

Great Lakes Aquatics

Summer Training / Junior Olympics - 2021

I'd like to officially welcome everyone to Great Lakes Aquatics!

Formerly known as Spartan Water Polo Club, in the past year we have taken the opportunity to relocate our club to better align and support the growing interest in our sport!

Who We Are: Based in West Michigan, our goal is to elevate water polo by enhancing and evolving how it is taught and developed while increasing exposure to the sport in our community. We provide student-athletes an opportunity to improve their knowledge, skills and ability to accomplish success at every proficiency level.

GLA offers programming for all ages/experience from learn-to-play (Splashball) to National-level competition through USA Water Polo. GLA is a proud member of USAWP.

Much like years past, we will be offering a multitude of opportunities for kids to take advantage of this summer! See below for more on each opportunity and fill out this [Google Form](#) ASAP so we can get the proper contact information recorded.

Summer Training

We are thrilled to announce that we have partnered with two local West-Michigan pools to bring summer training to all interested athletes. We will be utilizing Grandville as well as Grand Rapids Northview. While we are awaiting final details, refer to the general information below! Keep your eyes peeled on our social media pages and website for final announcements on specific training times and costs.

High School Group:

Dates: June 14-July 30. Practice four days per week (Monday-Thursday) alternating days between Grandville & Northview. Practice times will be in the evening, two hours in length.

Splashball/Age Group:

Session 1: June 14-July 2

Session 2: July 12-30

Practice three days per week (Monday, Weds, Thurs) at Grandville for three weeks (you will be able to register for both sessions as well). Practice times will be in the late afternoon/early evening, one hour in length.

Junior Olympics

After a year delay due to COVID, we are very excited to once again offer an opportunity to attend the world's largest water polo tournament in Dallas, Texas -

Junior Olympics - hosted by USA Water Polo! We encourage all athletes to consider joining us for this outstanding opportunity! Below I will try to illustrate what JO's is in a nutshell for those who are new to the process.

Junior Olympics looks a bit different this year with the restrictions California is limited to. This summer they have essentially created two separate events, one for the California zones and one for all zones outside the Golden State. JO's is truly the largest water polo tournament in the world. With age groups ranging from 10u through 18u both for boys and girls (and even some co-ed), there are in total over 1,000 teams entered into this event each year!

JO's as one big tournament essentially splits itself into several smaller tournaments. For instance, there were 120 teams (!!!) for the 18u Boys age group alone in 2019 (the last year this event took place). In order to guarantee that each team gets an appropriate number of games, USA Water Polo (USAWP) divides the 120 teams into three tournaments based on seeding - the Championship Division (seeds 1-48), the Classic Division (seeds 49-96) and the Invite Division (seeds 97- 120).

2021 JO Dates: Session Three (non-CA zones): July 28-Aug 1, 2021

Process of Making a JO Team

Due to the nature of how quickly this event has been put together, the following [Google Form](#) is required to be filled out to gauge interest in those that desire to commit to JO's. ***The due date for anyone that would like to be considered as a JO team roster member is SUNDAY, MAY 30 @ 5:00p.*** We welcome all ages to consider this opportunity!

Our goal for all teams is to place as well as we can in addition to each athlete gaining a valuable water polo experience. We will also have different expectations specific to each age group.

A deposit will be required through our website (www.glaquatics.com). The deposit is \$200 which will confirm your athlete's roster spot and also be put towards your athlete's JO team fee (more on that below in a minute). After the tryout, Coach Latham and I will discuss our numbers and look at rosters. Our goal is to take as many athletes as possible while filling out as many teams as possible. Example - if we have eight kids registered in one particular age group, we will look to pick-up 2-3 more to complete that roster. Same goes for if we have 18 kids registered - we will look at taking two teams at that point. Our goal each summer is not to have to make any cuts, however, in the event that your athlete does not make his/her team, you will be refunded the \$200 registration fee.

After gathering interest and deposit information, you will hear from Coach Latham or myself by Monday, June 7 indicating the next step for you and your athlete.

