



BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE DESERT MERMAID PROGRAM From the Head Coach

- ✧ We are a competitive program. We are looking at producing the best results possible. As a result, the best athletes will be selected to swim on our highest level teams and participate in more competitions or routines.
- ✧ Fair is not always equal and equal is not always fair.
- ✧ Synchronized Swimming is a subjectively judged sport. Looks, attitude, manners and behavior can have an effect on your score.
- ✧ Ability and potential are not equal with every girl.
- ✧ Coaches make decisions as to the most effective training and competitive environment for each athlete. The decisions are based on the background and knowledge of the coaching staff. Sometimes it is difficult to assess talent and potential; other times it is more obvious.
- ✧ Regular attendance will increase ability.
- ✧ Practicing at home will also increase ability.

CLUB STRUCTURE

The club has four divisions of responsibility: board, coaches, parents and swimmers. Each has separate goals and yet all must work together to provide team spirit and promote the club's mission.

OUR MISSION

To create a positive learning environment that promotes not only teamwork, but individual dedication and commitment to the sport of synchronized swimming.



PROGRAMS OFFERED:

Recreational Level I

- ✧ Our recreational program is to introduce swimmers of all ages the fundamentals of the sport of synchronized swimming.
- ✧ These swimmers will not compete but will have opportunities to swim in exhibitions and water shows that maybe scheduled during the time they are training.
- ✧ The Rec. I program swims Monday and Wednesday evenings.

Recreational Level II

- ✧ This program continues to teach and perfect the fundamentals of the sport of synchronized swimming after they have completed our Level I program.
- ✧ This program is designed to ensure that swimmers interested in moving up to the next levels have the basic skill down to be able to accomplish their goals.
- ✧ The Rec. II program swims Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Novice Level

- ✧ This program is for any swimmer that has knowledge of the basic synchronized skills and has a desire to compete possibly in local, California or Arizona meets.
- ✧ This team is a year long commitment. Swimmers must be committed to the club for the whole season – Starting October to September.
- ✧ A swimmer can move into the Novice Level from the Recreational Level I or II teams anytime during the year on approval from the Head Coach.
- ✧ The Novice Level swims all age divisions: 9 -10, 11-12, 13-15, and 16-17.
- ✧ The Novice Team trains Monday, Wednesday and Saturdays.

Intermediate Level

- ✧ This is a mid-level age group competitive swimming team. Swimmers in this group will learn all age group specific figures required during competition.
- ✧ Every swimmer is required to learn the team routine.
- ✧ Swimmers may be selected to swim in a solo, duet or trio in addition to the team routine.
- ✧ Swimmers will be trained to compete at the local and regional meets.
- ✧ This team is a year long commitment. Swimmers must be committed to the club for the whole season – Starting October to September.
- ✧ The Intermediate Teams train Monday though Thursdays and Saturdays. Times vary based on age division.

Age Group Level

- ✧ This is an advanced competitive age division. Swimmers in this level have learned everything in the intermediate class. Work on Compulsory and figure skills will continue.
- ✧ Every swimmer is required to learn the team routine.
- ✧ Swimmers may be selected to swim in a solo, duet or trio in addition to the team routine.
- ✧ Swimmers are expected to attend practices regularly. Swimmers will be trained to compete at the regional and national meets.
- ✧ This team is a year long commitment. Swimmers must be committed to the club for the whole season – Starting October to September.
- ✧ The Age Group Teams train Monday though Thursdays and Saturdays. Times vary based on age division.

Junior Level

- ✧ A swimmer in the Junior level must be at least 14 years of age to compete.
- ✧ They must have the commitment show by the performance and dedication from the Age Group Level in order to compete. This will be discussed with each swimmer and parent by the Head Coach.

Senior Level



Fees and Dues

Membership & Insurance Fees

Competitive swimmers pay an **annual fee of \$100*** to Southern Nevada Desert Mermaids. A portion of the Annual SNDM membership fee goes to the United States Synchronized Swimming Association, Inc. (USSSI). It establishes each swimmer as member of the national association, USA SYNCHRO and provides participating teams with a discounted insurance plan to cover all swimmers at practices and meets. Each swimmer receives a subscription to the magazine, *Synchro Swimming USA*. (Registration covers from September 1st to August 31st).

Non-competitive Level swimmers pay an **introductory registration of \$50*** which covers the swimmer for a 1 year period with USA SYNCHRO or they may opt to pay the Full Annual Fee. The Annual fee can not be prorated. (Registration covers from September 1st to August 31st).

