Practice Attendance
- Level of Maturity and Personal Responsibility
- Age and Previous Experience
- Stroke and Skill Development
- Meet Performance / Time Standards Achieved
- Space Availability
- Training ability
- Meets Test Set Requirements of New Group

Practice Group Promotions

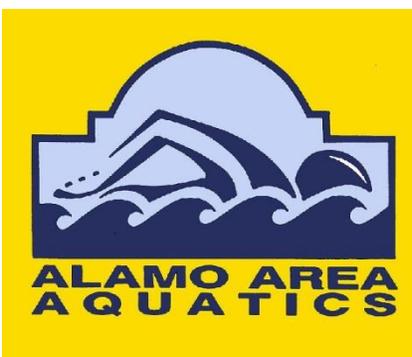
Swimmers Under Consideration:

1. Consistently make choices that demonstrate a willingness to make a level of commitment expected of swimmers at the **next** level.
2. Meet or exceed attendance expectations for their current group and clearly demonstrate an ability to meet or exceed the attendance expectations for the **next** level.
3. Consistently train above the level of their current practice group.
4. Clearly demonstrate an ability to train successfully on base intervals for the **next** practice level.
5. Have mastered the stroke and skill expectations of their current practice group.
6. Exhibit levels of maturity and responsibility typical of swimmers at the **next** level.
7. Match the age and experience parameters for the **next** training level.
8. Have demonstrated potential to compete successfully at the general level of competition of the **next** level.
9. Have achieved the required time standards for the **next** level.

Practice Group Demotions

Swimmers Under Consideration:

1. Have demonstrated they are not willing to make the commitment level expected of the practice group.
2. Attend practice consistently less often than the group expectation.
3. Are not training successfully on base intervals for the practice group.
4. Need injury rehabilitation at a less strenuous level.



Competitions

As members of AAAA, age group swimmers should expect to participate in a variety of swimming competitions throughout the year. The competitions in which your athlete will compete will most often be based on qualifying times established by USA Swimming. Below are the classifications of swim meets.

Unclassified	No Time Standards
“C” Level	Slower than National “B” Time Standard
“B” and Faster	At least a National “B” Time Standard
“BB” and Faster	At least a National “BB” Time Standard
Championship Meets	STAGS, TAGS, Sectionals, Jr. Nationals, Nationals, Olympic Trials (All have separate qualifying standards)

During the High School Season, most Senior level swimmers will have an opportunity to compete in both High School and USA Swimming meets, including Championships at the District, Regional and State levels. The latter two require the achievement of increasingly difficult qualifying times. At the conclusion of the High School season, senior swimmers compete in USA Swimming competitions including but not limited to:

- STAGS (South Texas “A” Championships)
- Sectionals
- Texas Senior Circuit Meets
- Junior Nationals
- Senior Nationals
- US Open
- Open Water Nationals
- Arena Grand Prix
- Olympic Trials

Entering a Swim Meet

A list of recommended swim meets will be posted on the team website (www.aaaa-ne.com). The coaching staff selects the meets that their practice group will be attending for the season in advance. Meets not listed on the website schedule have not been approved for our team to attend.

Coaches will select their swimmer’s events once your child has been committed online to attend a swim meet. Online commitments must be received prior to the event deadline in order for your child to be signed up for the meet. We encourage swimmers to attend at least one swim meet a month in order for the coaches and swimmers to gauge their progress.



Annual Registration / Monthly Dues

Members are required to register their athletes upon joining the team. There is both a USA Swimming Fee as well as an AAAA-NE Club Fee associated with that registration and both must be paid annually. In addition to the annual registration fees, each member will also be responsible for their monthly dues associated with the practice group in which they are placed. Dues vary from group to group. A list of monthly dues can be found on our website (www.aaaa-ne.com) and are subject to change periodically. Typically any changes to monthly dues will occur annually and the members will be notified in advance of such changes. All NEW swimmers are required to provide the office with a copy of their birth certificate. All swimmers transferring from another club will need to provide a "transfer form" which can be located on the South Texas Swimming website (www.stswim.org). Please note that ALL accounts are inactivated at the end of each Long Course season and MUST be re-activated prior to returning for the Short Course season. ***Failure to properly register your athlete and/or pay monthly dues will result in your child being dismissed from the team.***

Account Status

If for any reason you decide to remove your athlete from the program, you MUST contact our office for the necessary steps to do so. You will be asked to fill out an inactivation form and pay your account in full. If you are transferring to another club/team in the San Antonio area, you must complete one full year with that team before having for the option to re-join AAAA-NEAT. On occasion you might need to remove your athlete for a short period of time due to an injury or school work etc. In this instance, you will still need to contact the office and fill out the necessary paperwork. When your child is ready to return, simply notify the office so that we can re-activate your account. ***Failure to report your child going inactive will result in your account continuing to be billed. All unpaid account balances can and will be turned over to collections.***

Competition Fees

In addition to monthly dues, each member will be responsible for any fees associated with competitions they attend throughout the year. Meet fees vary and will be posted on your account after the competition has been completed. Once the entry has been sent to the meet host you will be responsible for all meet fees regardless of whether or not your child attends the meet. ***Any and all accounts with a balance of 60 days past due will be restricted from entering swim meets. Once a balance has reached 90+ days without contacting our office, your account will be placed on an inactive status which will result in your child / children being dismissed from the team.***

Parent Volunteers

As with any youth sports program, we rely heavily on volunteer help from our parents. There are several ways a parent can help as a volunteer with the AAAA-NE program.

1. Timers: Every parent is expected to help with the conduct of a swimming competition. If your child is competing at a swim meet, you should expect to be a timer for part of the time your child is swimming at the meet.
2. Meet Officials: A swim meet does not run without the help of many individuals. We have an excellent history of providing qualified officials at our swimming meets. Many of our officials have been invited to officiate at the State and National level competitions. If you are interested in becoming a USA Swimming Certified Official, please contact Rog Graham at jeroam@satx.rr.com or Doug Donofrio at doug311@sbcglobal.net.
3. Swim Meet Hospitality: When our facility hosts swimming competitions, we provide a coach and meet official hospitality room. When meets approach, we often will solicit families and businesses for donations for the hospitality room. If you would like to help with the running of the hospitality room, please see David Johnson, Aquatics Coordinator, for more information.

General Swimming Information

There are many different sources that offer helpful information to you and your athlete regarding swimming. Below are a few areas you might find helpful.

- www.usaswimming.org
- www.stswim.org
- www.aaaa-sa.org
- www.aaaa-ne.com
- www.stswim.net
- On Deck Parent App
- Meet Mobile Parent App
- Swimming World Magazine
- Splash Magazine

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