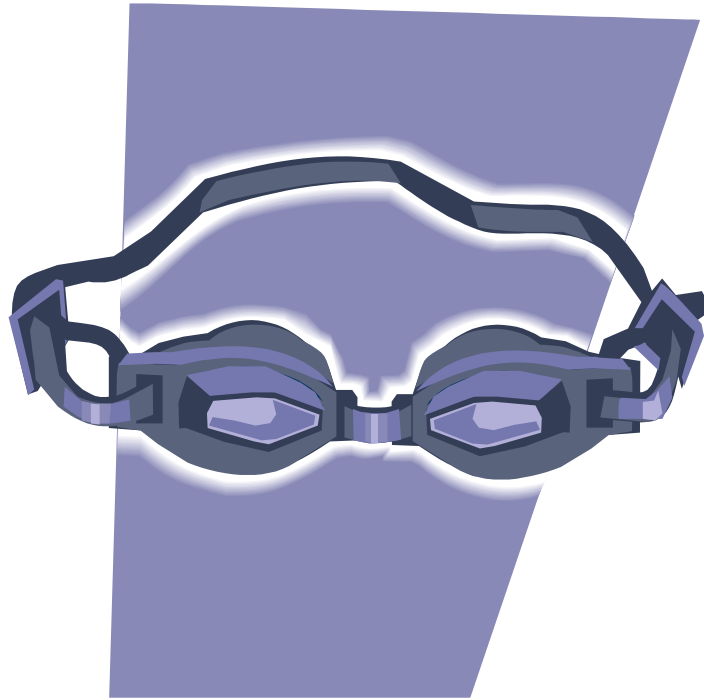


Greater Scranton YMCA Swim Team Handbook



706 N. Blakely Street
Dunmore, Pa 18512
(570) 342-8115
(570) 342-8205 (fax)
Website: www.gsyswimming.org
email: mesolen@gsyswimming.org

Introduction

This handbook has been designed for GSY families as a reference source for team philosophy, structure, policy, and helpful information. It is divided into sections and has an appendix for easy reference. The majority of the information in this handbook will be valid year after year. Current schedules, rosters, time standards, and other updates will be posted on the website and families will be notified by e-mail. While this handbook contains a large amount of information, there will inevitably be questions not answered within its pages. Please contact one of the coaches or the Aquatic Director immediately if you have a question concerning the swim team program.

Table of Contents

Message from the Aquatic Director	3
The YMCA and GSY Team History	4
Coaches	6
Team Structure	7
Practices	9
Swim Meets	11
Financial	17
Communication	19
Swimmer, Parent, Coach	21
Health and Nutrition	25
Glossary	29

From the Aquatic Director

Welcome to the Greater Scranton YMCA (GSY) Stingrays Swim Team. The goal of the swim team program is to develop responsible, caring, respectful and honest young adults through the sport of competitive swimming. Competitive swimming is the vehicle through which participants learn life lessons that will impact them forever.

We focus on the values that will enable each participant to build strong character and we take pride in the leaders and role models who graduate from the program. Throughout the program, you will find constant examples of these traits in action from our coaches, swimmers and parents.

The objectives of all YMCA programs, including competitive swimming, are to promote:

- Youth Development
- Healthy Living
- Social Responsibility

In order to achieve these, the competitive swimming program, like other YMCA programs, helps participants to:

- grow personally through the building of self-esteem and self-reliance.
- clarify values and to develop moral and ethical behaviors based on the YMCA's founding principles.
- improve personal and family relationships by learning to care, communicate and cooperate with family and friends.
- appreciate diversity and to respect people of different ages, abilities, incomes, races, religions, cultures and beliefs.
- become better leaders and supporters through the give-and-take experiences of working toward a common good.
- develop specific skills and to acquire new knowledge and ways to grow in spirit, mind and body.
- and most importantly, Have Fun and enjoy life!

While there will be some experiences that are tougher than others, the coaches and parents comprise an important team in teaching the valuable lessons of a young person's life. We are excited that you are a part of our YMCA program and look forward to your family's involvement throughout the year.

GO STINGRAYS!

