



Welcome Packet

What is Zeeland Age Group Swimming (ZAGS)?

Zeeland Age Group Swimming (ZAGS) is a Zeeland Recreation program that designed to be an introduction to the sport of competitive swimming. ZAGS is for swimmers ages 6-18 yrs old that are newer to competitive swimming. Practices will focus on kicking, stroke technique, starts, turns, drills, aerobic endurance, and learning to swim all four competitive strokes. Participants will gain confidence while learning the basics of competitive swimming in a fun, safe environment while competing against age group teams from the West Michigan area. ZAGS is a preparatory program and should not be considered the end of an athlete's development in the sport of swimming. Practices are typically four times a week, and participants have the opportunity to swim approximately 4-6 swim meets. The season will last about 9 weeks this summer. For those that aren't new to ZAGS, the program is a great way to continue to work on good technique and aerobic endurance.

ZAGS Coaching Staff:

Drew Scheerhorn is the ZAGS head coach after being hired in November of 2016. In addition to serving as the ZAGS head coach, Coach Scheerhorn also serves as head coach for the West Michigan Swimmers (WMS) parent governed USA club swimming program. Prior to becoming the ZAGS and WMS head coach, Coach Scheerhorn swam at West Ottawa High School ('00) and Clemson University ('04 | Marketing). After graduating and swimming at Clemson University, Drew lived in North Carolina for 10 years while working in the financial field. Coach Scheerhorn is excited to help the ZAGS program and pass his swimming knowledge onto our swimmers. Coach Scheerhorn will be assisted by several current Varsity high school swimmers.

Rookie Night (Tuesday, May 22nd):

"Rookie Night" is for participants who are joining ZAGS for the first time. This night serves as an opportunity for coaches to see your swimmer's comfort in the water and determine what group they should be in. Younger swimmers (8 years old & younger) should be able to swim one length of the pool freestyle, one length backstroke, and the other two strokes if they can and if there is time. Swimmers that are 9 years old & older should be able to swim two lengths of the pool freestyle and at least one length of the pool of backstroke or breaststroke. Contact Coach Scheerhorn with any questions (ajscheer@zps.org).

- 6:30 - 7pm: Swimmers with last names beginning with A-M
- 7 - 7:30pm: Swimmers with last names beginning with N-Z

Meets Descriptions:

Each season there is one invitational meet, 3-4 dual meets, and a championship meet. Swimmers must compete in at least one dual or invitational meet to be eligible to swim in the A or B championship meet.

- **Invitational:** Several local age group swim clubs come to one location for a large meet
- **Dual Meets:** Meet vs. one local age group swim club. All dual meets are on Thursday mornings (8am warm up time, 9am start time)
- **A Meet:** Meet participants must qualify for this meet based on their times in duals or invitational. Guidelines for times that qualify for A meets can be found @ <http://www.westmismwimleague.com/> or contact Coach Scheerhorn @ ajscheer@zps.org.
- **B Meet:** Open to all swimmers who didn't make the "A Meet" qualifying times

Meet Schedule: TBD



Practice & Meet Schedule:

The first week of practices will be May 24 -26 (Wed - Fri). After the first week, all practices will be on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The dual meets will run on Thursdays. We recommend participants attend 75% or more of the practices. If your child was assigned to a group outside of their age group during the 2017-2018 winter season, please continue to attend the practice times of that group. All practices take place at the Zeeland West Natatorium (3390 100th Ave, Zeeland). The schedule will be updated as soon as the dual meet schedule is set

Equipment Needed for ZAGS Participants:

- Competitive Swimming Suit (no board shorts)
 - For those that need a new ZAGS Suit, we will be having a suit fitting on May 23 during our “Rookie Night” (anytime between 6:30pm - 7:30pm). This suit fitting will provide your swimmer with the correct size of suit to purchase, and you will be able to purchase it from the Varsity shop. ZAGS apparel will also be available through the Varsity shop’s online store. The link will be sent out to all ZAGS members once the store is “open”. This will allow families to review what they might want and order it online.
- Goggles Store Suggestions:
 - “Making Waves” (Holland) or “Dick’s Sporting Goods” (Holland) or “The Varsity Shop” (online)
- Goggle Suggestions:
 - TYR Tracer Racing; Aqua Sphere Kayenne; Speedo Speed Socket; Speedo Hydrosplex; Speedo Vanquisher
- ZAGS Swim Cap (available starting on the night of the Parent Meeting)
 - \$10 Silicon Caps (higher quality and last longer) OR
 - \$5 Latex Caps

