

**A Handbook of  
Policies &  
Procedures  
for the  
Hamden Heronettes  
Synchronized  
Swim Team**

Revised December 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Team Expectation Agreement.....1

Swimmer and Parent Responsibilities.....2

Health Policies.....3

    Medical Release Forms, Illness/Injury, Medications

Financial Obligations and Fundraising.....4

Travel Policies, Procedures, Expectations.....5

    Swimmer Behavior Guidelines for Meets, General Travel Cost Guidelines, Swimmer’s  
    Travel Checklist, Parent Volunteers at Away Meets (Team Mom, Driver, Chaperone,  
    Food Parent, All Parents, Spectator Parents)

Team Apparel, Equipment and Competition Suits.....14

Types of Clinics, Meets, and Competitions.....16

    Scoring for Figures and Routines, Zone-Region-Association Divisions, Competitive Tracks

## General Policies

### ***Hamden Heronettes Synchronized Swim Team Expectations Agreement***

1. The Hamden Heronettes Synchronized Swim Team is a competitive team. Tryouts will be conducted by the coach. Swimmers will be chosen based on the swimmer's ability to successfully complete the tryout requirements for the appropriate level as determined by the coach.
2. There is NO POLICY that governs equal pool and coaching time for all athletes on the team. This is a coaching decision based on many factors. This is a competitive athletic program.
3. Swimmers are expected to attend ALL practices and meets. Extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from attending a practice will be reviewed by the coaching staff on an individual basis. A schedule for the competitive season will be provided prior to the first meet.
4. Personal communication between the swimmer's family and the coach is the ONLY way to be excused from a practice. Messages from teammates will not be considered an excuse.
5. All Hamden Heronettes rules must be followed as outlined in the Bylaws and Handbook.
6. Any team member caught using illegal substances (alcohol or other controlled substances) will be dismissed from the team.

I have read and will abide by the expectations listed above.

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(Athlete Signature)

I have read and will encourage my child to follow the expectations listed above.

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(Parent/Guardian Signature)

## ***Swimmer Responsibilities***

### **Be respectful. Be present. Be committed.**

Heronettes must

- Act in such a way as to represent the Hamden Heronettes well.
- Respect teammates, coaches, parents, chaperones, competitors, and officials.
- Support other Heronettes both in and out of the pool.
- Acknowledge competitors in a friendly way.
- Take direction from coaches and chaperones without debate. (Discuss problems later, in private.)
- Attend practice regularly. (Attendance two weeks prior to competition is mandatory.)
- Be on time and prepared to swim.
- Notify a coach as early as possible, but no less than one hour before practice, about an absence.
- Competitions are mandatory. Clear your calendars for meet dates at the beginning of the season.
- Set high personal standards to work hard at the pool and at home.
- Wear the team uniform (as directed by the coach) to, during, and from every competition.

## ***Parent Responsibilities***

### **Support. Encourage. Participate.**

Parents/guardians can promote their swimmer's involvement and success by:

- Making sure the swimmer attends practice regularly and on time. If transportation is a problem, arrange a car pool.
- Cheering the Heronettes at competitions. (Note: Parents are not allowed on the pool deck.)
- Volunteering to help the Parents' Association. Each family is expected to provide at least one parent/guardian to serve on a standing committee.
- Attending Parents' Association meetings and staying informed.
- Supporting fund-raising activities.
- Monitoring the care of the swimmer's suits, team apparel and equipment.
- Picking up their swimmer inside the building at scheduled dismissal time. Coaches' responsibility for swimmers ends at the end of practice. All parents must be present during locker room time. (NOTE: Swimmers should never be left at the pool without either a coach or parent to supervise.)
- Paying registration fees, tuition, apparel/suits, and travel expenses promptly.
- Being sure the swimmer is properly equipped for practice and meets.
- Notifying coaches of any health problems or changes during the season.
- Supporting coaches by reinforcing the list of Swimmer's Responsibilities.

NOTE: Parents may be asked to leave the pool area during practice, at the discretion of the coaches.

## ***Health Policies***

### **Medical Release Forms**

- All competitive swimmers of the Hamden Heronettes Synchronized Swim Team will be required to have on file a signed sports release form from their Health Care Provider.
- Forms must be submitted to the First Vice President/Travel Chair by October 1st to cover the upcoming competitive season.
- They must be dated no earlier than August 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year (so that the physical will not be more than 24 months old when the season ends.)

