STARTING A CLUB GUIDE

Congratulations, on starting a new synchronized swimming club! Below you will find the tools and resources you will need in order to start a club. The National Office is here to help and support you along the way. If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please don’t hesitate to contact the Membership Services Coordinator.

1.) Determine who is going to be the coach and start their training/certification, if necessary.
   - If you’re in need of a coach, please contact the Business and Sport Development Manager for more information on how to post an ad on the USA Synchro website.
   - Please click here for more information about our Coaching Certification Program.

2.) Find a pool and present a timeline of when you want to establish the club.
   - Contact country clubs, school districts, private schools (including colleges and universities), member organizations (such as the local Y or fitness clubs), community centers, and diving schools to inquire about contracting pool time during their peak hours.

3.) Assign a Club Representative who is 18 years of age and holds a current Professional membership with USA Synchro.

4.) Recruit and register two athletes with USA Synchro. Please click here for membership categories and fees.

5.) Complete and send the club registration form to the Membership Services Coordinator. The National Office will contact you regarding payment once the club registration form is received and processed.

6.) Enjoy the benefits of starting a new club. Please see benefits below:
   - Sport accident insurance:
   - Ability to host sanctioned events
   - Discounts on USA Synchro Apparel
   - Monthly USA Synchro newsletters
   - Exclusive members-only web access
   - 5% off United Airlines flights
   - 15% off hotel rooms within Hilton Honors community
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

There are different organizational structures for clubs, including non-profit, for-profit, community, etc. The club organizer needs to think about organizational structure and things like boards, policies, bylaws, etc..., and to prepare for growth. If the club is going to incorporate or apply for non-profit status, it will need to have a board and bylaws in place. The National Office has an Association and Zone structure in place to help and assist new clubs. Please click here for a list of Association and Zone Officers who can help, in addition to the National Office.

MEMBERSHIP/ RECRUITMENT

- Start with a general interest meeting
- A club can be targeted to a specific age group, i.e., kids only or masters only, or to a specific level, i.e., novice and intermediates only, recreational only, or competitive only
- Develop recruitment materials
- Distribute informational flyers anywhere kids and parents congregate- coffee shops, preschools, car washes, grocery stores, dance studios. Anywhere an organizer can get permission to post things.
- Establish a link between your club website and the USA Synchro club directory
- Develop a website and/ or Facebook page
- Contact local media avenues; let them know of your new club
- Attend community fairs and festivals
- Offer introductory classes to anyone interested

FINANCIAL REALITIES

When starting a new club, it is important for a Club Representative to plan and prepare for financial realities. Below you will find a sample list of financial realities for new clubs:

- Coach training and travel
- Salaries
- Pool costs
- Filing fees
- Admin/overhead (bookkeeping software, paper/toner/ink for brochures, etc.)
- Equipment (sound system including microphone, underwater speaker, locked equipment box, extra nose clips for swimmers, white boards, noodles, kick boards)
- Planned workouts
- Posted schedule
- Access to USA Synchro rules/figures
Below you will find a list of financial realities a Club Representative will need to tell new athletes to prepare for:

- Swimmer apparel (team suits, parka, warmups, competition suits, bathing cap)
- Traveling costs
- Meet fees
- Swimmer dues
- Towel
- Swimmer equipment (nose clips, yoga mat, pull buoy, resistance bands)

EDUCATION

The USA Synchro Coaching Certification Program (CCP) is designed to educate and assist the synchronized swimming coaches in meeting the needs of athletes from the novice level through the Olympic level. Comprised of five levels of certification, the CCP provides coaches with information on a wide range of topics such as basic coaching theory, safety, risk management, conditioning, teaching progressions, routine development and choreography. CCP courses are conducted across the U.S. throughout the year. Please click here for more information about the Coaching Certification Program.

EVENTS/COMPETITIONS

There are a number of synchronized swimming events for your club and athletes that allow for clubs of all sizes to thrive in our sport. Some of these include solo, duet, and team (4-8 swimmers), combo routine and mixed duet. The competitive rules and manner of judging are similar to such sports as figure skating and gymnastics.

USA Synchro and its membership organize, participate and promote our sport in events during the year. These include but are not limited to local, regional and national competitions for all ages. From the novice athlete to our National Team athletes, all of our programs support and promote the sport of Synchronized Swimming in the United States.