ZAGS Swimmer Expectations

- Treat others as you would like to be treated in and out of the pool
- Address the coach directly when they have a question, concern or complaint
- Attend at least 75% of the offered practices
- Participate in 3 of 4 in season meets and swim in their respective A or B championship meets
- Get 1% better every day
- Focus on the process (the results will take care of themselves)
- Bring what you learned yesterday into today’s practice. The best competition is YOU yesterday.
- At this age, swimmers are too young to be swimming the same events every meet. The coaches will be asking swimmers to participate in multiple types of events throughout the season.
- End of season goal: Be proficient in all four strokes and swim them legally.
- Read the clock
- Starts & Turns

ZAGS Parents Expectations:

- Volunteer!
- Be Patient: Getting all aspects of the correct swimming techniques, starts, turns, etc. takes time!
- Be an Ally for the Coaches, Not an Enemy:
 - The coaches hope to be an extension of your home by teaching discipline, responsibility, respect, hard work, and determination.
 - Give the coaches the benefit of the doubt.



- Don't talk poorly about the coaches or other swimmers in front of your children or other parents. Instead follow the "Conflict Resolution" steps listed below if you have a concern.
- Let the Coaches Coach:
 - A parent's job is to allow their child to be coached by the coaches, and to simply encourage your swimmer and allow them to enjoy the sport of swimming.
 - Be supportive of and encourage your swimmer after meets, no matter their results. Let the coaches do the coaching.
 - Your swimmer is putting enough pressure on themselves during practice and meets. If they are hearing one thing from the coaches and a different thing from the parents, that will make impede the progress of your child.
 - The coaches should be the ones working with your swimmers stroke technique. As a coaching staff, we will be deciding who will swim each event during dual meets and our "Summer Classic" meet. Please be supportive and encourage your swimmer if they are swimming something different. At this age it is too early to be swimming the same events every time. They will grow into their best events and will have plenty of time to do them in the future.
- Handling Conflict:
 - Step #1: If this is a concern voiced by your child at home, give the coach the benefit of the doubt. Then, help teach your child to handle conflict by walking alongside your child while you have them talk to the coach directly about their question, concern, etc.
 - Step #2: If "Step #1" is completed and the concern is still not resolved, OR if the concern is a parent concern rather than a concern your child raised, a meeting should be set up with Coach Scheerhorn (email should not be used to handle conflict; if it's important enough to contact the coach about, it's important enough to talk face to face)
 - Step #3: If Steps #1 and #2 are completed and the concern is still not resolved, the parent(s) should contact the Recreation Director (Brett Geertsma) to set up a meeting.

Concerned About Other Commitments for your Child?

If you are gone on vacation(s) or have other Zeeland Recreation camp(s) that you have or want to sign your child up for... go ahead! We realize there are many opportunities in Zeeland and we don't want ZAGS to hurt your child's interest in other sports and activities. All we ask is that your child attends as many practices as possible (75% or more is ideal), and participates in 3 out of 4 of the meets throughout the season. Minimum Guidelines: Try to attend 75% of the practices and meets.

Parent Volunteers:

Parent volunteers play a large role in the success of the ZAGS program. Let's make sure our swimmers know that you support them swimming this ZAGS season. Please contact Coach Scheerhorn at ajscheer@zps.org with the volunteer positions you are interested in.

- Parent Volunteer Coordinator (1-2 volunteers needed)
- ZAGS Apparel Order Coordinator (1 volunteers needed)
- End of Year ZAGS Party Coordinator (1-2 volunteers needed)
- 10 & Under AM and 11 & Over PM Meet Volunteers (positions below)
 - Admissions (1-2 volunteers needed per meet)
 - Heat Sheet Sales (1 volunteers needed per meet)
 - Timers (20 volunteers needed per meet)
 - PA / Emcee (1 volunteer needed per meet)
 - Hospitality Room / Awards Coordinator (1-2 volunteers needed per meet)