### **Illness/Injuries**

- Swimmers with fevers, flu-like symptoms, or any other contagious illness should refrain from practice. Notify the coach prior to practice.
- Swimmers with any minor illness or injury (cold, headache, sprain, soreness, or muscle stress) are encouraged to attend practice to observe and to participate within their capacity.
- If an athlete has been seriously injured or absent due to any hospitalization or serious illness, permission to resume activities will be necessary in the form of a letter or email directly sent from all doctors that treated the swimmer (i.e. pediatrician, orthopedist, neurologist, etc.)
  - The responsible parent or guardian must keep the head coach informed regarding plans to return to the activity.
  - If the responsible parent and/or guardian have been unable to contact the head coach, he/she must contact the President of the Executive Board instead.
  - This will ensure that the coaching staff has the information they need regarding the physical and emotional situation of the particular swimmer and will be able to safely monitor the swimmer and recognize any recurring problems.
  - No athlete will be allowed to reenter the pool area, locker rooms, or any other Heronettes function until these steps have been taken.
- The staff reserves the right to ask a parent to be present at practices as deemed necessary.

### **Medications**

- A swimmer who is taking prescription medication during the travel season will need to travel with their parent or guardian if there is not a parent chaperone willing to take responsibility for this swimmer. The parent or guardian of this swimmer will sign a release removing any responsibility from the chaperone related to the administration of the prescription medication.
- The coach reserves the right to ask a parent to be present at practices as deemed necessary.
- The coach reserves the right to exclude any swimmer from entrance to the pool, locker room, or any Heronettes event if it is deemed a matter of safety for all individuals involved.

## ***Financial Obligations and Fundraising***

Funding for the Hamden Heronettes is primarily provided by the parents, working through the Parents' Association. Most expenditures are coaching salaries and registration fees for competitions.

*We are fortunate that the Hamden Parks and Recreation Department contributes pool time and a monetary allocation—many teams have to pay for pool time!*

### **Tuition\***

Swimmers will be assessed a yearly tuition based on the number of routines assigned to the swimmer. A payment schedule is determined in advance by the Board.

Tuition must be paid on time. If payment is not received according to schedule the swimmer will not be allowed to swim at practice or in competition.

### **Fundraising**

A variety of Individual, Cooperative and Team fund raising opportunities will be held during the season. Fundraisers can be used to defray any cost associated with the Heronettes: fees, apparel, costumes, and/or travel.

- a. Individual fundraiser - 100% of profits are assigned to the swimmer account
- b. Cooperative fundraiser - Profits are divided with a set percentage going to the swimmer account and the remainder to the team
- c. Team fundraiser - 100% of profits will support the team, often to offset coaches' travel

Note: Once the competitive season ends, all unused funds will revert to the team account. The Board will decide how the excess monies will be used.

\*Tuition does not cover a swimmer's cost for equipment, costumes, and travel expenses to away meets.

## Travel Policies, Procedures, and Expectations

### **OVERVIEW**

- When traveling as a team, all swimmers will dress in identical attire, as directed by their coach.
- All chaperones and/or swimmers staying together in a hotel room will be the same gender.
- Volunteer chaperones must be available and willing to chaperone all travel, competition, and other events for their assigned group of swimmers for that particular meet.
- The entire team participates together in food arrangements, whether being assessed for purchased food or dining out. If dietary restrictions are anticipated to pose a problem, families should alert the coach as soon as possible.

### **Team Travel Policies**

- Teams travel together as a group with designated chaperones and coaches. The specific travel arrangements for each meet are established by First Vice-President in consultation with the coaches.
- All activities, meals, sightseeing, etc. done as a team.
- Expenses necessary for the competition are shared by team members. These include the minimum number of vehicles, hotel rooms, and chaperones needed to accommodate the team. Also included is the cost of shared meals.
- Team members share all expenses of the coach(es), which may include a “coaches room” and/or a “coaches car” as well as meal expenses.
- The number of drivers and chaperones required will be determined by the First Vice-President and coaches. The first priority for vehicles will be to transport coaches, chaperones, food coolers, swimmers and their gear.
- Although all parents and families are welcome to attend away meets, in fairness to the team, expenses for travel and lodging will be covered only for the necessary chaperones. Food parents or drivers who are not also chaperones may or may not have their travel and/or lodging costs covered, depending on the availability of beds and passenger seats. Chaperoning responsibilities must be shared among parents during the course of the season.
- A swimmer may receive permission to return home from an away meet in her family’s vehicle or via another alternate arrangement. However, every swimmer will be assessed the travel costs home for the team coach(es) and chaperone(s).
- Estimated Costs Sheets will be issued and must be paid in full two weeks before an away meet. Revisions will be made following the meet and, based on the actual costs, Revised Cost Sheets will reflect credits to the swimmer’s account or additional money due.
- Roommate assignments are made by the coach and switching is not allowed.
- Younger girls will have at least one chaperone in each hotel room. Some older swimmers might have a separate chaperone room rather than a chaperone in each room. Rooming assignments are made by the coach, in consultation with the First Vice-President.