Diana Dempsey
Greater Scranton YMCA
Aquatic Director

The YMCA

The YMCA of the USA is a national organization, founded in 1851 (the YMCA movement began in London in 1844 and quickly spread to North America), which has evolved to promote the modern mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

As “America's Oldest Swimming Instructor”, the YMCA has long valued the importance of fitness activities in the development of young people. All YMCA programs, including competitive swimming, incorporate values education and character development through the promotion of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Commitment to the YMCA's principles and the promotion of the character development traits make GSY unique from other swim teams. We develop strong people, not just strong athletes.

The YMCA is the largest nonprofit community service organization in the United States. It is at the heart of community life in neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the nation. It works to meet the health and social service needs of over 15 million men, women and children.

Best known for community-based health and fitness programs, the Y teaches kids to swim, organizes youth sports programs, offers exercise classes for people with disabilities, and leads adult fitness programs. In addition, YMCAs offer hundreds of other programs, including day camp, child care (the YMCA is the largest nonprofit child care provider in the United States), teen clubs, environmental programs, substance abuse prevention, family nights, job training, international exchange and many more.

National headquarters for the YMCA of the USA are in Chicago, IL.

The Greater Scranton YMCA is an association of all ages, ethnic groups and religious affiliations that strives to cultivate the human potential, self-esteem and dignity of all people. Our organization exists to significantly influence the lives of people in the Greater Scranton area by incorporating Judeo-Christian principles into programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. This is our mission statement and our guiding principle for all programs and services.

History

Greater Scranton YMCA

1858: Scranton YMCA was organized in the Neptune Fire House on Lackawanna Avenue near Adams Avenue. First President was John Brisbin..

Civil War: Activities ceased.

1868: Scranton YMCA reorganized in the Penn Avenue Baptist Church at 324 Lackawanna Avenue. President Alfred Hand.

1870: Charter received William D. Mossman the first General Secretary with President, Col. H. M. Boles.

1880: Railroad YMCA was built with help from Lackawanna Railroad.
1887: First YMCA building on Wyoming Avenue.
1898: Campaign began for funds for a new building on Mulberry and Washington. President, H. C. Shafer.
1901: New building opened – cost \$316,000.
Circa 1930: Property for Camp Spruks received.
1940: Camp Spruks turned over to the YMCA by the Y's Men's Club.
1972: New building in Dunmore dedicated to serving families. President H.H. Axford.
1985: Campaign begun for construction of a new gymnasium, multipurpose room and weight training room, President Robert N. Lettieri. New 4,900 sq. ft. Men's Fitness Center opened.
1986: Major building expansion dedicated.
1989: New 6500 sq. ft. Daycare Center opened. Will serve over 100 children a day.
1999: New second swimming pool added, youth room and classrooms with a 3.3 million addition. President Andrew A. Kettel.

Coaches

Mark Esolen – Head Coach, National and Senior Groups

7th year as Head Coach with GSY, has over ___ years of coaching experience, has been High School head coach and has coached summer league, area age group

Chris Wruble –10 years with GSY, has coached local age group in the Scranton area and was coached by Mark Esolen as a high school swimmer. Has been involved in competitive swimming as a swimmer or as a coach since he was 5 years of age.

Pete Loftus – 2nd year with GSY, has over 17 years coaching experience at club, high school and college levels. Works as an EMT with a local ambulance company. Grew up as a swimmer of GSY.

Matt Esolen – 5 years with GSY. Was a local age group, high school and GSY swimmer. Swam for 1 year at Shippensburg University.

Stephanie Campbell – 1st year with GSY.

Team Structure

The Greater Scranton YMCA Swim Team is divided into training groups based on age, ability, attitude and commitment. The groups enable swimmers to progress at a steady rate while building bonds with other team members in the same age range.

Swimmers age twelve and under are encouraged to participate in other activities outside of swimming while they develop the technique, endurance and competitive spirit that are the foundations for successful swimming.

Senior (13 and older) swimmers are encouraged to make a greater commitment to swimming and to the team by participating in more practices and competitions. Senior level swimming, in the YMCA and in USA Swimming, is more demanding and competitive than the sport is for younger swimmers. The GSY program reflects that reality and aims to equip its swimmers not only to compete, but to succeed at each level of competitive swimming as they mature.

All swimmers are expected to budget their time, maintain above average grades in school and reflect the YMCA's core values at all times.

