

NWAL Swimmer Eligibility Rules

From the 2022 NWAL Rulebook

I. OBJECTIVE

The Northwest Aquatic League ("NWAL" or "League") is a federation of teams organized to foster competitive swimming and good sportsmanship in a non-discriminating environment.

II. ELIGIBILITY

The goal of the NWAL is to promote a competitive program for community swimmers. The intent of the following rules regarding team representations is to promote the community concept and at the same time make provisions for situations where NWAL swimmers' families are Members of a Club or reside in an area that does not have a community team.

"Community" is defined as a local neighborhood entity that may include subdivisions, villages, unnamed areas, or aggregates of these up to and including cities. A *"Club"* is defined as a commercial business that may include country clubs, health clubs, YMCA's, etc.

"Member of a Club" means:

One who has paid a club's normally charged initiation, annual or monthly fees and is entitled to full use (for class of membership) of the facilities year round (this specifically excludes swim team only memberships and clubs without other substantial facilities which would induce membership).

A. A swimmer who lives in a community represented by a NWAL swim team shall swim for the community team except as provided below:

B. If a swimmer is also a Member of a Club represented by the NWAL, or resides in more than one community represented by the NWAL, the swimmer may choose the team he or she wishes to represent, but the swimmer shall represent the same team throughout the swim season.

C. If the swimmer's family is not a member in good standing of their community team, and if the community team does not offer swim team-only memberships to community residents, then the swimmer may swim for any NWAL team for which he or she may qualify for membership.

D. Any swimmer who lives in the area covered by the NWAL but does not live in a community represented by a NWAL team may join an NWAL team for which he or she meets that team's membership requirements. In this case a swim team-only membership will be allowed.

E. Paid coaches are ineligible to swim in the NWAL.

Coaches shall follow the Coach Certification referenced on Page 29 F.8.a&b.

F. Coaches' children may swim with the team their parents coach, providing they receive NWAL Board approval and meet that team's membership requirements.

G. Only NOVICE SWIMMERS may participate in the League. A NOVICE SWIMMER is any individual up to and including eighteen (18) years of age.

H. Eligibility for an age group is determined by the individual age as of the end of the day on May 31 of the current year.

I. To maintain a stable environment for team competition, it is expected that swimmers and their families shall not seek, nor be encouraged, to change NWAL teams except as an incident of a

move of the family residence. The NWAL's eligibility rules are established with this purpose in mind, recognizing that an individual's opportunity to participate on a particular team shall be appropriately balanced against the League's legitimate interest in maintaining stability and competitive fairness within the League. The NWAL Board may investigate and provide appropriate sanctions with regard to any instances that it deems may affect the stability and competitive fairness of the League.

J. Requests for eligibility waivers or exceptions shall be approved unanimously by the Team Representatives in the swimmer's requested Division and the governing body of the swimmer's original team no later than two weeks prior to the official start of the NWAL season. An eligibility waiver will be submitted using the NWAL Certification site for approval. The following are suggested exceptions that the Division(s) may consider (not all inclusive):

- Swimmer displaced by the forming of a new team.
- Recent family moves to a new community.
- Swimmer zoned to a school in a different community.
- Work-related transportation issues.
- Swimmer previously given permission to swim on wrong team.
- Swimmer denied membership because of team size restriction.

K. Any waiver requests not approved by the affected Division may be appealed to the NWAL League Officers. All eligibility waivers approved at the Division level shall be submitted and approved using the NWAL Certification site for Waivers. The League Officers have the authority to override any eligibility waiver decisions made at the Division level in order to maintain consistency across the League. All appeals and Division-approved waivers shall be submitted on the NWAL Certification site for Waivers no later than two weeks prior to the start of the NWAL season. All approved waivers shall be displayed on the NWAL Certification Site for Waivers no later than the start of the NWAL season. All approved waivers are considered to be permanent unless there is a change in the swimmer's eligibility circumstances.

L. Any team wishing to contest the validity of a submitted waiver must provide documented proof to the satisfaction of the NWAL League Officers that the exception for the waiver is invalid or false.

M. The violation of any of the above eligibility requirements may result in forfeiture of each meet in which an ineligible swimmer participated. [Note: The score of a forfeited meet, regardless of the reason for the forfeit, shall be 749 to 747.] Violations determined by the NWAL League Officers to be willful or premeditated shall result in additional disciplinary action up to and including expulsion of both swimmer and team from the League.

N. Gender – NWAL sanctioned swimming is a gendered sport, divided by male and female to ensure fair competition. NWAL follows the Texas University Interscholastic League rules for determination of gender.

NOTE: Requests for interpretations and questions on eligibility go to eligibility@nwal.org