***Swimmer Behavior Guidelines for Meets***

- Be polite, calm , quiet, cooperative and always prepared
- Observe curfews
- Be at the pool, breakfast area, car, etc. at the designated times fully prepared
- Treat the host pool/locker areas and hotel with respect, leaving them neat and clean
- Eat according to the schedule and the guidelines
- Cooperate with and be respectful of chaperones, coaches and officials
- Be respectful of other Heronettes and your competitors
- Stay in assigned cars and rooms
- Bring and wear required uniforms and gear
- Stay with teammates in groups of at least two or three at all times
- Ask permission of chaperones before going anywhere
- For safety, keep interactions with strangers to a minimum
- Never invite anyone (other than teammates) to your hotel room
- Do not use phones, tablets, or computers at the meet venue or hotel without permission from a chaperone or coach.

## ***General Travel Cost Guidelines***

Estimated Cost Sheets are distributed in advance. Money is due two weeks before an away meet. The Treasurer will distribute cash to the designated drivers and food parents before the departure date. Chaperones, drivers, and food parents are expected to turn in receipts for their purchases within 10 days of their return.

Fundraisers may be held during the year to help defray coaches' travel expenses, which otherwise are shared among teammates.

### **Cost of Lodging**

- The First Vice-President makes all hotel reservations for the team, weighing cost, convenience, and available amenities to make the best decision for everyone involved.
- Each swimmer shares an equal portion of the cost of swimmers' rooms, the chaperone room, and the coaches' room.
- Coaches share a coaches' room together; coaches do not share rooms with swimmers.

### **Cost of Transportation**

- The designated chaperone cars transporting swimmers to and from away meets and coaches' car (if needed) are reimbursed gas money based on the government standard rate. The specific mileage for the trip there and back as well as trips to and from hotel/pool are included in the calculations.
- Additional charges such as tolls or parking are also reimbursed.
- If traveling by air, train or bus, each swimmer is responsible for her own fare and her equal portion of the chaperones' and coaches' fares.

### **Cost of Food**

- \$25 per day /per swimmer is the standard assessment for food when traveling to one- or two-day meets. (Multi-day meets require an increased per day assessment since they will involve more dining out and/or takeout meals.)
- A "food parent" brings (or sends) food in coolers "picnic-style" for lunch and snacks which are shared by swimmers, coaches, chaperones, and the food parent at the meet venue. Teams may decide to purchase a healthy lunch at the concession stand or send someone out for sandwiches, etc. instead of bringing all the food to the venue.
- If possible, breakfast is at the hotel, otherwise the "food parent" provides that, too.
- Meals not eaten at the venue may require additional funds for dining out or take out; parents will be notified ahead of time if there's a planned restaurant meal or stop en route for which swimmers will need their own money. NOTE: Coaches' meal expenses at restaurants are shared among swimmers. Chaperones and food parents must pay for their own restaurant meal.

### **Cost of Supplies**

- The Team Mom will provide make up, in consultation with the coach, for each swimmer. She will also provide Knoxing supplies at away meets.
- There may be a separate assessment for these supplies, as requested by the Team Mom.
- If there is money not used by the food parent, the Team Mom may purchase supplies from those excess funds.

## ***Swimmer's Travel Checklist***

### Things to wear when traveling

- Warm up suit (jacket and pants) \*
- Heronettes shirt \*
- White Socks
- White sneakers

### Things to Pack

- HHC green team bathing suit \*
- Black figure suit
- HHC shorts \*
- Black flip flops
- HHC towel \* + extra towels
- HHC goggles \*
- HHC backpack or duffel bag \*
- Parka (if required for your team) \*
- White bathing cap
- HHC bathing cap \*
- Nose clips (at least 2)
- Hair brush/elastics (Make up and Knox supplies are in the Team Bag)
- Routine CD or MP3 file
- CD or MP3 player plus external speaker (one for each team or small routine)
- Water bottle
- Yoga mat or extra towel for floor stretches
- Plastic bags for wet suits etc...
- Anything else that shows your Heronettes spirit!*

### Important Reminders

- Leave all jewelry at home
- Remove polish from finger and toe nails
- Label ALL of your things with your name and HHC

\* Ordered through the Apparel Coordinator

### **Special Packing Guidelines for Air Travel**

For meets at remote locations, air transportation may be necessary.

- Swimmers should pack one bag to be checked and bring a carry-on bag that contains HHC green suit, black suit, white and HHC bathing caps, HHC goggles, and nose clips.
- A chaperone must carry on a bag that contains all the Competition Suits and headpieces.
- Travel regulations may require a photo ID for travelers older than 15.