White Group

Ages 5 & Over

Minimum Requirements: Complete 25 yards (1 length of pool) freestyle without assistance

Competitions: Participation in League Dual Meets is encouraged. Invitational meets are optional.

This is the introductory level of competitive swimming for swimmers. This group teaches the basics of competitive swimming in the YMCA while having fun.

Blue Group

Ages 8 & Over

Minimum Requirements: Complete 50 yards of all four competitive strokes (Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke & Butterfly) and be able to perform racing starts from starting platforms and perform turns for all strokes.

Competitions: Participation in League Meets is required. Invitational & USA Swimming meets are optional.

This group builds upon the skills learned in the White Group and improves all four competitive strokes.

Gold Group

Ages 13-18

Minimum Requirements: Ability to complete two-hour training sessions and a desire to contribute positively to the team and YMCA

Competitions: Participation in league dual meets and championships is expected; Invitationals and USA Swimming are strongly encouraged

The Gold Group provides advanced training, stroke technique and race preparation for teenage swimmers. Participants build aerobic conditioning, engage in a dryland program and prepare for regular competition in a variety of events. Teamwork, volunteerism and a positive attitude are essential.

Four practices, ranging from ninety minutes to two hours, are offered each week. A minimum of three is recommended.

National Group

Ages 15-18

Minimum Requirements: At least one Short Course or two Long Course YMCA National Championship qualifying time or four USA Swimming 15-18 AA times, ability to maintain practice intervals commensurate with the group, a desire to excel as part of the GSY team and a willingness to commit fully to the GSY program including practices, meets and team activities

Competitions: Participation in League dual meets, championships and USA Swimming invitationals is expected

The National Group challenges team members through practice sessions, dryland and strength training, team building and preparation for national level competition.

Swimmers are expected to attend four practices each week, all designated meets, team activities and service projects.

Four practices, ninety minutes to two and a half hours in length, are offered each week.

Seasons and Breaks

The GSY Swim Team is a year-round competitive program that runs from the beginning of September through August.

Each swimming year is divided into two seasons—Fall/Winter (short course) and Spring/Summer (long course.)

The short course season runs roughly from mid-September to mid-March (National swimmers continue through mid-April). During this time, competitions are held in short course pools, which are 25 yards or 25 meters in length.

The long course season begins in the first week of May and lasts until the Middle of August. Long course meets are held in 50 meter pools.

All groups take a short break in the spring (between the short course and long course seasons) and a longer break in August (between the long course and short course seasons). These are important periods of physical AND mental rest for swimmers. Please respect these breaks as they are important in preventing burnout and keeping swimmers excited about the sport and the team.

The GSY Swim Team respects family time together, including vacation time. Parents of older swimmers should be aware, however, that extended time away from practice and competition in the middle of a season can adversely affect a swimmer's performance. The effect becomes greater the older and more competitive a swimmer becomes. One

option to minimize any break in training is to find a team in the town/area that you will be

visiting and arrange for your child to practice with them during your stay. This can be a fun way to not only stay in shape, but to learn different training techniques and systems. Another option is to take a practice with you from your coach. To discuss time away from practice and meets and/or the effects it will have, please contact the lead coach of your child's group or the head coach.

Practices

At all levels, practice sessions develop important athletic, personal and social skills. Regular, consistent attendance is necessary to build the abilities of the swimmer, enhance the coach-swimmer relationship, and strengthen the unity of the team as a whole.

Schedule

Practice schedules are distributed to all GSY families prior to the start of each season. Some updates and revisions may be necessary, especially during holidays. Every effort will be made to notify families of changes in the practice schedule. Please be attentive to all notices and announcements. Check your email, twitter and the website often.

Facilities

The GSY Swim Team primarily uses Pool "A" at the Greater Scranton YMCA during the short course (fall/winter) season.

Some groups also practice at the Nay Aug Park pool during the long course (spring/summer) season.

What to Bring to practice

Practice equipment may be purchased at the YMCA Front Desk, Dicks Sporting Goods, Battaglia's Sporting Goods. Items can also be purchased on-line via the links on our website.

