

Welcome to Thames Aquatic Club!

Thames Aquatic Club is privately owned and operated by the Vitale Family. TAC is a competitive swim team in eastern Connecticut and a member of USA Swimming.

Thames Aquatics was founded with 2 major principles in mind; introducing competitive swimming to eastern Connecticut and encouraging children to have fun while working hard to achieve their individual goals!

Because of the Vitale Family's extensive swim and athletic background, members of TAC not only learn to swim competitively, but they become a special part of the TAC commitment to excellence. Thames provides an avenue for success for its swimmers through discipline and hard work. Additionally, while swimming for TAC, an athlete's character is built upon through structured work habits and dedication in the pool. Respect for teammates and coaches is stressed, as well as team unity. Members of TAC are required to adhere to the motto that has been the backbone of TAC's success; **WORK HARD, SWIM FAST and HAVE FUN!**

With these goals in mind, Thames Aquatic Club strives for excellence, both in and out of the water.

TAC operates approximately ten months out of the year and offers two seasons of training and competition; the fall/winter season (short course) and the spring/summer season (long course). In addition, Thames Aquatic Club believes that everyone should learn how to swim and be safe around water. Thames Aquatic Club is the only certified and registered Starfish Swimming provider in Connecticut. Starfish Swimming is a nationally recognized swim instruction curriculum developed by the Starfish Aquatics Institute. We offer swim instruction for beginner swimmers based upon safety and swim benchmarks attained in each level of instruction.

As a member of USA Swimming, TAC swimmers participate in fully sanctioned, USA swim meets at a local, regional, and national level. We participate in a minimum of 4 meets during the winter season (short course) and 2 meets during the summer season (long course). Both seasons culminate with Championship meets. Those swimmers who achieve the necessary qualifying standards will participate in Regional Championships and Age Group Championships. Participation may also include the following meets: Senior Championships, Eastern Zone Championships, Speedo Sectional Championships, the U.S. Open or the U.S. Senior or Junior Nationals Championship meets. Swimmers are encouraged to swim in the highest level championship meets for which they qualify.

TAC currently only competes in USA sanctioned meets

TAC provides a quality, year-round swimming program for the communities of Eastern Connecticut. TAC also strives to provide all swimmers with the opportunity to be their best. **Our ultimate goal is to produce world class citizens through the sport of swimming.**

Thames Aquatic Club prides itself on offering quality coaching by a staff which constantly stays in touch with the latest training methods in order to benefit of all its swimmers. Our coaching staff also provides swimmers with a motivating and exciting environment in which to train. In addition to top notch swim coaching, TAC provides members with high level, fitness oriented activities to keep the fun and excitement, strength, health and flexibility in children's everyday lives! TAC athletes know and show the importance of the basics of core strength and flexibility. TAC develops the whole person and not just the swimmer in your child!

TAC swimmers are afforded the opportunities to strive for excellence and to most importantly, reach their full potential.

Mission Statement:

Thames Aquatic Club, LLC is a competitive swim program designed to encourage fun, friendship and fast swimming in a safe and positive environment. TAC is aimed at offering high-quality, reasonably priced, swim instruction and athlete and personal development.

Objectives of TAC

- To develop the fundamentals of the sport of swimming.
- To develop speed, strength, endurance, coordination, flexibility and agility.
- To teach children how to compete.
- To teach goal setting and goal achievement.
- To develop a sense of achievement leading to positive self esteem.
- To develop self-reliance and emotional stability by learning to make decisions and accept responsibility.
- To teach good sportsmanship.
- To teach cooperation.
- To develop leadership skills.
- To teach life lessons through the sport of swimming.
- TO HAVE FUN!

Thames Aquatic Club is committed to adhering to the above objectives in order to build our swimmers into confident, self-reliant individuals.

Team Structure

The Thames Aquatic Club is divided into four training groups in addition to four instructional groups. These groups are designed so athletes with similar abilities and goals are practicing together. Groups are also designed to maximize each individual swimmer's training needs. TAC does not believe in "loading up" yards on a swimmer just to make him/her swim fast at the end of a season. We believe in training all physiological systems appropriate for the age and ability level of each individual athlete consistently throughout each season. We train to improve stroke efficiency and for continual time improvements.

As a certified provider of Starfish Swimming, TAC's focus is safety in and around the water and learning to swim by concentrating on the lead up skills needed to meet the 5 basic benchmarks of swimming. All these benchmarks prepare our swimmers to be safe and competent in the water: Trust and Submersion, Body Position and Air Recovery, Forward Movement and Direction Change, Rotary Movement and Integrated Movement.

Swimmers who are willing to make a strong and consistent commitment will realize their goals and be nurtured in a year round, positive team environment. Coaches reserve the authority to demote or promote a swimmer that does or does not meet the specified criteria of a group.