## ***Parent Volunteers at Away Meets***

The Hamden Heronettes could not function as a competitive team without the help of parent volunteers. The coaches depend on parents' help and are very appreciative of the time and effort expended. Although the swimmers may not consciously appreciate parent volunteers, they are the reason parents step up to volunteer again and again.

*Thank you in advance for volunteering!*

### **Overview of Volunteer Roles**

**Team Mom:** Supplies Knoxing and makeup, extra gear, costumes, headpieces, and Team Bag.

Cares for suits and headpieces following the meet and restocks Team Bag.

Receives free meals at the venue when traveling with the team (except at restaurants).

May also serve as a chaperone.

**Driver:** Transports swimmers, gear, food, coaches to the meet.

Receives money for mileage, tolls, parking, but not free lodging or meals.

May also serve as a Chaperone.

**Chaperone:** Stays with swimmers at the hotel and maintains their schedule during the meet (while traveling, at the hotel, and at the venue.)

Monitors their time at the venue, assists with costume changes, hair and makeup. (Because this position requires access to the locker room, it should be done by a female.)

May be either a driver or a passenger/navigator in a team car, but must travel with the swimmers to and from the venue.

Receives free lodging and meals with the team (except at restaurants).

**Food Parent:** Shops in advance for food to bring and eat while traveling and at the venue. Feeds the swimmers, coaches, and parent volunteers on a budget of \$25 per swimmer/day.

(All parent volunteers pay for their own restaurant meal.)

Receives free meals if traveling with the team (except at restaurants).

Except for the Team Mom, volunteer responsibilities must be shared among all parents during the competitive season. The Team Mom usually serves in the position for the entire competitive season, but does not need to travel to every meet or serve as a Chaperone for every meet.

Volunteers often take on more than one role at a meet, being both Food Parent and Driver or Team Mom and Chaperone, for example.

**NOTE:** Parent volunteers (including Team Moms) are NOT permitted on the pool deck at a meet venue.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

#### **Team Mom**

A Team Mom volunteer is needed for each competitive age group team. This may be a shared position. Responsibilities include:

- Works with Suit Coordinator to help with decoration of Competition Suits and head pieces.
- Stores Competition Suits and headpieces during the competitive season and cleans them after each use. Makes minor repairs as needed.
- Returns all suits to the Heronettes Suit Closet or individuals at the end of the competitive season. Reports any damaged or lost suits to the Suit Coordinator.

- Works closely with Team Chaperones before and during each meet.
- Coordinates and maintains supplies for the Team Bag. Records and alerts the Treasurer if a swimmer should be assessed for goggles, bathing caps, or nose plugs needed from the Team Bag at a meet.
- Implements a phone tree/email list for team information and scheduling updates.
- Acts as a liaison between the team parents and coaches.

#### Care of costumes

- ✓ Rinse headpieces in warm water to remove Knox. Dry flat. Never wring out headpieces. Store when completely dry.
- ✓ Transport Competition Suits on hangers marked with swimmers' names. Swimmers return wet suit to their hanger after competing. Each set of routine suits is stored together in a mesh bag.
- ✓ At the hotel, hang wet Competition Suits in the shower to dry.
- ✓ At home, rinse Competition Suits in Woolite (or similar product). Do not soak or put in a washing machine. Suits must be HAND WASHED and AIR-DRIED. Do not wring out suits or put in a dryer.
- ✓ Examine suits for minor damage and repair as needed.
- ✓ Store on labeled hangers out of direct sunlight.

#### Driver

Drivers transport athletes, coach(es), gear, and food supplies to and from the hotel, pool, events and meals at the coach's specified times.

Coaches assign the swimmers to a car.

- Before leaving, determine the departure time and location. (Often swimmers meet on the "plaza side" of Hamden High School.)
- Be aware of the arrival schedule and whether your vehicle will report directly to the meet venue or will go to the hotel first.
- Allow plenty of travel time to arrive safely and on schedule. Teams can be disqualified for arriving at the venue late. Sometimes a meet may progress more quickly than expected, so it's always better to be early.
- Evaluate weather conditions and traffic to determine, with the coaches and chaperones, if it will be necessary to adjust the departure time
- Confirm the specific travel route with other drivers before leaving the designated location. Have directions to/from the hotel and meet venue as well as to/from Hamden High School.
- Travel in a caravan when possible.
- Exchange cell phone numbers with all chaperones and coaches.
- Instruct swimmers when to call on the way home to inform their parents of the drop off time
- Follow these safety precautions when traveling:
  - Require everyone to use seatbelts
  - Seat only age-appropriate swimmers only in front seat
  - Prohibit smoking in the car
  - Abstain from alcohol use
  - Eat before departure, even though swimmers may be instructed to bring a meal to eat in transit
  - Employ a "designated communicator" to phone/text other care while driving

### **Chaperone**

Chaperones must commit to travel with the team from the time of departure until the time of return. The chaperone's time is devoted to the swimmers from departure time, through the meet, and at the hotel until they meet their parents at the end of the trip. The chaperones are expected to stay at the meet venue and the hotel with the swimmers.