White Group—suit, goggles, cap, towel

Blue Group – suit, goggles, cap, towel, fins, water bottle

Gold Group – suit, goggles, cap, towel, fins, water bottle

National Group – suit, goggles, cap, towel, fins, hand paddles water bottle

These are the necessities. We recommend that all swimmers carry an extra cap, suit, and pair of goggles - "just in case." Coaches do not carry extra items to loan swimmers for practice and the facilities do not regularly have extras to loan. **CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO PRACTICE.**

Swimmers should bring their bags, clothes, etc. onto the pool deck with them or lock them in a locker during practice. Locks should be temporary and removed each day at the end of practice. No bags should be left on top of lockers, on floors or benches in the locker rooms.

Punctuality and Practice Time

Please be on time to all practices. Practices begin with a warm up period to prevent injury. Instructions and important information are also given to swimmers at the beginning of practice. When swimmers are late, they miss this important preparation and information. Likewise, please avoid bringing swimmers to practice excessively early (more than 15 min.) and pick up swimmers promptly after practice (no later than 15 min. after the conclusion of the practice). Swimmers should wait in the pool area or lobby to be picked up, not outside of the building. Coaches are responsible for swimmers during specified practice times only. When swimmers arrive at their practice site, they are to wait on deck, away from the pool, until practice begins.

Swimmers are expected to participate in the full practice in order to gain the complete physical, mental, psychological and social benefit. Please do not schedule doctor's appointments, babysitting, social events, etc. that require swimmers to leave practice early.

Arriving late or leaving early not only interferes with the proper warm up or cool down for your swimmer, it is disruptive to the entire group.

Greater Scranton YMCA employee policy prohibits staff members from transporting program participants in their personal vehicles. Please do not ask GSY coaches to transport your child to or from practices, meets or team activities.

Parents at Practice

Practice is time for swimmers and coaches to concentrate on improving the swimmers' technique, increasing speed and endurance, developing a strong coach-swimmer relationship, and fostering cooperation and unity within the group. It is important that parents allow this development to occur without interruption.

Parents are welcome to observe practice by sitting on the designated bleachers. Please do not talk to or give signals to your child during his/her practice. If you have questions, please ask the group coach after practice.

White Group Parents

In the interest of safety, parents of White Group must bring/accompany their child to the Pool for practice and must pick them up from the Pool at the end of practice.

Parents are welcome to watch practice but need to sit on the bleachers along the side of the pool area. Please do not talk to or give signals to your child during his/her practice. If you have questions, please ask the group coach after practice.

Inclement Weather

Practice (indoor and outdoor) continues when it is raining. If there is thunder and lightning, practice will be suspended, but not necessarily canceled. Pool closure is a facility, not coach or team decision. Call ahead or go to the pool to learn the fate of

practice. When thunder and/or lightning is detected, the pool and pool deck will be cleared and swimmers will have to wait at least 30 minutes before being permitted back in the pool area. Coaches will make a determination whether or not to cancel practice based on the storm prediction and how much practice is left. In the event of snow or ice, practice may be canceled depending on road conditions. The Greater Scranton YMCA makes decisions about programs and classes according to the following schedule:

Morning classes (those that begin prior to Noon) – by 7:00 am

Afternoon classes (those beginning between 12:01 pm and 4:59 pm) – by 11:00 am

Evening classes (those beginning between 5:00 pm and after) – by 3:00 pm

Swim Team Cancellations are posted on the GSY Twitter Account and a team e-mail will also be sent out.

Keep in mind - weather conditions in one location may not be the same elsewhere in the area. If there is a question, call ahead. If parents are experiencing hazardous conditions (snow, ice, thunderstorm) while their children are at practice, they should come to the pool in case practice is ended early.

Be on the safe side. Don't take chances if you have doubts.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are a fun and exciting opportunity for swimmers to measure progress, experience the thrill of competition, and strive for individual and team accomplishments. They provide a break in the practice routine, as well as focal points for practice efforts. All swimmers are encouraged to compete in meets for these reasons.

White Group swimmers are encouraged to participate in league dual meets. All other GSY swimmers are expected to compete in team dual meets throughout the year and the YMCA championship meets at the conclusion of each season. Invitational and USA meets are optional but strongly recommended for some practice groups. The meet schedule will designate which swimmers are eligible or recommended for each meet. If you have questions regarding what is appropriate for your swimmer, please discuss with his/her coach.

Classification

The GSY Swim Team competes in both YMCA and USA Swimming meets. These swimming bodies both provide competitive opportunities, but they are slightly different.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming is the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming. It sets rules for competitions, implements policies, conducts national championship meets and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competitions. USA

Swimming requires coaches and officials to be certified according to its standards.

