

Houston Cougar Aquatic Sports, COOGS, is a year-round swimming team created in 2003 by the late Mark Taylor, Head Coach of the University of Houston's Women's Swimming Team. We offer a guided age-group program for children aged 5 and up as well as a Masters program, for the beginner swimmer to the most competitive and skilled swimmer. When a young person becomes a member of COOGS, they learn the values of sportsmanship and teamwork. The mission of the Houston Cougar Aquatics Sports is:

"To develop our swimmers to be technically, physically and mentally prepared to achieve all of their goals in and out of the pool."

GROUPS AND MOVEMENTS

The COOGS use a "progressive" age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally, and emotionally in a systematic fashion. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge will be introduced to the training program. In this respect, "too much too soon" is more often the cause of failure to achieve maximum potential in senior swimming than in the reverse situation. At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. As each child is different, they will progress at their own rate. The Coaching Staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental, and emotional level of development.

National Group

Our National Group is for swimmers over the age of 14 with sectional cuts and above. This group focuses training and competitive efforts at the National level and qualifying for National level meets. National Group swimmers have both morning and afternoon sessions available to them and must maintain a minimum of 8 practices a week to remain in the group. Swimmers in National Group are expected to attend all meets through the season.

Senior Group

Our Senior Group is for swimmers over the age of 14 who are working towards achieving at a state level. This group focuses on building speed and endurance, improving swimming technique, and preparing athletes for the National Group. Swimmers in this group should have 2 or more 15/16yr old "A" times and are expected to attend all meets through the season.

Blue & White Groups

Our Junior Groups are generally for swimmers over the age of 12 that are committed and motivated in preparation for higher levels of swimming. These groups focus on stroke refinement, aerobic training and strength building both in and out of the pool. Ideally swimmers should have at least 2 "A" times to be in Junior Red as well as be able to train on a 1:30 base for swim sets and 1:50 base for kick sets. Swimmers in Junior Red are expected to attend all meets through the season as well as compete at the Championship meets.

Age Groups

Our Age Group program is designed to introduce and advance swimmers in year-round swimming. The goal of our Age Group program is to get swimmers to TAGS. Our Gold Group is for swimmers aged over 10 who have "BB" times in at least 2 different strokes and who can train on a 1:40 base for swim sets and 2:00 base for kick sets. Swimmers in Age Group Gold will be expected to compete in all meets through the season as well as compete at the Championship meets.

Development and Fundamental

Our Development and Fundamental Groups are for young swimmers who are ready to learn more advanced stroke techniques. They must be able to complete a minimum of 25m freestyle and 25m backstroke to join Fundamental, advancing to Development when they have a basic understanding of the other two strokes. Swimmers will continue to learn by means of drills and games designed to make swimming fun.

****All group movements are at the Coaches discretion and a swimmer must compete in a Championship meet that season before they can advance.***

Masters

Our Masters program is for all swimmers over the age of 18. To train with our group they must register with us under USMS. This group is perfect for swimmers who wish to compete, triathletes who wish to improve their swimming endurance/technique and people who just want to swim to stay in shape.

FEE STRUCTURE

Each COOG family will be responsible for the following fees. Fees are charged to all accounts automatically each month. Accounts that do not have a credit card linked to them may pay by check (**payable to "Houston Cougars Aquatic Sports"**) or online through our website. (Select the make a payment tab on the right side of the home page BEFORE logging in to your account)

Monthly dues

The monthly dues for our age group program are charged for 11 months out of the year with swimmers receiving sessions in August for free.

National Group	\$230.00
Senior Groups	\$215.00
Blue / White Groups	\$200.00
Age Group Gold	\$160.00
Age Groups	\$135.00
Development Group	\$110.00
Fundamental Group	\$90.00

Masters Group	\$80.00 monthly, \$850 yearly or \$120 for a 12-session punch card good for 3 months.
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- Families that pay their monthly dues in full at Registration will receive a 10% discount (On the coaching fee only). **This is a non-refundable amount**
- Families with more than one swimmer in the program receive a discount on their monthly dues. The second member receives a 10% discount, the third a 20% discount, the fourth a 30% discount and the fifth member will not be charged.