- Confirm that the swimmers are always supervised and that they use the buddy system when leaving the larger group.
- Know where the swimmers are at all times.
- Enforce the bedtime, wake-up time, and breakfast designated by the coaches.
- Monitor healthy snacking, eating, and hydration.
- Ensure that swimmers behave according to the Behavior Guidelines
- Check that all swimmers are wearing the uniform specified by the coach.
- Attend to health problems that arise such as illness or minor injuries utilizing supplies from the Team Bag or the meet venue.
- Ensure swimmers are ready to "warm up" and swim in specified uniforms or costumes.
- Assist swimmers with costumes, Knoxings, headpieces and makeup according to the coaches' timeline and instructions.
- Encourage swimmers to be organized and careful of their belongings and costumes.
- Enforce the de-Knoxing prohibition of most venues.
- Assist with video recording Heronettes routines.
- Remind swimmers to inventory their belongings before leaving the meet venue. Help them check Lost and Found, if needed.
- Keep receipts of all expenses and submit to the First Vice-President within 10 days of returning.
- At drop off, answer any questions for parents regarding hotel, food, behavior etc.
- Chaperones responsibility is to the swimmers. If a swimmer's sibling is traveling as well, that sibling must be in the care of another adult for the duration of the travel and meet.

### **Head Chaperone**

To facilitate communication, one chaperone is designated "Head Chaperone." This person will have direct communication pre-meet and during the meet with the coach and First Vice-President. The Head Chaperone will disseminate information to other chaperones, food parent, swimmers and other parents.

Once everyone has checked in to the hotel, provide a list of rooms and occupants to the coaches and other chaperones.

The Head Chaperone will carry the swimmers' Emergency Medical Forms while traveling and any medications that will be needed.

Parents should contact the Head Chaperone with questions or concerns about medication, allergies, dietary restrictions, homesickness, etc.

The coaches and First Vice-President will give a Travel Information Sheet to the Head Chaperone to share with the other parents and volunteers. The Travel Information Sheet includes:

- Information about the hotel (reservation name, check in/check out times, payment, coach-assigned roommates)
- Travel details (car assignments, departure time and location, plan for meals while traveling)
- Timeline for the competition venue detailing when to Knox, put on costumes, eat, be on deck, land drill, etc. (Often Heronettes coaches have adjudication responsibilities during the meet, so the chaperones are responsible to keep the team organized at the meet venue.)

### **Food Parent**

It is important that swimmers are well fed and hydrated when at a meet. Each team's designated food parent oversees this for one- and two-day meets.

- Coordinates the purchase of non-perishable items and food/beverages for the team cooler.
- Stocks the team cooler with healthy food, snacks, water, and juice for the swimmers. Adheres to a "no junk food/no soda" rule until the competitive events have concluded.
- Takes into account dietary restrictions and allergies.
- Reminds swimmers and volunteer adults to bring a refillable water bottle.
- Handles the allotted money responsibly; \$25/day per swimmer is the standard charge for food at a one- to two-day meet.
- Turns over excess money and receipts to the First Vice-President within 10 days of returning.
- Provides food at the venue for swimmers and volunteer parents. (If non-volunteering parents want to eat from the team cooler, they must inform the food parent in advance and will be assessed \$10 per person.)
- Arranges take-out meals to be eaten at the hotel and determines the logistics of picking up food and eating together. Volunteer parents, swimmers, and coaches should all be fed with the take-out food. (If non-volunteering parents want to join the take-out meal, they must inform the food parent in advance and will be assessed \$10 per person.)
- Researches possible dining out options for the team when traveling for more than one day. (If it becomes apparent that the \$25/day budget will not cover a restaurant meal, alert the First Vice-President that a change in assessment will be needed.)
- Informs swimmers of their budget when eating at a restaurant, pays the check and tip for the swimmers and coaches. Swimmers may only order water or milk with their meal. All volunteer parents pay for their own restaurant meal.

The Hamden Heronettes own a couple of large coolers with wheels; the First Vice-President will help procure one as needed. Generally, the food items /cooler can be left unattended at the meet venue. Eating at the meet venue will be planned for individual swimmers according to their scheduled events and the coaches' timeline.