USA Swimming is divided into Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) which administer USA Swimming activities in smaller geographical areas. Our LSC is Middle Atlantic Swimming. Registration with USA Swimming is optional for all GSY swimmers, but strongly recommended for certain practice groups.

YMCA

YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving is unique in that it, like other YMCA sports programs, emphasizes the overall development of the athlete. It promotes not only physical achievement, but also mental and spiritual growth.

The National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Committee conducts the YMCA National Championship Meets and group representatives, district committees and leagues oversee local and regional competitions. The Greater Scranton YMCA is in the East Field North District and we are part of the Penn-del YMCA league.

YMCA coaches and officials are certified by YMCA standards. YMCA competitions include dual meets, invitationals, and championship meets. Swimmers must compete in at least three YMCA "closed" meets during a season to be eligible for the league, regional and national championship meets.

*In order to ensure that the team is adequately prepared for competition, all swimmers must maintain above 60 % practice attendance in order to compete in any team travel meet. Senior swimmers with National Championship (including YMCA Nationals) qualifying times must attend an average of at least three (3) practices each week in order to be eligible to compete in the meet with the GSY team.

Age Group Designations

In both USA Swimming and YMCA meets, swimmers compete according to their ages. USA Swimming age groups are divided as follows: 10 & Under, 11/12, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18. USA Swimming meets will often combine the last two into a 15-18 age group. YMCA age groups are the same except there are also 8 & Under age groups. Sometimes, in both USA Swimming and YMCA meets, 13 & Older swimmers are combined into a "senior" age group. In "open" events or meets, swimmers of any age may swim. For USA Swimming and some YMCA invitational meets, swimmers compete in their age as of the first day of the meet. For most YMCA dual meets, their age group is determined by their age as of Dec. 1 of the current year for short course meets and May 1 for long course meets.

Time Standards

USA Swimming establishes national motivational standards by which its meets are classified (B, BB, A, AA, etc.). These standards are based on a national average of performances with the goal of allowing swimmers to be grouped in competition with swimmers of the same general skill level. Many YMCA meets, including all dual meets, do not have time standards for participation.

Entering Meets

Meet information is made available by e-mail distribution and on the team web site. This information includes the name, location, dates, times, eligibility requirements, and (for invitationals), meet information handout. Every effort is made to distribute meet information at least two weeks before it is due. Sometimes, however, this is not possible and the turn-around time is shorter (USA meets). Please pay careful attention to the deadlines for entering each meet. Retain the meet information for reference at the time of the meet.

Dual Meets

There is no fee for participation in dual meets. Swimmers do, however, need to give notification that they will, or will not, participate. When the meet information is distributed, swimmers or parents will then send e-mail notification (click the link in the far right column of the meet on our website) to the assistant coach (Matt Esolen) no later than the Wednesday prior to the meet. Coaches usually choose the events for swimmers in dual meets but swimmers may request to be entered in certain events. Most dual meets limit swimmers to 3-4 events total.

Invitationals and Championships

To enter a meet, follow these simple steps:

1. Write the swimmer's name on the entry page.
2. List the events and event numbers that swimmers wish to swim. Coaches will review the entries and may make changes to the events. Swimmers who sign up for a meet are expected to be available for relays. Coaches alone determine relays. If there is an unavoidable reason why a child cannot stay for a relay, please let that be known on the entry sheet.
3. Turn in the events page, with payment (when necessary), to the YMCA Front Desk by the designated deadline. Payment is by check, cash or credit card.
4. For online meet entry, select the swimmer's desired events and proceed to payment. Credit card payment is required with online meet entries. Name, event number, and event name must be emailed to assistant coach (Matt Esolen) by the entry deadline posted for the meet on the website.

NOTE: Entries submitted after the deadline WILL NOT be accepted. Entries requiring payment (invitationals and championships) without payment for meet fees WILL NOT be accepted.

What to Bring

team suit	team cap
goggles	at least 2 towels
team shirt, sweats, warm-up, parka	pen & paper (to write down times and events)
shoes & socks	money (for heat sheet, healthy snacks)
healthy snacks (if facility permits)	

**** CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO A MEET****

Deck space is often limited at meets so swimmers should pack only what is needed and keep their belongings in their bags at all times. Coaches are NOT responsible for individual swimmer's belongings at practices or meets.

