

Alamo Area Aquatic Association - Pieper PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised 8/27/25



Pieper High School Pool
1400 Kinder Parkway
San Antonio, TX 78260
Pool Located by Tennis Courts



Coaching Staff

Tracey Spurgeon – AAAA-Pieper Head Coach

coachspurg@gmail.com



Tracey started swimming at age 2. She swam competitively for the City of Midland Swim Team for 11 years before moving to San Antonio and swimming for Clark High School and AAAA Northside. She started her career in 1987 coaching several different summer league teams. In 1991 she joined the staff at AAAA/NEAT. From 1991-2000 she primarily coached age group swimmers and assisted with the National level team as well. In 2000-2002 she moved to the Dallas area and coached for the Frisco Summer Swim Team. In 2003 she returned to her roots and started coaching with AAAA/NEAT again. She

continued to coach Developmental to Elite level swimmers and became the Head Age Group Coach of AAAA-NE - she coaches the Pre-National Group. She has produced many Top 10 Nationally ranked Age Group Swimmers as well as numerous TAGS champions and Sectional/Futures qualifiers. She is currently the South Texas Open Water Chair and has expanded Open Water Swimming in the South Texas LSC., taking teams of 24-32 athletes to various Open Water Zones competitions in the Southern Zone. Tracey was named "South Texas Age Group Coach of the Year" in 2009 and 2013. The satisfaction she receives from coaching is the achievements of each one of the swimmers she coaches no matter what level they are at in their swimming career. Tracey has two boys – Brody (21) and Kavan (19) and three dogs – Ranger, Rye and Whiskey. She enjoys vacationing, being outdoors, water sports, snow skiing and spending time with her family and friends.

Mission Statement:

Our team's mission is to offer children an opportunity to participate in a year-round competitive swimming program and to provide a positive learning environment for every swimmer to achieve success.

Philosophy:

Our team is organized to offer a competitive swimming program for athletes aged 7 to 18 years old. We strive to instill a passion and respect for the water by proper instruction of safety skills, stroke techniques, training, and professional coaching to build a proper foundation for the enjoyment of all aquatic opportunities throughout their lives. The athletes are grouped first and foremost according to their skill level and proficiency. All children grow and develop at a different rate; therefore, their rate of skill and mastery will likely be different. We praise our swimmers with positive reinforcement through each stage of their progress and development. Swimmers are encouraged to attend as many practices as possible for their prospective group placement. Each coach keeps track of attendance in their respective groups. One of our most important jobs is to make their experience swimming with Alamo Area Aquatics Association – Pieper the most fun thing they do each day. We also encourage parents to become involved in the program whether volunteer timing, officiating or relaying information to prospective families and athletes about what a great organization we are at AAAA-Pieper.

Team Administration:

AAAA-Pieper is operated and managed overall by Tracey Spurgeon and is a member of the Alamo Area Aquatic Association (AAAA), South Texas Swimming, Inc. and USA Swimming (USA-S). All team members are registered each year with United States Swimming.

Training Facilities:

AAAA-Pieper utilizes a 6 lane 25-yard heated pool located at Pieper High School - **1400 Kinder Parkway San Antonio, TX 78260.**

Facility Rules:

- All facilities are tobacco and vape free.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited on any facility or campus.
- Cameras and cell phones are **NOT ALLOWED** in any restrooms or locker rooms at any time.
- Filming of athletes during practices from the spectator seating is **NOT ALLOWED**. If caught doing so you may be asked to leave the facility by a member of the Aquatics Staff.
- **Parents must remain outside the pool fence during practice times. Parents are not allowed on the pool deck.**
- **Parents are not permitted to interrupt coaches during practice times.** If you need to speak with a member of our coaching or administrative staff, please email Coach Tracey at coachspurg@gmail.com.
- Coaching your swimmer from the spectator seating area during practice time is prohibited and causes a distraction to your swimmer and their group. The coach should remain focus and your swimmer should be fully engaged with them during each practice.
- ***If your swimmer's coach or another AAAA-Pieper coach observes this type of behavior from a parent in spectator seating, a member of our staff will contact the said parent and warn them that this is not acceptable behavior. If this becomes an issue and the coaching/distraction from the stands continues a member of the staff will ask the parent to leave the facility***
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Team Sponsorship(s):

Alamo Area Aquatic Association has been sponsored by ARENA USA since 2012. Under the Arena sponsorship agreement each registered swimmer is **required** to be outfitted in AAAA Arena team apparel including (but not limited to) Navy Blue Arena Suit for competition & Navy-Blue Arena Warm Up Jacket/Pants. **Each athlete MUST compete in yellow AAAA caps.** SwimFreak has been affiliated with Alamo Area Aquatic Association since 2019 and is located here in San Antonio on Thousand Oaks. Swim Outlet is also another preferred vendor. We ask that you use either SwimFreak or Swim Outlet when purchasing your Arena gear as our sales are tracked and help us when it comes to our sponsorship.