If multiple HHC teams are at the same meet, they may share food from each other's' cooler.

Plans can be made in advance for healthy meals to be purchased at the venue's concession stand or for someone to bring take out to the venue instead of carrying everything in.

Breakfast and dinners should be eaten together as a team whenever possible.

### **Suggested Food Items for the Team Cooler**

Juice, milk	Hummus
Yogurts/yogurt tubes	Lettuce for salad or sandwiches
Fresh fruit	Deli meat, cut-up cooked chicken
Dried fruit	Whole grain bread, sandwich thins, flat bread
Cheese/string cheese	Cereal bars/granola bars
Cut up vegetables for dipping or salads	Peanut butter and jelly (if no allergies)

If there are allergies, one cooler should be kept nut-free, well-cleaned, and clearly labeled.

Note: Meets that require more than two days away may not use a food parent. Instead, chaperones will plan together how the team will eat.

**All Parents**

- Before your swimmer leaves for an away meet, please review the “Behavior Guidelines” and discuss their importance.
- Remind swimmers that their public behavior and attitude are seen by others as characteristic of the Hamden Heronettes; when they are wearing their team uniform, they represent the team.
- Notify the Head Chaperone of any special circumstances for your swimmer, especially medical and dietary needs.
- Update your emergency medical information if it has changed.
- Following the meet, help your swimmer launder, organize, and repack the Heronettes uniform and gear so it’s ready for the next meet.

**Spectator Parents (not volunteering)**

- Parents and families are welcome and encouraged to attend away meets. Spectator parents make their own travel and lodging arrangements.
- Spectator parents may offer assistance to parent volunteers, but should not interfere with the timeline or scheduled plans.
- Parents are NOT permitted on the pool deck at a meet venue.
- Spectator parents may transport their swimmer(s) home from the meet venue or hotel with permission from the coach and after notifying the Head Chaperone. (Providing transportation home does not release a family from any portion of their travel assessment, which provides for round-trip transportation for chaperones and coaches as well as swimmers.)

## Team Apparel, Equipment & Competition Swimsuits

### Team Apparel and Equipment

Competitive swimmers are required to have Team Apparel as determined by the Head Coach. Team Apparel is the financial responsibility of the parents and is not included in the Fees. The design and style of the Team Apparel may change from year to year, depending on the availability from the manufacturers.

*Note: Training team and novice clinic swimmers must have a solid black swimsuit for the Watershow.*

### **Swimmer's Required Equipment List**

Needed for practices:

- One-piece bathing suit (any color)
- Bathing cap (any color)
- Goggles (any color)
- Nose clips (at least 2 pairs) \*
- Towel
- Water bottle
- Yoga mat/extra towel for floor work

Needed for Meets and traveling to Meets:

- Team warm-up suit (pants & jacket) \*
- Team shirt \*
- Team shorts \*
- Team swimsuit \*
- Team bathing cap \*
- White bathing cap
- Team goggles \*
- Team towel \*
- Team backpack or duffel bag \*
- Black flip flops
- Solid black figure suit
- Nose clips (at least 2 pairs) \*
- Hair brush
- Water bottle
- Extra towel (for Knoxing)
- White sneakers & socks
- Yoga mat/extra towel for floor work
- Team Parka (optional)

\* These items are ordered through the Apparel Coordinator and the expenses are added to the swimmer's assessment. It is requested that these Team-specific items not be used on a daily basis (going to school or practice.) It is costly to replace these items. Reserving them for meets and traveling will avoid the clothing and gear becoming lost or unusable.

A Team Makeup and Knox Box travels with each team and is maintained by the Team Mom. Each swimmer contributes financially to the team supplies.

### **Competition Suits**

Competition suits are artistic costumes designed to reflect the character of the routine. These suits and coordinating headpieces are the financial responsibility of the parents and are not included in the Fees. All suits and headpiece designs must be approved by the Head Coach.

#### ***Suits Purchased by a Swimmer:***

Any Routine Suit purchased by an individual swimmer is the property of that swimmer and will be returned to them at the end of the competition season. At that time, the swimmer may decide to submit their suit to the Heronettes Suit Closet.

#### ***Suits Rented from the Heronettes' Suit Closet:***

All rented Competition Suits must be returned to the Heronettes Suit Closet in good and useable condition at the end of the competitive swim season. Any suit not returned in good condition will be billed, at full replacement value, to the swimmer.

All Headpieces must be returned to the Suite Closet in good and useable condition at the end of the competitive swim season.