Recreational Level swimmers pay a **trial athlete registration of \$15** which covers the swimmer for a 30 day period with USA SYNCHRO or they may opt to pay the Introductory or full annual fee. The Annual fee can not be prorated.

*A portion of the annual fee is sent to the West Coast Association. The remainder of the fee goes to SNDM's General Fund to offset costs of regional and national events, equipment expenses and other operating costs of the team.

Monthly Dues Structure for 2011-2012 season

Recreational Team I or II (4 hours weekly)	\$ 95 Monthly
Novice Team (6 hours weekly)	\$120 Monthly
12 & under Intermediate & Competitive (11 hours weekly)	\$230 Monthly
13 & over Intermediate & Competitive (15 hours weekly)	\$300 Monthly

There are typically no additional charges for extra practices. There will be no make up sessions for practices cancelled due to bad weather, holiday or the unavailability of the pool facilities.

All dues are payable to SNDM at the beginning of each calendar month. All payments should be paid before the 8th of that month. Late fees of \$15 charged for all payment not received by the 15th of that month. Payments can be directly given to the treasure or mailed to:

Sommer Cripps, SNDM Treasurer
10745 Qualla Crest Court
Las Vegas, NV 89129

Payments can be made on line for a nominal fee by visiting our web site NevadaDesertMermaids.com.

When a payment is not received by the end of the month, two (2) months fees become due on the first Saturday of the second month. The swimmer will not be allowed in the water and the parent/responsible party will be called to come for the swimmer. Please make timely payment in order to avoid any embarrassment to you, your swimmer and the Coach.

There is an additional \$10 "return check fee" or the actual fee charged by the bank, whichever is great, on all returned checks. Please note that returned checks may also be subject to any late fees as presented in the above paragraph.

Swimmers in the Novice, Intermediate, Age Group and Junior levels are expected to pay monthly dues for the entire Synchro season (September 1 – August 31).

A swimmer who takes an extended time off (including summer) is still responsible for monthly dues.



SNDM's budget is based upon all swimmers paying monthly dues all year in order for expenses to be met. Should a swimmer quit the team and then rejoin at a later time, new member fees will apply.

In rare circumstances, an exception to the dues rule might occur, but it must and can only be approved by the Board and Head Coach.

Team Distribution & Additional Routines

Teams are comprised of four (4) to eight (8) swimmers. Most beginner swimmers initially swim with a team only and the other events are added as the swimmer gains more experience. Exceptions are sometimes made when there are not enough beginner swimmers to make a complete team. Then they may swim as a duet or a trio to be able to participate in meets. Swimmers are grouped by age and ability by the Coaches.

Swimmers have the opportunity to swim a solo routine, duet routine or trio routine as well as swimming on a team. Additional routines are determined by the coaches. Additional routines, any routine other than a team routine, are an additional charge. These charges are due to additional coaching time required to spend. These charges are as follows:

Solo Routine ~ \$50 Duet/Trio Routines ~ \$25 per swimmer

ROUTINES

The music and routines assigned to each swimmer are determined by the coaches. It takes many painstaking hours to choose and edit the music for each routine. There is much to consider when assigning routines, such as ability and body type. Each girl may be assigned one, two, or three routines. A maximum of three routines is allowed per swimmer for each competition. Additional fees apply to additional routines. See above section.

One practice tape of each swimmer's routine music is provided.

TEAM AND EXTRA ROUTINE SELECTION

Guidelines that are used each year:

- ✎ Decisions are made to produce the best competitive results.
- ✎ Decisions take into consideration the entire group and club, not just one or two individuals.
- ✎ Some of the criteria for determining ability are subjective.
- ✎ Selection criteria include: competitive results, attendance, attitude, physical conditioning (flexibility, strength, cardiovascular fitness), potential, coach ability, extension, routine swimming skills (eggbeater, synchronization, match ability, vertical and horizontal height), personality, and swimming ability.
- ✎ The team routine is the most important event. Figures are the second most important event. Extra routines are extra.
- ✎ The decisions are not made lightly or easily. A lot of time and effort goes into each decision.



- ✎ Extra routines take extra time other than regularly scheduled practice. Every swimmer will not do an extra routine.

Meet Fees & Travel Expenses

We swimmer is responsible for their own travel expenses and entry fees at all meets that they are completing in. All of the coaches travel expenses are covered by the required fundraising throughout the year. The swimmers dues do not cover this expense. If there is a short fall in fundraising the coaches travel expenses are equally split for that meet by all athletes. Example: If there are 5 swimmers going to a meet then each swimmer would pay 1/5 of the travel expenses. All entry fees and travel expenses are broken out and estimated costs are given to each swimmer. Payments for the entry fees and any travel expenses if applicable are due to SNDM prior to the meet.