Annual Registration Fee

The registration fee of **\$225 for EACH swimmer** includes a fee for registration, three (blue, white, red) team t-shirts, team meet suit & a team latex swim cap. **Parents you will pay the USA Swimming Membership straight to USA Swimming, some of the fee will go to Gulf Swimming.** For example, a registration fee in September 2023 will cover the swimmer through December 31st, 2024.

Importance of Timely Payment

Characteristic of any business, COOG expenses begin the first day of every month. A positive cash flow is required to assure payroll requirements and various other expenditures. It is, therefore, imperative for all COOG parents to pay their swimmer's monthly installment on or before the due date which is the 5th of each month, after the 10th of the month **a late fee of \$25 will be attached to their account. (No exceptions! Once this charge has been applied to an account it will not be removed!)**

CANCELLING COOG MEMBERSHIP OR GOING "INACTIVE"

If you need to suspend your account or if you'd like to terminate your membership you need to contact Coach Jeff Armstrong (business@coogaquatics.org) before the 10th of the month. Failure to do so will result in your account being charged for the following month.

SWIM MEETS

We will post all meets that we plan to attend each year on our events page, at the start of the Short Course season. The Short Course season runs from September through March with meets taking place in 25yard length pools. The Long Course season runs from April through August with meets taking place in 50meter length pools. For meets to run smoothly they require a lot of volunteers, especially timers. If your child is entered in a meet, you will be required to volunteer as a timer, timing allocations are set by the coaches and sent out to families the week of the meet.

COOGS will send an email to all accounts with information about each meet before the sign-up deadline. If you would like your swimmer to attend the meet, log in to your account and commit them to the sessions you wish to attend. The coaches will select what events each swimmer will compete in at meets. Once entries have been sent to the host team, we cannot offer a refund if a swimmer decides not to compete. All meet fees are set by the meet host and charges will be added to your online accounts. Some meets will offer "On Deck" entries for those that miss the entry deadline. **You MUST speak to your swimmers Coach before doing any on deck entries!** Meet information such as warm up times, session times, individual entries etc. will be emailed out to all families the Wednesday before every meet. There will be a \$10 per swimmer fee added to the meet

fees to cover coaches' travel within 60 miles. Over 60 miles and prelim / final meets a fee of \$25 per swimmer.

Throughout the season COOGS will be attending and hosting meets/events and we will need your help. Starting in the 2021-22 season we are doing away with the volunteer escrow fee and introducing the following:

1. When we have an event that requires parent volunteers we will assign families volunteer positions prior to the event. Families will not be assigned at events they are not attending.
 - o **Parents are strongly encouraged to use the comments section when signing up for their swimmer's entries to indicate when they are or are not available to volunteer.**
2. COOGS will ensure that parents will be finished with their assigned volunteer position prior to their swimmer's last event.
3. Once volunteer assignments are complete and posted, parents will have 24 hours to make arrangements through Coach Jayson for any last minute changes.
4. After this 24 hours parents will be responsible for filling the volunteer position. If for any reason the assigned position is not fulfilled the family account will be charged a \$25/occurrence fine.

TEAM UNIFORM

COOGS is sponsored by Arena and requires all swimmers to wear Arena suits for meets. Additional Arena suits and COOG merchandise, as well as meet suits, can be purchased through our online supplier ([D&J Sports](#))

Swimmers aged 13/Over may wear Arena Tech suits at specific meets on their Coaches approval. Each swimmer receives a COOG latex cap upon registration. Additional caps can be purchased from the coaches (\$5 for latex and \$15 for silicone). COOG registration t-shirts are also available to buy from the coaches at \$15 each.

PARENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

Please make every effort to have your swimmers at practice on time, this is at least 10 minutes before the session starts. Also, please make sure to be at the pool on time to pick your swimmer up if leaving them at the pool. Acknowledge that your child is working hard and give all the support you can, remembering that the Coach is the Coach. Encourage a good diet and sleeping habits, they will serve your swimmers well.

Download the "OnDeck" app on your phone for easier access to your account. Also make sure to follow us on our social media platforms to stay up to date with the team.