The JO Qualifying Tournament

The process of getting your seed in order to compete is at first glance, a bit confusing. I will do my best to break it down for you. JO's as a whole is open to any USA Water Polo (USAWP) registered club program, however, you have to qualify in order to go. USAWP has broken the country up into various zones - we, for instance, are located in the Midwest zone. Each zone is allocated a certain number of spots for teams to qualify. Last year, the 18u Boys had 9 spots, the 18u Girls had 5 spots, so on and so forth. Those spots are subject to change. If at least 4 teams register for a particular age group there will be what is called a qualifying tournament for seeding purposes. If there are more teams that register than there are spots, and no additional spots get allocated from USAWP, only the top placing teams will qualify for the tournament (ex: if there are 8 spots, teams that place 1-8 will move on, everyone else will not qualify).

With the additional spots available, we are not sure if a qualifier will be needed this year, but it's good to always plan on it. The qualifier dates are tentatively planned for June 25th-27th. Plan on it being that Friday evening through mid-afternoon Sunday. Unfortunately the location of the qualifier is not known at this time and likely won't be known until early June, but we know that Chicago as well as potentially Cincinnati have been thrown out there as possibilities.

USAWP Registration

All athletes must be USAWP Gold members to participate in JO's. Link to register with USAWP: <https://webpoint.usawaterpolo.com/wp/Memberships/Join.wp>
Our club is Great Lakes Aquatics (ID #35005).

The fee is \$135 and paid to USAWP. Our club has no say in this fee and gets no funds from this, however, it is required in order to participate.

JO Team Fee & Training Expectations

The team fee for the trip to Dallas will be somewhere in the \$550 - \$650 range. We will be setting up payment plans for everyone so that after the \$200 initial deposit, an additional \$200 deposit for the qualifier and the balance will be due by the second/third week of July. Note: the ACTUAL figure for the team fee will be adjusted as our actual costs become known and will be communicated along the way.

The JO fee is separate from the summer training session cost. There is an expectation that if you choose to participate in the JO experience, you are training throughout the summer on a consistent basis. Our goal is to develop team cohesion so that our experience in Dallas is not only enjoyable, but also one that we can get the most out of.

***Note: we understand and realize that vacation & other plans may have already

been set for the summer of 2021. As the result of this information coming out this late, the coaches may be willing to give some flexibility depending on what the circumstances are (this applies only to practices). If you have any questions or concerns please contact us directly.

If you need additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Coach Latham. We understand it's tough to ask for help, but we don't want money to be an issue. We will consider a scholarship offer, payment plans, etc. if necessary as well for the summer training fees.

Important Dates

May 30 - JO Interest ([Google Form Deadline](#))

June 7 - Email confirming teams

June 21st - All final deposits due & gold membership registrations completed

June 25-27 - JO "Qualifying Tournament"

TBD - Great Lakes Classic (we host -- tournament open to EVERYONE)

July 5-10 - No practice due to MHSAA dead week & 4th of July.

July 28-Aug 1 - Junior Olympics (Dallas, TX)

FAQ's

What does the summer training fee cover?

It covers all training for the summer, all pool costs, tournament entry costs, a team t-shirt, coaching costs, and operating expenses for the summer for the club.

What does the JO team fee cover?

It might be easier to say what it doesn't cover - it doesn't cover your child's flight out to Texas, travel/hotel costs for the qualifier and day to day spending money out there in Texas. We will generally tell you to budget around \$1,200 for the entire trip - a lot of that depends on the airfare that you can get to Dallas/Fort Worth. If you can get a flight at a reasonable rate, then the cost comes down.

What it will cover are all JO tournament costs, coaching costs, a team t-shirt, a team suit, one team dinner, team transportation (i.e. team rental vehicle(s)), and hotel rooms.

Can Parents come out as well?

Of course, we encourage it! Parents and family members are more than welcome to come. In fact, we will have a block of hotel rooms for you. All the cost figures above, however, are only for your child to participate.

Where to Find Us

Website: www.glaquatics.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GLAQuatics>

Instagram: @glaquatics
Twitter: @gl_aquatics

Final Notes

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Matt or myself. I cannot wait to see everyone come out for a summer of great training and experience!

- Coaches Mitch Fountain & Matt Latham