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

- **USA Synchro De Mayo** is the official name for National Synchronized Swimming Month. Our goal is to help raise awareness for the sport and encourage people to try it out.
- **Swimoutlet.com Synchro Swimmer of the Month** is someone who demonstrates leadership in the pool and in the community with the goal of growing the sport at the grass-roots level.
• **Why I Love Synchro Video Contest** is a new competition where clubs have the opportunity to create and submit a short video on why they love USA Synchro.

**INSURANCE/ LEGAL**

The National Office will send the club representative a Certificate of Insurance once the office has received the club’s registration form and payment. The club representative will not need to renew the Certificate of Insurance. The National Office will always send a Certificate of Insurance at the start of a new policy term, once the club membership has been renewed for the new season.

USA Synchro provides you with the following for a properly sanctioned event:

- **Liability Insurance.** $2,000,000 General Liability coverage per occurrence. And if the sanctioned event will take place at a pool that you do not already have included on your liability insurance coverage, our insurance carrier will consider adding the new location for purposes of the event, subject to any underwriting requirements that the carrier may require.
- **Medical Insurance for Athletes.** $25,000 Excess Medical Expense and $10,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment coverage for event participants currently registered with USA Synchro.
- **Increased Stature.** The right to state in your event materials that the event is "Sanctioned by United States Synchronized Swimming, Inc." It provides the people who attend your event the assurance that the event will be conducted fairly, in accordance with the National Governing Body's rules.
- **Marketing Rights.** You may use the Synchro Swimming USA logo to promote your event and the fact that we have sanctioned it. If you need an electronic copy of the logo, please contact the National Office.
- **Calendar Promotion.** We include sanctioned events in our Events Calendar on line if we receive your sanctioning request in a timely manner. This makes it easier for those who wish to enter your event to find information about it, and to check results.
- **Event Management Assistance.** We will soon provide, via the Internet, a program that will assist you in running your events. It will include the ability to register for the event on line, to generate entry lists, record results, etc. This will mean less paperwork for you as the organizer, for the competitor, and in the case of qualifying events, less work for the next event in line.

**WHEN DO YOU NEED TO REQUEST A SANCTION?**

USA Synchro's Rules require that any event (including all competitions, exhibitions, clinics, or entertainment of any kind) where athlete members of more than one group member of USA
Synchro compete, exhibit, demonstrate, or display synchronized swimming talents or techniques, must be sanctioned.

For example, water shows are "exhibitions" or "demonstrations." Camps are the same as "clinics." And "competitions" include invitational, as well as geographically restricted (such as Association, Regional, or Zone) competitions. "Display of synchronized swimming talents" includes any other type of demonstration or exhibition. However, if your event includes only members of your club, you don't need to request a sanction, because it is not a "sanctionable event."

If you are conducting a competition where two events are being run at the same location on the same dates, you only need one sanction. For example, where a junior figures meet and a senior figures meet are held at the same pool either on the same day or consecutively, it is one event. But, where there is a break in the activities or where the events are held in two different venues, they are considered separate events and each needs its own sanction. For example, a junior figures meet held on Saturday and Sunday, followed by a senior figures meet beginning on Tuesday requires two separate sanctions. If you have a question whether your event/s are separate, contact the National Office.

WHAT WE WILL NOT SANCTION

We don't sanction events where the athletes of only one group member (such as a club) are involved in the competition or exhibition. We don't sanction events where synchronized swimming talents or techniques are not displayed. So if you are holding a general fundraiser, such as a bingo night, a garage sale, a golf tournament, an open house, a fundraising banquet, etc., where you won't be displaying Synchro in a pool, you don't need a sanction, and USA Synchro will not sanction the event.

We don't sanction events where we do not have control of the rules for the event, such as State Games. We will consider sanctioning State Games where the organizer requires that all competitors be members of USA Synchro, and where they require that our rules be used. We don't sanction any event where the word “Olympic”, or any derivative of "Olympic," is used in connection with the event. The United States Olympic Committee must approve use of the term, and only USA Synchro has the right to obtain that permission.

And we won't sanction any organization which has failed to fulfill expense obligations to athletes or to give the prizes stated on its entry materials.

RESOURCES

USA Synchro Staff  Board of Directors  Zone and Association Directory