


**JUDGES' COMMENTS:**

"Great program mix for this size facility!"

## OUTDOOR FAMILY AQUATICS CENTER

The Hercules Swim Center, Hercules, Calif.

Class 11  
(under 50,000 annual attendance)

Dolphins and Piranhas don't usually go hand in hand, or fin in fin for that matter; but at Hercules Swim Center in Hercules, Calif., they work together in beautiful harmony. It all started in 2004, when the center made the shift from a three-month seasonal facility to an annual one. At that time, it already had a recreational swim team, the Hercules Piranhas. However, when managers came to the conclusion to keep it open year 'round, they decided the center needed a more consistent rallying point. That's when they brought in the East Bay Silver Dolphins, a USA Pacific Swim Team from Richmond — coaches and all.

Working on a shoestring budget of \$450,000 a year, these two changes have revived the aquatics facility as a community center in the public's eye.

Usually 100 people will attend HSC's free swim hours. When it comes to the team swim meets, however, the crowd nearly doubles in size.

"The two new coaches are really the ones who make the program," Aquatics Director Alexandra Johnson says. "They bring in swimmers from outside the city who have followed them, and offer some of our more serious swimmers a valuable resource."

The two HSC swim teams also are where the center does a majority of its recruiting for staff positions.

Operating in a small town, HSC wears many hats. It provides the high school swim and water polo teams with a place to train. During events such as the citywide Family Fair, it opens its doors for free and introduces people to the aquatics programs. The fact that HSC's annual fund-raiser, a roasted garlic crab feed, sells out year after year suggests that aquatic aficionados view it as an important part of the community — and are willing to lend a claw, fin or hand. — Danny Brown

**FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS:** Popular community swim team • Theme days and events

**FEATURES:** 1 outdoor pool • 1 diving well • 2 diving boards

**PROGRAMMING:** Learn-to-swim • WSI aid • Water aerobics • Aquatic fund-raiser events, recreational swim team • USA Swim Team • Masters Swimming • Water polo • Private pool parties • Public swim pool parties • Lap swim