Practice Cancellations

AAAA-Pieper will practice if it is raining (unless we are unable to see the bottom of the pool. If there is thunder/lightning, temps fall below 40 degrees, or if there are any other severe weather threats in the area, practices will be cancelled. **There are no refunds or make-ups for cancelled or missed practices.** All practice cancellations will be communicated to families as soon as we are aware of them. Typically, we will make the call at least 1 hour prior to practice time.

Annual Registration and Monthly Tuition:

AAAA-Pieper members are required to register their athletes each year and after their initial evaluation for group placement. There are two fees due at registration time, one is the USA swimming fee, and the other is the AAAA-Pieper annual club fee associated with yearly registration costs. Both fees (USA swimming and AAAA-Pieper annual club fee) must be paid annually. In addition to the annual registration fees, each member will be responsible for their athletes' monthly group tuition associated with their training group. Dues are based on group placement and are subject to changes each season. Any changes in tuition fees for each upcoming season will be emailed to current families in advance before the registration period.. All accounts are deactivated at the end of the summer season and reactivated once registration fees (USA Swimming and AAAA-Pieper dues) are paid to start the beginning of Short Course Season in September. **Failure to properly register your athlete and/or pay monthly dues in a timely manner will result in your swimmer being dismissed from the AAAA-Pieper team.**

Tuition Account Status:

If at any time during the season you decide to remove your athlete from the AAAA-Pieper program, you must contact the head coach and follow the necessary steps for withdrawal no later than the 25th of the month. If you are transferring to another USA swim club in the San Antonio area, you must complete a twelve-month period with that team before having the option to return to AAAA-Pieper. If a situation arises due to injury, illness, work related, etc. and you need to remove your athlete for a short period of time you must contact the head coach to complete the proper form so we can temporarily deactivate your monthly tuition account. **There will be a \$50 per month hold fee to reserve your spot on the AAAA-Pieper team.** When you are ready to return, please contact the head coach and we can re-activate your account. **Failure to report your athlete going inactive will result in you continuing to be billed monthly for your tuition account. All unpaid account balances can and will be turned over to a collection agency. Monthly dues will be billed through Square and must be paid no later than the 3rd of every month. A late fee will be assessed to payments not made by the 3rd of every month.**

Meet Fees:

In addition to monthly tuition, each member will be responsible for any fees associated with meet/event/competition they attend throughout the year. Meet/event/competition fees vary and will be billed through square at the time of meet entry. Once the meet entry has been sent to a meet host you will be responsible for all fees regardless. Meet fees are non-refundable.

All accounts with a balance of sixty days past due will be restricted from entering a meet/event/competition. Once a balance has reached ninety + days without communication from you to our administrative assistant, your account will be placed on an inactive status which will result in the athlete(s) being dismissed from the AAAA-Pieper team.

Parent Volunteers

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

Timers: Every parent is expected to assist with timing at all swimming competitions. If your child is competing at a swim meet, you should expect to be a timer for part of the time your child is swimming at the meet.

Meet Officials: A swim meet does not run without the help of many individuals. We have an excellent history of providing qualified officials at our swimming meets. Many of our officials have been invited to officiate at the State and National level competitions. If you are interested in becoming a USA Swimming Certified Official, please Rick Russell at rd.russ@yahoo.com, or Steve Mandacina at smandacina@hanger.com.

(Officials participating in meets throughout the year will receive a discount on monthly dues)

Team Structure

AAAA-Pieper is divided into three main programs: **Purple, Silver, Gold**. Each of the three groupings is designed to provide a competitive swimming experience that is age and skill-appropriate for each athlete. Group and Team size are limited to ensure a safe learning and training environment. Each of the three divisions and the groups within them are designed to teach and promote specific competitive swimming skills appropriate to each level of training. Swimmers are advanced from group to group as they meet qualifying standards and other criteria listed below. The initial decision for advancement from one group to another rests with the lead coach of each group and then is discussed and confirmed with the staff. A swimmer's age, skill level, and maturity will be key factors in the decision to advance an athlete to another group. Other factors will include commitment level, practice attendance, athletic and training abilities, meet performance, talent level, space availability and coach's discretion.