#### ***The Heronettes Suit Closet:***

- Donations: All athletes are invited to submit Competition Suits to the Heronettes Suit Closet. Suits will be accepted if they are in good, useable condition. Donated suits are labeled with the donor's name and contact information. The donor will receive a receipt for suits accepted.
- When a suit is admitted to the closet, it is housed in favorable conditions, under the care of the Suit Coordinator, in order to maintain its good condition.
- When a suit has been selected for use, the Heronettes will collect a rental fee based on the original cost of the suit and the number of seasons it has been used.
- The Suit Coordinator will submit the rental information to the Treasurer.
- The suit donor will receive \$20 for the first use of the suit. *Note: It is the responsibility of the donor to keep their contact information current.*
- Once the donor has received \$20 for the first rental, the suit becomes the property of the Heronettes. The donor will not receive additional compensation, even if the suit is rented during another season.
- Not all suits in the Suit Closet are donated. When the Heronettes purchase made-to-order suits, the first users are charged ½ the retail price as rent for that season. Subsequent swimmers who use these suits are charged a rental fee based on the original cost of the suit and the number of seasons it has been used.
- Swimmers will be charged the FULL cost for replacement of any lost or extremely damaged suit. (Normal wear and tear is to be expected.)
- Monies collected for the Heronettes Suit Closet will be used towards the purchase of new suits, trims, decorations, supplies, and maintenance of the suits. All monies will be held by the Treasurer and dispersed, as needed, to the Suit Coordinator.
- Headpieces are always the property of the Heronettes Suit Closet; they may not be retained by an individual swimmer.

## Types of Clinics, Meets, and Competitions

### Clinics

Clinics are specific sessions by “expert clinicians” designed to help swimmers learn new techniques and skills to improve their swimming.

Clinics may be sponsored by the East Zone, the Heronettes, or USA Synchro. Travel and possible overnight stays will be needed for some clinics. Clinic sessions may be noted as Bronze, Silver or Gold according to the level of swimmer skills that will be addressed.

Clinic attendance is not included in tuition fees; costs will be assessed at the time of the clinic.

### Association, Regional, Zone and National Meets

Between January and June there are several competitive meets.

The number of meets a swimmer will attend depends on the age group of the swimmer and how the swimmer places in early meets.

Some meets are “Invitational” and are excellent practice meets with no pre-qualification to attend.

Some meets are “Qualifiers” intended to pare the routine field. Later in the season, teams and small routines may have to qualify to attend the next-level competitive meet.

- “Away meets” require travel arrangements and chaperones and often require an overnight stay at the venue. The Heronettes typically attend meets in New Canaan CT, the Boston MA area, and the Albany and Buffalo areas of NY. Sometimes regular season meets are also held in PA, NJ, DE, and/or MD.
- “Home Meets” are hosted by the Heronettes (typically one or two each season.) Hosting requires the help of many people. All families are required to participate by helping to run concessions, sell souvenirs, enter data into the computer, prepare food for our menu, assist adjudicators, etc. There are also “chaperones” identified to “oversee” the swimmers.
- “East Zone Intermediate and 12&U AG Championships and 13/Over AG Opens” take place in early June. Held somewhere in the East Zone, this is the final meet for Intermediate teams and small routines. It often requires two or more days’ attendance. Some Age Group routines may also end their season at the East Zone Championships if the routine does not qualify for Junior Olympics.
- “Junior Olympics” take place in late June/early July, concluding the regular competitive season. Only Age Group team and small routines that have qualified by their excellent performance in a qualifying meet will attend. Junior Olympics is a multi-day event.
- Other National Championships: The Heronettes occasionally attend other national championships. These competitions are an opportunity that may be discussed for a swimmer or routine, and while participation is strongly encouraged, they are not obligatory events. The other US National Championships are the 13/15 Age Group Championship, the Junior Championship, the Senior Championship, and US Opens.

### **Figure & Routine Competition**

Each meet is broken into two sections: Figure Competition & Routine Competition.

Swimmers are judged in each section and the scores are combined to give a final score.

- All swimmers are required to participate in the figure competition. Failure to do so will result in the swimmer being scratched from all the competitions.
- The final score for a solo routine is derived by adding the swimmer's figure and routine scores together for a final score.
- The final score for a duet or team routine is derived from the average figure score of each participant added to the routine score to create the final routine score.
- The final score of a combination (combo) routine is only the routine score, but figure competition is required for all combo routine entrants.

Awards are given for places 1 - 8 in figures and routines.

### **Figure Competition**

Figures are compulsory movements performed individually in front of a panel of judges who award combined points, in the following categories, according to the methods of grading in the Rules section of the Official Rules Handbook.