Punctuality

Please arrive at the meet location and check in with coaches on deck at least 15 minutes before the designated warm-up time. Swimmers need to fully warm up before competing. In addition, coaches must make relay decisions before the start of competition and they will be unable to include a swimmer who is not present for warm-ups. Directions to the most frequently attended meet locations on the website.

Team Area

Swimmers should sit in the designated team area. This promotes team support and unity, which in turn contributes to swimming success and fun. Depending on the facility, there may or may not be a separate spectator area for family members. When there is such an area, parents who are not volunteering sit in the stands, not with their children. Younger swimmers may choose to sit with their parents if the child prefers but they are encouraged to sit with the team. At many invitational meets, parents who are not volunteering in the meet are not permitted on the pool deck. This is because deck space is limited and parental interruptions are distracting to swimmers and coaches. In addition, swimmers develop responsibility and camaraderie when working together as a team. In addition, just as swimmers are asked to sit together as a team, parents are invited to do the same. This creates team spirit and support for the swimmers from the spectator stands and is highly encouraging to the team.

Behavior

Swim meets are an opportunity to display not only athletic ability but also team pride and sportsmanship. Parents and swimmers should always be mindful that they are representing the GSY swim team, and the Greater Scranton YMCA and should act accordingly (Even when other swimmers and parents do not). Swimmers are encouraged to cheer for their teammates and to stay until the end of the meet. Senior swimmers are expected to stay until the end of each meet session to support their teammates, unless directed otherwise by the coaches. If a swimmer, at any level, must leave before the end of a meet, he or she should notify one of the coaches before the start of the meet.

Herding/Clerk of Course/pre-seeding

Some meets offer a clerk of course to help organize 10 & under swimmers for the events. Dual and some other meets do not have a clerk of course or bullpen and swimmers will be responsible to get to their heat and lane. At dual meets, parent volunteers (Deck Moms or Dads) serve as “herders” who help assemble younger swimmers for each event and send them to the starting blocks. Senior meets are pre-seeded. In both cases, swimmers need to stay attentive to what event is being called to the clerk or the blocks. If a swimmer misses an event, he or she may not be able to make it up.

Checking with Coaches

Swimmers should talk to their coaches before and after each swim. Coaches give final reminders and encouragement before the event, and they offer praise and a constructive review afterward. Parents, PLEASE do not coach your swimmers. It is confusing and disruptive to the work that the coaches and swimmers are doing. Offer them love and support for their effort, regardless of the result, time or place achieved in the swim.

Results and Awards

Results are posted on a wall at each (invitational) meet. Parents and swimmers may copy official times and places from these results. The kind of awards (medals, ribbons, plaques) and the number of awards given at each invitational meet are determined by the host team, or by league by-laws. Team trophies are given primarily at championship meets. All awards are given to coaches at the end of the meet and are distributed at practice. Coaches also receive the official results from the meet. These will be uploaded into the team database on the results page of our website.

Snacks

Healthy snacks and beverages (water, sports drinks) are good for swimmers to have during meets, especially during long sessions (see nutrition section for tips). Some facilities do not allow food or drink on deck so please be attentive to policies at the various pools. All trash in the team area should be properly disposed of before swimmers leave the meet. It is important that we respect the facility and the host team.

Team Apparel

Swimmers wear GSY attire, especially the team suit, cap and t-shirt, at all meets. Wearing team apparel promotes team pride and unity. It also helps coaches, parents and other swimmers locate GSY team members.

T-shirt and cap orders will be taken approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the first league meet for all team members. The official team suit is a solid black Speedo Aquablade suit that is available on-line through the link on the home page of our website. The team suit is required for all GSY swimmers at all meets. For championship meets only, older swimmers may wear approved “performance” suit. These suits are for championship meets only, as designated by the coaching staff. USA Swimming rules

restrict the coverage and material of performance suits and all swimmers who wish to purchase a performance suit should talk to their coaches prior to purchase. Additional optional team apparel will be for sale at various times during the season.