- **The Purple Division** is designed for ages 7–12-year-olds, divided into practice groups based on skill level and age. This is a beginner level. At times it may be necessary for 12 & over athletes to be placed in this group to achieve the necessary skills to move forward.
- **The Silver Division** is designed for ages 7-16 based on skill level while age will be a pre-determining factor in which group a swimmer will be placed, the combination of skill mastery, maturity, performance, and achieved time standards will ultimately determine which group the athletes will train with. At times it may be necessary for athletes 14 & over to be placed in the group to achieve the necessary skills to move forward.
- **The Gold Division** is designed for ages 12&up. This is an advanced level for those swimmers who are proficient in all four strokes and can complete interval training as conducted by the head coach. At times it may be necessary to place athletes younger than 12 in this group based on their skills and training level.

The sizes of the groups are carefully controlled to ensure maximum utilization of both coach and pool resources. Group sizes are restricted mainly due to the availability of pool space and time. Ages are strictly guidelines. There will be times that swimmers of younger/older ages will be placed in one of the above groups. Swimmers who are unable or unwilling to seek and maintain attendance and performance expectations may be dismissed from the team.

Group Placement Philosophy

Movement from one practice group to another is often a complicated and sometimes contentious issue. These decisions are based on several factors. There is a team philosophy which ultimately drives group placement decisions. It is our goal in outlining this philosophy to inform the swimmers and their families so that a better understanding of the process and procedures governing group placements. The coaches have years of experience in placing swimmers in appropriate practice groups. Here are several important factors regarding group placement: commitment (attendance at practice, meet participation, prioritization of the sport, etc.), maturity (chronological age, physiological age and emotional development), training ability and technique. Times achieved in competition are also a factor when considering moving a swimmer from one practice group to another.

The practice group into which a swimmer may be placed determines a “floor” rather than a “ceiling”. This means each group has different standards for membership (the floor) but does not have upper limits on achievement (the ceiling). In no way does group placement communicate a belief by the coaches regarding that swimmer's potential. Your athlete's group is not meant to be a predictor of future success nor an indicator of his or her worth to either the team or the coaches. Finding the most appropriate practice group for your athlete is our goal and doing so is our challenge. As swimmers grow physically and emotionally, their needs also change. The more we as a coaching staff think in terms of appropriate groups for our athletes, the healthier our team culture will be.

We understand that group moves themselves can create change in your family's dynamic. Changes in practice schedules potentially alter and affect other activities such as carpools, team costs, coaches, and expectations. This parallels a similar path of moving from middle to high school or moving from one subject to the next. As a coaching staff, we believe that teaching each swimmer in the ownership of their success is a positive step in maturity and development. Successful ownership is the foundation and cultivation between athlete and coach. Discussion regarding group placement, forward or backward, begins with honest and open dialogue between athlete and coach. We encourage our athletes to initiate and schedule meetings if they have questions about their group placement, progress, goals, and ways for them to challenge and improve their swimming. It might not be an easy talk for them to have, but all coaches will have increased respect for a swimmer who comes to them directly with questions. Taking that step for a young athlete is empowering. Rather than acting as an intermediary between coach and swimmer, try to support and encourage your athlete to communicate with their coach on their own. Belief in one's team, coach, and group are necessary to achieve potential. The staff will always welcome questions and concerns from parents regarding group placements; however, we want to allow the athlete-coach relationship to flourish.

Group Placement Criteria and Considerations

- Attitude
- Ability Level – Age
- Attendance
- Addition to Team
- Accountability

Practice Group Promotions Swimmers under Consideration:

- Consistently makes choices that demonstrate a willingness to make a level of commitment expected of swimmers at the next level.
- Meets or exceeds attendance expectations for their current group and clearly demonstrates an ability to meet or exceed the attendance expectations for the next level.
- Consistently trains above the level of their current practice group.
- Clearly demonstrates an ability to train successfully on base intervals for the **next** practice level.
- Has mastered the stroke and skill expectations of their current practice group.
- Exhibits levels of maturity and responsibility typical of swimmers at the **next** level.
- Reaches the age and experience parameters for the **next** training level.
- Has demonstrated potential to compete successfully at the general level of competition of the **next** level.
- Has achieved the required time standards for the **next** level and meets the test set requirements of the new group.

Practice Group Demotions Swimmers under Consideration:

- Swimmer not willing to make the commitment level of the practice group.
- Practice attendance does not meet the group expectation.
- Training level falls below the expectation of the practice group.
- Injury or illness preventing them from performing at the appropriate level of their practice group.
- Meet attendance is below the expectations of the group.