FUNDRAISING:

The Southern Nevada Desert Mermaids is a non-profit organization. Our main sources of income are from monthly dues, fundraisers and sponsorships of the team. We encourage all parents and swimmers to help with these fundraisers. The Southern Nevada Desert Mermaids are only as successful as the commitment from the swimmers and parents.

Each team member is required to assist in fundraisers by donating time and/or specific dollar amounts needed to be raised. Some of our fundraisers are: Car Wash, Swim-a-thon, Garage Sales, Water Show, etc. We understand that not all parents/swimmers will be able to participate in these fundraisers but you are still obligated to participate financially by making a donation to the SNDM's General Fund. Each fundraiser is given a donation value that each swimmer will need to either raise or donate. This creates an equal share for all swimmers. Any money raised over the minimum requirement for that fundraiser is then split 75/25 with the swimmer. The excess 75% raised by the swimmer is put on that swimmers account to be used towards competition suits, entry fees, etc. The excess 25% is put in the SNDM's General Operating Fund.

COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES:

Head Coach:

- ✎ To work with the Board of directors to set goals for the club.
- ✎ To guide and direct all coaches by continuing to improve their coaching skills.
- ✎ To make team, solo, duet and trio decisions in relation to members of these groups with Assistant Coaches.
- ✎ To select music and choreography.
- ✎ To promote good club communication by being available and accessible to parents.

Assistant and Team Coaches:

- ✎ To work with head Coach in making plans.
- ✎ To be on time for all practices, to start on time and end on time.
- ✎ To be prepared with written plans for practices.
- ✎ To be positive motivator and reinforce good behavior.
- ✎ To be reliable and a good role model for swimmers.

To treat all athletes fairly, with the understanding that fair is not necessarily equal



BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To make financial decisions such as yearly budgets, annual financial obligations, coaches' salaries, etc.
2. To choose a direction for the entire club and implement committees to fulfill its goals.

The Board of Directors consists of four parents and two members at large. Parent liaisons (on parent from each team), can be present at the beginning of each board meeting to bring concerns to the board however parent liaisons do not have voting rights. Elections for new members take place at the Annual General Parent meeting of the membership in September. Board meetings are held monthly. Anyone can attend the Board meetings with prior notice to the board. Your ideas to enrich the program of the club are always welcomed.

COMMUNICATION:

- ✍ Parent comments are encouraged. Please call the coach of your swimmer's team to set up a time for a conference. Because of limited coaching time and expensive pool costs, coaches are not able to talk with parents during practice. Remember, parents are asked to not be on deck during practice except for the last Saturday practice of the month.
- ✍ If you feel that an issue has not been resolved to your satisfaction, the Head Coach is available on Saturdays after practice. Again, please call in advance so that she may make plans accordingly.

ILLNESS POLICY:

It is hard to know when an athlete should stay home from practice and when they should attend. We feel that you as parents are the best judge of that. Here are a few guidelines that may be helpful. AGAIN, you are the best judge as to when your child CAN or CANNOT swim.

1. If your child is out of the water for any injury, such as a shoulder, she can swim and not use the shoulder. There is no reason the swimmer cannot be conditioning other parts of the body while one part is repairing. If this is the case, I would like a note and probably need you to follow up with a phone call. I also need some time to prepare a plan for the swimmer.
2. If your swimmer has an ear infection and the weather is warm, she can swim. The swimmer will use a kickboard and do a limited amount of work. The swimmer will not get her ears wet. Again, it is helpful if I am notified so an appropriate practice plan can be designed. If the swimmer has an ear infection and the weather is cold, she should dress warmly (something to cover the ears) and attend practice with a note.
3. If your swimmer has a head cold, has no fever, and feels good enough to go to school, it is okay to swim. She will usually feel better after practice than before. For some reason, swimming seems to clear up head colds. It is sometimes painful to be under water. The coach needs to be informed so that swimmer can work on things that do not require her to go under water.
4. If your swimmer has a fever, is cranky and achy, leave her at home; the swimmer's physical condition is weak. The body is trying to fight off infection and does not need the added stress of physical conditioning. Your swimmer is better off resting in bed.
5. If you want to know if your swimmer should come to the pool and observe, call your coach or parent contact. The team coach will know exactly what the team is doing that night and how important it is for the swimmer to attend practice.