Accommodations for Travel Meets

Whenever possible, the team will reserve a block of rooms for multiple-day meets 1 1/2 or more hours away from Dunmore. The hotel will be listed on the meet information. Participants are not required to stay at that particular hotel, or stay at all, but group planning promotes camaraderie among parents and swimmers.

Team Travel Meets

Team travel meets are sometimes offered for swimmers age 11 and older. These are designated on the meet schedule. "Team travel" means that swimmers travel, share rooms and eat with their teammates under the supervision of parent chaperones and coaches. In this setting they make decisions about food, use of money, use of free time, and how to solve problems and deal with conflict. They share their resources and build team unity through shared experiences. Team travel meets are an excellent opportunity for swimmers to work with teammates, make decisions and further develop the YMCA's character development traits of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. During such trips, swimmers must abide by specific conduct guidelines, and coaches, with the assistance of parent chaperones, have complete authority. Team travel meets are chosen for their competitive offerings and are most valuable for swimmers who already make a strong commitment to swimming and their teammates. Swimmers must maintain above 60% practice attendance in order to be eligible for team travel meets.

Parent Volunteers

Swim meets are completely run by parent volunteers. There are numerous jobs to be filled at meets and volunteering is a great way to stay busy between your child's events. It also gets parents involved in the achievements of all team members and builds relationships with other parents in the swimming community. All GSY parents are expected to help at meets, both at home and away. It sets a positive example of volunteerism and participation for the swimmers.

All meets require:

Timers - Time each heat in a specific lane using stopwatches that are provided by the host team. This job is very easy and keeps you right next to the action. No prior experience is necessary.

Officials - These include the starter, referee, and stroke and turn judges. They conduct the meet and address rule infractions; training is necessary (through USA Swimming and/or YMCA, depending on the meet). There is always a demand for these volunteers. Training is technical but not lengthy or difficult.

Home meets also need:

Ribbon writers - Place computer-generated labels on ribbons and other awards for swimmers. No prior experience necessary.

Runners - After each heat, this person takes cards from timers to the computer operator. No prior experience necessary.

Hospitality – This is usually reserved for invitational and championship meets. These volunteers provide drinks to other meet workers, act as host/hostess in the hospitality room where coaches and officials go to relax and have a snack. No prior experience needed.

Computer Operator - This person inputs data during meets (times, relay names, etc.) and generates results from the system. Training on specific meet manager software is needed.

Timing System Operator – This person operates the Colorado Timing System console that times each event electronically. He or she coordinates with the Computer Operator and Referee to keep the meet running efficiently. Training on the console is needed.

Clerk of Course - The clerk organizes swimmers into proper heats, gives them cards if necessary, and sends them to starting area behind blocks.

Deck Mom/Dad – Dual meets and some other meets do not have a Clerk of Course. In these meets, parent volunteers are used to assemble the 10 and younger swimmers and take them to the starting blocks.

Marshal - Monitors the pool deck, especially, but not only, during warm-up periods to make sure that safety rules are being followed.

Head Timer – Organizes the timers and acts as a backup timer in case a timer’s watch malfunctions.

Concessions/Snack Bar – Sell snack items to swimmers and family members attending the meet.

Financial

Program Fees

There are many costs involved in operating the swim team. Much, but not all of the cost is covered by program fees. Below is a list of what is and is not covered by your program fees.

Covered: coaches' salaries pool rental general operating costs dual meet costs	Not Covered: Meet entry fees for invitationals/championships Suit, goggles, T-Shirt, cap Team clothing Swim bag Travel costs Training equipment (personal items) Special events or parties Team travel expenses
---	--

Program fees may be paid through monthly bank drafts or in full.

Payment in Full

At the time of registration a family pays a non-refundable full program fee for each swimmer in the family. This may be paid by cash, check or credit card.

Payment by Bank Draft or Credit Card Draft

Bank draft payments for each swimmer in the family begin on the following 15th of the month. A parent

fills out a bank draft or credit card authorization slip and submits a voided check to authorize drafts.

There are six bank draft payments for swimmers who register for the White Group or High School Group for the short course season. (four for summer season)

There are seven bank draft payments for swimmers who register for the Blue/Gold Group for the short course season. (five for summer season)

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available for families needing help in paying swim team program fees. To apply, pick up a financial assistance application at the YMCA Front Desk. Fill out & return form to Louise McLafferty, YMCA Executive Director. Inquiries, the application process and awards of assistance are kept confidential.