Competition Team:

Nautilus: The Nautilus swimmer is our first competitive training group. Emphasis at this stage of training is on fine-tuning stroke development and drilling while fostering the competitive team experience. Swimmers must be proficient in freestyle and backstroke and be able to demonstrate the ability to handle a regular practice routine. Practices are held 3 times per week for 45 minute sessions. Participation in meets is strongly encouraged, but voluntary and based on the discretion of the coach, swimmer and parent. However, there is mandatory participation in any TAC hosted meets.*

Triton Tweeners: This training group is comprised of the advanced Nautilus swimmer who is ready to take on the additional commitment of training for competition. Swimmers are assigned to this group per coaches' recommendation and will swim part time with Nautilus and

part time with Triton. Increased swim time with Triton coaches continues as the season progresses. This group meets 4 times per week for 1 hour sessions. Attendance at all practices is highly recommended.

Triton: TAC's Triton group is for the swimmer who is ready and able to make an increased commitment to the sport of swimming, attend practice at least 4-5 sessions per week and demonstrate a positive attitude for the sport. Stroke development is continued with increased drill and kick work. Athletes will swim increased yardage specific for this age and ability level. Practices are offered 5 times per week for 1 hour sessions. Attendance at 4 practices is strongly encouraged as well as participation in at least 3 of the swim meets which TAC attends.

Seawolf: The Seawolf group is TAC's highest level of competition training. This group may still be divided into smaller groups within, but the Seawolf swimmer will exhibit the highest level of commitment to the sport of swimming. This swimmer will have specific goals and show the

willingness and motivation to accomplish those goals. Practices are offered 5 times per week, at least 1 to 1 ½ hours per practice. Attendance at practice 5 times per week is strongly encouraged and attendance at all meets is highly recommended

Dry land is an important training tool and is incorporated into a training group at the discretion of the coaching staff.

*Speak with the coaching staff for any issues relating to this requirement.

TAC Swimming Basics for Parents

- **LEAVE THE COACHING TO THE COACHES**
The coaching staff wants every swimmer to become the best swimmer he/she can be. TAC has taken the responsibility of producing a coaching staff that has the swimmers best interests in mind. Please give the coaches the respect and space they need to do their jobs effectively.
- **BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE COACHING STAFF**
A good relationship between a swimmer and a coach is imperative to positive results. When a parent's conflicting opinions interfere with this relationship, it makes the road a little harder to navigate. If there are conflicts of opinion, please take it up with the coach at an appropriate time.
- **CODE OF SILENCE**
When the coaches are in the process of running a practice, they ask that parents not speak with them or the swimmers, as this is disruptive to the practice session. If there are special concerns you may have, please make an appointment to meet with a coach to discuss these issues.
- **PARENTS AS SPECTATORS**
As a parent of a swimmer, the best role you can play is as #1 Fan and Supporter. Parents are more than welcome to watch practice; we encourage it!
- **"WE ARE HERE TO SWIM"**
As coaches, we are here to coach, not watch over your child as a babysitter. Inappropriate behavior from one swimmer detracts from the quality of practice for all of the other swimmers. We will ensure a safe training environment and do what we can to make swimming a good character developing activity. Please help us make sure your swimmer takes responsibility for their behavior before, during and after practice.
- **ENCOURAGE BUT DON'T PUSH**
When swimmers hit a certain point in their swimming career, everything seems to come together. Coaches are alert to this and recognize it almost immediately. However, many of these sudden successes are stepping stones of a long

path of work, swim and more work. Support and encourage your swimmer, but try not to place too much pressure on their efforts.

- **PLATEAUS**
Swimmers are often observed to improve steadily for a period of time and then reach a point where improvement in performance does not come as easily as it once did. Coaches refer to this as "hitting a plateau". This is usually not an easy time for a swimmer, but with patience, motivation, encouragement, rest periods, etc. the swimmer seems to bounce back when they are ready. This happens to swimmers often and coaches recognize this, shrug it off and wait for a better day.
- **"GROW WITH THE PROGRAM"**
Our program is structured to provide for swimmers of varying levels of ability and effort. We train our swimmers with their best interests in mind for long term swimming, not just for swimming a fast time now, when their bodies are not ready for it. A swimmer's age, body type and maturity, training accomplishments, as well as a swimmer's psychological well being are considered when group placement is determined.
- **HARD WORK IS ITS OWN REWARD**
At TAC, our swimmers, no matter which group, get a healthy dose of training. The coaching staff works hard at providing training sets for all swimmers to succeed and they expect the same amount of effort from each swimmer. We praise honest efforts and good sportsmanship and discourage disruption. Becoming a TAC swimmer means our athletes are ready to commit to the sport and make sacrifices for success. TAC coaches show the desire to assist our athletes to continually improve and expect the same desire from each and every swimmer.

Pool and Team Rules

- Members of Thames Aquatic Club are required to follow not only the rules of the club, but of the facility at Vitale Aquatic & Tennis.
- Parents should be at the pool at the end of practice to pick up their swimmers. TAC is not

responsible for swimmers once they leave the pool and locker area.

- Unless a TAC coach is present and on deck, no one is allowed to enter the pool.

Locker room

- Proper behavior must be observed at all times in the locker room. Anyone found violating proper behavior, depending upon the offense, will not be allowed to use the locker rooms and may be removed from the team. In addition, any expenses related to damage or vandalism by a

swimmer, will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian of that swimmer.