From time to time we will be having dry practices. There are certain aspects of the sport that are improved faster on land than in the water. A lot of time out of the water can be beneficial to teach and drill the routines. Please call the team coach if your swimmer will not be attending practice. This gives the coach an opportunity to preplan practice if necessary.

EAR ACHES:

Drops should be placed in the ear after swimming. The doctor recommends a solution of half alcohol and half white vinegar.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The coaches would like practices to start on time. This means swimmers should arrive a few minutes early to get ready to start. Arrange to have your swimmer at practice and picked up on time. Do not expect the coach to act as a "sitter".
2. If your swimmer cannot swim for physical reasons, but can attend practice to observe and participate in land drills, she should bring a note so the coaches will know she shouldn't swim. Please note "Illness Policy". Remember, no one is immune to "goofing off" and the coach cannot always tell imaginary tummy aches from real ones. The swimmer will be asked to get in the water if she does not have a note.
3. Coaches are human, too. If they appear to pay more attention to the dedicated regulars and the ones who listen and work at home, it should be understandable. Put yourself in the coaches' shoes and remember they are still learning. If you think this is a problem, contact the Head Coach in writing for a conference.
4. There are many chores that need to be done by parents. Please respond positively when asked. Both you and your swimmer will get more out of the club if you join too.
5. All parents are expected to participate in the work of the club. See the Organizational Chart in the directory section of the handbook for a description of the places where you are needed. Please volunteer today.
6. If there is a concern with the swimming program, contact the Head Coach as soon as possible. If there is a concern with the club organization, contact a Board member.
7. PLEASE WALK YOUR SWIMMER TO AND FROM THE POOL WHEN DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP. This is for your swimmer's safety. On occasions, our pool time is canceled. Though the head coach or team parent works hard to notify everyone, sometimes skips do occur and we cannot reach everyone.

PARENT ETIQUETTE:

- ✎ No gossip, rumors or false comments (lies) about anyone individually or about the team as a whole.
- ✎ Communicate directly to a board member, or to the whole board in regards to concerns about the team, don't listen to idle gossip from a disgruntled parent.
- ✎ Be respectful to one another. Acknowledge each other with a positive greeting.



- ✎ No profanity or harsh language toward your child, or other swimmers, or towards other parent, in the presence of swimmers.

SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Swimmers take the responsibility for their own progress and improvement with the sport. If a swimmer is unhappy with how she is progressing, it is her responsibility to talk to her team coach or the Head Coach.
2. Swimmers are responsible to have all equipment ready for practice when practice begins. Equipment includes: cap, goggles, and nose clip(s). At certain time of the year, swimmers will also be asked to bring additional swim equipment for strength training.
3. Swimming equipment should have swimmer's name on it.
4. Swimming equipment should be held on the body or suit throughout practice. Nose clips, caps or goggles should not be placed on the deck to be picked up later. These items are easily stepped on and broken. This is a safety issue.
5. Nose clips often fall off of newer swimmers. When they fall off, a great deal of time is spent looking for them underwater. If this happens to you on a regular basis, put your nose clip on a string attached to your suit, or purchase a nose clip that has a strap on it.
6. Learn to put on your own cap.
7. Dress appropriately for the weather.
8. Call the Head Coach, or your team coach, if you are unable to come to practice.
9. All belongings should be put into your swimming bag before you get into the pool. They should be in order for when you need them. The towel should be on top.
10. Make sure you leave the pool with what you brought with you. To help you do this, always put your things in the same place in the pool and keep your things together. When you leave, look around your area for items that may have jumped out of your bag.
11. Be prompt come 5 minutes early so you will be ready on time. Go to your meeting place.

Follow the Mermaid Rules:

- Respect other people's property
- Let your coach know if you are injured or sick.
- If you have a problem, discuss it with your coach. Don't keep it inside.



WHAT SHOULD BE IN YOUR POOL BAG FOR PRACTICE

1. Practice CD
2. CD player or I-POD (not an expensive one)
3. Goggles
4. Nose Clip (can never have too many)
5. Cap
6. Swimsuit
7. Towels
8. Sweats, top and bottom (seasonal)
9. Parkas or Jacket (seasonal)
10. Hat (knit hat, towel or hooded top to cover wet hair to keep in body heat – seasonal)
11. Shoes
12. Snacks (i.e. fruit, juices, water, whole grain crackers; not candy)

HINTS

- Be sure to put your swimmer's name on all items
- In the best interest of our swimmers, the coaches insist that swimmers bring proper attire to change into upon exiting the pool during the winter months.
- Pool bags should be packed and checked before leaving for the pool as well as before going home to make sure nothing has been forgotten.