Competitive Seasons

AAAA-Pieper trains and competes year-round - from September to late July or early August each year. The competitive year is divided into two seasons. The **SHORT COURSE season** (25 yard/meter courses or pools) starts in September and runs through the end of March. The **LONG COURSE season** begins after school spring break (mid-March) until the end of the summer season, usually late July, or early August. Although we will not be practicing in a 50 Meter LC pool, we will compete in Long Course competitions. Summer Practice Schedules will be determined each season based on group numbers.

Competitions/Meets

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

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| • UNCLASSIFIED | No time standard required |
| • “C” | Slower than the National “B” time standard |
| • “B” | At least a National “B” time standard |
| • “BB” | At least a National “BB” time standard |
| • CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS | (have separate qualifying times) |

During the High School season, High School level swimmers will have the opportunity to compete in both High School and USA Swimming meets, including Championships at the District, Regional and State level. At the conclusion of the High School season, High School athletes compete in USA Swimming competitions/meet/events including but not limited to:

- **STAGS (South Texas “A” Championships)**
- **SECTIONALS**
- **TEXAS SENIOR CIRCUIT MEETS**
- **FUTURES**
- **PRO SERIES MEETS**
- **JUNIOR NATIONALS**
- **US OPEN**
- **OPEN WATER JUNIOR NATIONALS / NATIONALS**
- **OLYMPIC TRIALS**

How to enter a swim competition/meet

A list of recommended competitions/meets will be emailed out to the families. The coaching staff selects the meets that their practice groups will be attending for each season. Meets that have not been emailed out, have not been approved for athletes from AAAA-Pieper to attend. Coaches will select their athlete's events once your invitation to attend has been selected to "committed" online to attend the event. Online commitments for competitions/meets must be received before the deadline for your child to attend (no exceptions). Our coaching staff strongly suggests that our athletes participate in a competition/meet at least once per month to evaluate and gauge progress.

Expectations of Parents & Athletes

AAAA-Pieper is a competitive swim team. Our staff will have expectations of both the parents and athletes and communicate those expectations on a regular basis throughout the year. Your child will be expected to put forth their best efforts at every practice and meet attended. There will be days that they may not "feel" their best. Our staff will help them to understand that their best will look different every day... and it's OK! There will be times we may push them beyond what they feel their limits are...and it's OK! Parents will be expected to give positive reinforcement and encouragement regardless of the outcome of a race. Let the coach handle the "Swim Talk".

Required Equipment

Each group will be required to bring the equipment listed below to each practice. There may be additional equipment required for specific groups which will be communicated to those groups at the beginning of each season. **All swimmers will need to practice in a competitive practice suit – (no board shorts, bikinis, or two-piece suits will be permitted).** AAAA-Pieper is an Arena sponsored team and we strongly encourage each athlete to purchase Arena equipment and attire. A more specific equipment list will be provided upon team registration.

Swim Cap * Goggles * Kickboard * Fins * Ankle Buoy * Water Bottle * Mesh Equipment Bag



Team Communications

Most communications will come from the Head Coach via email. Important information will also be posted on our Social Media Link. If any concerns should arise, please contact the head coach via email. We strongly encourage athletes to communicate with their coach but understand that the communication line needs to remain open between parent – athlete – and coach. Communications will be kept between athlete, coach, and parent and at no time will we discuss any other athlete other than your own. Please be considerate of the coaching staff's time and limit communications before/after practices as they have families at home.

General Swimming Information

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

- National Governing Body – Colorado Springs, CO www.usaswimming.org
- South Texas Swimming LSC www.stswim.org
- Alamo Area Aquatics Homepage (All Sites) www.alamoareaaquatics.com
- Alamo Area Aquatics Pieper – www.alamoareaaquatics.com (click on comal under the sites tab)
- Alamo Area Aquatics Pieper Facebook Page - www.facebook.com/aaaapieperwaterwarriors
- Meet Mobile Parent App (in the App Store)
- Swimmetry App (in the App Store)
- Splash Magazine (is a benefit of USA Swimming Membership only)
- SwimSwam www.swimswam.com
- Safe Sport <https://www.usaswimming.org/Home/safe-sport>
- Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy <https://www.usaswimming.org/utility/landing-pages/minor-athlete-abuse-prevention-policy>
- San Antonio Area Summer Leagues
Maverick Summer Swim mssl.swimtopia.com
Lone Star Summer Swim www.lsssl.org
- [AAAA-Pieper Ten Commandments For Parents](#)