- TAC or Vitale Aquatic & Tennis is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Do not leave any personal belongings in the locker room. Belongings should be brought out on deck with the swimmer.

As a member of USA Swimming, Thames Aquatic Club cooperates in the Safe Sport Programming in order to provide a fun, healthy and safe environment for its members. Strict adherence to the Swimmer Code of Conduct is followed.

Miscellaneous

Fundraisers: TAC sponsored fund raisers are in place to help defray membership cost. These fundraisers are mandatory participation by all competitive swimmers and their families. \$150 fundraiser fee will be charged to families who choose not to participate in the team fundraiser.

Relay Teams: TAC takes great pride in its relay teams. As such, it is an honor to be placed on a relay team. Once a swimmer commits to participating in a swim meet, it is understood that they may be entered in relays and are expected to swim in the relay. When 1 swimmer who is scheduled to swim on a relay team does not show up at a meet, that whole relay team must be scratched and the swimmers who are at the meet do not have a chance to participate. This behavior will not be tolerated and fines will be assessed (\$100)* to the swimmer's family who exhibits this behavior. Short of a very serious issue, all swimmers are expected to participate in the relays they are assigned to.

Meet Fees: Meet fees will be assessed to a swimmer's account and will be automatically withdrawn per the meet schedule or by the due date noted. Once a swimmer commits to a meet and meet fees have been paid to the host team, there will be no refunding of fees if the swimmer does not participate in the meet. All meet fees must be paid once a commitment to the meet has been made.

Please note, TAC's Administration works very hard at maintaining an affordable aquatics program for all families. Because of this, diligent adherence to the published payment plan schedules is required. Members in default will be assessed a \$25 late fee per month if payment is not received as scheduled. TAC reserves the right to limit a swimmer's participation in practice until payments have been made. Serious delinquencies will be handled by Goldstein and Dun Associates.

Mandatory Equipment

- Goggles: All groups
- Water Bottles: All Groups

- Sneakers: All Groups
- Fins: Nautilus, Triton and Seawolf

- Paddles or Gloves: Nautilus, Triton Tweeners, Triton and Seawolf
- Pull buoys: Nautilus, Triton Tweeners, Triton and Seawolf
- Snorkels: Triton and Seawolf
- Speed Jump Rope: Triton and Seawolf
- Therabands: Triton and Seawolf
- Hand held weights: Triton and Seawolf Girls (as noted at beginning of season)
- Swim Cap: All groups
- Team Suit: Nautilus, Triton and Seawolf
- TAC Tee Shirt: Nautilus, Triton and Seawolf
- Team Jacket (optional): Nautilus, Triton and Seawolf

Mandatory Required Apparel

Team Sponsorship

TYR is the official sponsor of Thames Aquatic Club. All TAC team apparel is produced by TYR. Team members are also encouraged to use TYR training products.

TYR products will be featured in TAC's team store.

Mandatory at swim meets: TYR Team suit, TYR Custom Team Swim Cap. If a swimmer arrives at a meet without these items, they will not be able to compete until properly outfitted in TYR team apparel.

No Exceptions.

Team Colors: Red, White and Blue

Thames Aquatic Club Booster Committee (TACBC)

The committee is organized and shall be operated exclusively for the following such purposes: (a) provide support for the competitive teams sponsored by the Thames Aquatic Club, LLC also referred to as TAC; (b) foster USA Swimming and participate in USA Swimming sanctioned meets and (c) foster sportsmanlike conduct and competition. Funds shall be used in accordance with policies agreed to by the Owners, including but not limited to: End of Season Banquets, team gifts, organizing socials and parties and any equipment to be used by Thames Aquatic Club.

The Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, a Secretary, and one to three additional members as appointed by the Owners of TAC.

Anyone interested in becoming a part of TACBC, or for further information, please let us know!

TAC Swimmer Code of Conduct

Expected Behavior of TAC Swimmers

- Act with dignity and respect for others and others property.
- Always practice good sportsmanship.
- Promote positive high team spirit and morale.
- Offer congratulations to my opponents, win or lose, and cheer on my teammates.
- Compliance of all team rules and guidelines.
- Wall sitting is not allowed. It is disruptive and bothersome to other swimmers. If a swimmer has an issue and needs to sit out, they are to leave the pool and sit on the bleachers until they are ready to come back and swim. Continued sitting out may result in a swimmer being placed in a different swim group.

Prohibited Behavior of TAC Swimmers

- Use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs.
- Smoking or other use of tobacco products.
- Destructive behavior, including defacing lockers in any locker room.
- Inappropriate, unruly or disruptive behavior.
- Theft of any kind
- Bullying of any kind
- Any other behavior deemed inappropriate by TAC Administration

Signatures: (age appropriate)

We have read the Thames Aquatic Club Swimming handbook and agree to abide by its provisions. If we do not abide by these provisions a meeting will occur between swimmer (s), parent(s), Head Coach, and if necessary Director of Operations to determine an exact outcome, which could include removal from the TAC Competitive Swimming Program (no refunds given if removed from the team).