- 5 points for Design: how well a swimmer conforms to those positions and movements specified in the figure description. Specific factors include: Precise definition of body positions, particularly the vertical and horizontal alignments, full body extension, and compactness.
- 5 points for Control: level of strength and coordination to the approach to total command of a figure performance. Specific factors include: Degree of stability, strong support for weight held above the water to reach maximum height, smooth, precise, and constant tempo between positions, and appearance of total confidence and seeming effortless performance.

Each Age Group has a different set of required figures, advancing in difficulty for each level.

Intermediate figures are the same regardless of the age grouping of the swimmers.

Four figures are judged at each meet. Two figures are compulsory for each group and will be judged at every meet in a season. The other two figures are chosen at random from three possible sets of two a few days before the meet. Figures are changed every FINA quad, or every four years.

Swimmers are required to wear solid black bathing suits and white bathing caps for the Figure Competition.

### **Routine Competition**

Routines are performed to music and in costume in solo, duet, combination, and team events.

Scores range from 0 - 10 and are based on the following categories:

- Execution (30%): Execution – the level of excellence in performing highly specialized skills. Execution of all movements. Synchronization – the precision of movement in unison, one with the other, and the accompaniment above, at and below the surface. Synchronization of timing of one with another and with the music.
- Artistic Impression (40%): Choreography – the creative skill of composing a routine that combines artistic and technical elements. The design and weaving together of variety and

creativity of all movements. Music Interpretation -expressing the mood of the music, use of the music's structure. Manner of Presentation – the manner in which the competitor(s) present(s) the routine to the viewers. The total command of the performance of the routine.

- **Difficulty (30%):** Difficulty – the quality of being hard to achieve. Difficulty of all movements and of synchronization.

### **Zone, Region, and Association Divisions**

These are geographic divisions, used to limit the number of clubs we compete against early in each competitive track. As routines qualify and progress through the competition tracks, the number of competitor clubs increases.

**Association:** For the Heronettes, this is the Connecticut (CT) Association. Currently the only two clubs in the CT Association are the New Canaan Aquianas and the Hamden Heronettes.

**Region:** The CT Association is a part of Region A, which includes also includes the Adirondack Association, which includes three clubs, and is located in upstate New York.

**Zone:** Our zone is the East Zone, which has four Regions and currently consists of 29 clubs which compete in Age Group, 13/15, Junior and Senior tracks. Including Masters and Collegiate clubs, there are a total of 38 clubs in the East Zone.

**National:** All of the clubs which are members of USA Synchro. There are four zones in the US, North, South, East and West, and hundreds of clubs.

## Competition Tracks

### **Groupings**

Intermediates: 10 & under, 11/12, 13&Over

Age Groups: 12 & under, 13/15, 16/17, 18/19

(Age Groupings are determined by year of birth, and is based on the age of the swimmer at the end of the calendar year.)

A swimmer may be entered in more than one group during a season. For example, an 11-year old with excellent skills may swim in the 13/15 Age Group team routine and also swim a solo in the 11/12 Age Group field.

**Intermediate and Age Group Track:** Competitors are divided into the age groupings shown above. Within each Intermediate and Age Group division, there are solo, duet and team routine competitions. Intermediates also have trio competition. Age Groups 13/15, 16/17 and 18/19 (combined into 16/19 for this event only) also have combination routines. Competition starts at the CT Association meet, where top three in each division and routine qualify for the Region A competition. Top three places in the Region A competition in duet and team, and the first place finisher in solo, qualify for Junior Olympics.

**13/15 Track:** All competitors must be 13 to 15 years old by the end of the calendar year. Starts at the CT Association 13/15 competition, top three places qualify for the East Zone 13/15 Championships. Top placing routines (minimum of top 4, may be more in some years) qualify for the 13/15 National Championships. Combo routines have no qualification requirement for any competition; entries are open.

**Junior Track:** All solo, duet and team routine competitors must be 15-18 years old by the end of the calendar year. Combos may include 13-14 year old swimmers. Starts at the CT Associations Junior competition, top three places qualify for the East Zone Junior Championships. Top placing routines (minimum of 6, may be more in some years) qualify for the Junior National Championships. Combo routines have no qualification requirement for any competition; entries are open.

**Senior Track:** All solo, duet and team routine competitors must be at least 15 years old by the end of the calendar year. Combos may include 13-14 year old swimmers. In Senior competition there is no Figure Competition, instead there are Technical Routines in addition to the usual Free Routines. (Example, a duet would compete in the Duet Free Routine competition and the Duet Technical Routine competition.) Starts at the CT Associations Senior competition, top three places qualify for the East Zone Senior Championships. Top placing routines (minimum of 4, may be more in some years) qualify for the Senior National Championships. Combo routines have no qualification requirement for any competition; entries are open.