



Case Study: Wheaton Swim Club

WHEATON SWIM CLUB

Illinois club incorporates swim software to effectively manage their athletes and eliminate lost revenue

Background

Wheaton Swim Club (WSC) is a year-round club that formed in the fall of 2004. WSC offers competitive, private and summer swim lessons, as well as diving lessons, to both children and adults. The club focuses on age group swimmers (typically 5-18 years in age) with the goal of recruiting young athletes into lessons and aging them through the swim program. After nearly six years in operation, the club has been incredibly successful and has grown to full capacity. Approximately 11 coaches with over 100 years of combined coaching experience tutor the swim and diving teams, whose numbers fluctuate between 250 and 350 athletes during the winter and summer seasons. In general, WSC has become a popular and respected resource in the community for anyone who has an interest in swimming.



Challenge

When its pool lanes opened in 2004, WSC used paper-based registration to get swimmers enrolled in the club, paired with HY-TEK sports software to manage billing. Swim meet entries were tediously performed with paper and pencils. Billing was time-consuming, every transaction had to be manually inputted into a database, outstanding payments needed to be chased down, and data was dispersed among different systems. After four years of hassle dealing with these laborious processes, WSC reached a point where the club was at maximum capacity and the staff could not keep up with the administrative tasks. To support their athletes the way they wanted to, WSC needed to automate routine functions and payment collection—it was time to upgrade to swimming software that would alleviate the burden on staff and coaches.

Solution

In 2008, WSC chose Active Network as its online registration swim software partner. Active had a strong reputation within the swimming community and could also offer a full integration with the HY-TEK technology suite. Swimmers and parents can sign up and pay online for lessons or meets, at their leisure. Fee payments can be made in advance, or in installments for the more costly club activities. Every piece of data on swimmers and club financials is collected in a centralized database, readily accessible to WSC. Detailed reporting on swimmers and on outstanding fees can be downloaded and then imported into other systems, such as the MEET MANAGER. Active's system also features a Communication

“Implementation was such a smooth process that we moved registration up a month early.”

Jacob Ayers,
Head Administrative Coach, WSC

Case Study: Wheaton Swim Club

Center that WSC can use to send broadcast emails to members regarding important deadlines and club information. Active further integrated with HY-TEK to accommodate mass billing, making it incredibly easy to automate invoicing for the entire club.

WSC opted to learn the new system via Active's phone support trainings and cruised through the process. "The technology is intuitive," explains Ayers. "Implementation was such a smooth process that we moved registration up a month early."



Results

Once online registration became available, WSC staff and coaches were diligent about advertising it and encouraged their swim club members to sign up online. Swimmer satisfaction increased with the convenient 24/7 access to registration and a flexible pay-as-you-go option. The system was adopted so whole-heartedly that WSC has since eliminated paper registrations completely, saving staff both money and valuable time. "Online registration and payment is so common these days," Ayers comments, "that people were used to it and expected it. It was an easy transition for us."

Revenue increased with the simplified and automatic payment processing system. Ayers and his team thankfully said goodbye to tracking down late or missing fees and could focus on coaching their athletes. WSC also has benefited from the detailed reports within Active's system. Meet reports summarized who signed up for what session, generating helpful information on participation. Financial reports allowed the club management to compare revenue and membership year over year, allowing them to accurately predict and prepare resources for upcoming seasons. Registration and payment data was easily downloaded and imported into MEET MANAGER, ensuring the information available at swim meets was up-to-date and accurate. WSC also set up automatic billing within the swimming software, getting rid of all manual processes associated with finances and saving countless hours of staff time.

Communication is a big focus for WSC, who wanted to reinforce their strong ties to swimmers and parents. WSC uses Active's Communication Center to send roughly eight emails per week. More than 50% of their athletes are from outside of Wheaton, making it essential for the club to efficiently communicate the latest news, schedule changes, weather updates and fee deadlines to stay connected with their dispersed members. This is an important part of the club and WSC has received such positive responses that it will soon begin to collect mobile phone numbers during registration. The staff will use the numbers to send text updates to members about extreme weather conditions, last-minute cancellations, important meet entry updates, and any other urgent information.

From drastically reducing the time spent on administrative tasks to ensuring the collection of payments to facilitating communication between WSC and its members, Active's technology has helped the swim club cut out the fat and focus on what's important—teaching people how to swim. "Active's software features were exactly what we wanted," notes Jacob Ayers, Head Administrative Coach for WSC. "The technology was compatible with HY-TEK and implementation was a slam dunk. There are several aspects that would directly address the changes we wanted to make within the club."



Word of Wisdom – Advice from Jacob Ayers of the Wheaton Swim Club

1. Don't be afraid to take a jump and try swimming pool software. It may seem daunting, but it is intuitive and can be learned by anyone.
2. Implementing online registration will communicate to the public that your club is cutting edge and that you have it together. Not to mention, it will save you time and help you retain your members.
3. Market your swim club—communicate with your members regularly.