Cancellations

Diana Dempsey, Aquatic Director handles all swim team cancellations. Please contact her for cancellation information. Registration fees and swim meet fees are not refundable.

Fundraising

The GSY Swim Team does require families to participate in fundraising activities and generally does organize activities. Funds raised by the Parents Club are used to provide the team with equipment (timing system), coaches travel expenses, ribbons, parties, end of season banquet, etc.

YMCA Annual Giving Campaign

Each year, the Greater Scranton YMCA conducts its annual support campaign. This raises money to help youth and families in need to participate in YMCA programs. The swim team is proud of the contributions its families make yearly to the campaign and you are encouraged to continue to help make a difference through your generosity. Volunteers in several capacities are needed and Stingray families are encouraged to get involved in the campaign.

Communication

Communication is vital to any organization and it must be a two-way street. Coaches will make every effort to convey information to swimmers and their parents. Likewise, team members and their parents need to communicate with coaches in order to avoid misunderstandings and to inform them of things that may affect a swimmer's training and competition. The responsibility for maintaining effective communication rests with everyone.

Information for swimmers and their families:

E-Mail – Information, reminders and last-minute information is sent to families via e-mail. This is the primary means of communication. Please update the GSY Parents Club (Teri Carey) with any changes or additions for the e-mail list.

GSY Twitter – Last minute changes due to weather, reminders about meet entry deadlines, etc will be posted. Sign up is FREE. Sign up to follow gsyswimming

Family Folders – A file box is located on the table near the family changing room in Pool A. There is a folder for each family in the file box. Awards from swim meets and miscellaneous items will be put in the family folders. These should be checked weekly.

Bulletin Boards - The swim team bulletin board is located near the family changing room entrance to Pool A. Team information results will be posted here. Please check the boards regularly.

GSY Stingrays web site –www.gsyswimming.org We are moving to paperless communication. Please bookmark this site and make a habit of checking it for meet information, updates and changes. If you have digital pictures to submit for the site, send them to the Aquatic Director.

Verbal - Sometimes swimmers are given information verbally by coaches. This is most common at the senior level. Regularly ask your swimmer about information given verbally.

Parent meetings - Held monthly throughout the season, these meetings allow coaches to convey information directly to parents. These meetings are an opportunity to educate parents in various aspects of competitive swimming and the GSY Swim Team. They also provide an open forum for parents to ask questions and address concerns.

Communicating with coaches:

Contacting coaches by phone – The Aquatic Director may be reached by phone during the general office hours of 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The YMCA phone is (570) 342-8115. The Coaches contact information is posted on the website. NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT CALL COACHES AT HOME. Please respect their personal and family time by addressing issues during office hours or before and after practice.

E-mail - Parents are welcome to e-mail coaches with questions, information and ideas. Please address large issues or concerns in person with the appropriate staff member(s). Individual coaches are not required, but may provide their cell phone numbers or e-mail addresses at their own discretion. Please use those respectfully and judiciously.

Meeting (formal or informal) with coaches - Coaches are usually available before or after practice time to answer quick questions. If you would like to address issues that require more time, please schedule an appointment with your child's coach or the Aquatic Director. Do not interrupt coaches or swimmers on deck during practice time. Coaches are more than happy to answer questions or address issues at a more appropriate time and place.

Electronic Communication Policy

Greater Scranton YMCA employees are not permitted to contact program participants by phone or electronically for any purpose other than transmitting program-specific information. Employees may not participate in social network communication with program participants. Please do not solicit such social or casual communication with GSY coaching staff members.

Grievances

Most problems are rooted in simple misunderstandings or miscommunication and can be resolved quickly and easily. If allowed to fester, however, problems grow out of proportion and can be harmful to swimmers, parents, coaches, and the program. This can be prevented by addressing grievances immediately and with the appropriate person. If a team member or parent has a grievance concerning any aspect of the program, he or she should go directly to the source.

Contact:	When:
Group Coach	An issue is group-specific, site-specific or swimmer- specific.
Aquatic Director	An issue concerns the overall swim team or our Senior Program, financial or administrative concerns.

The Greater Scranton YMCA is committed to maintaining ethical conduct from all employees, members and guests. Please feel free to report issues or concerns to the Aquatic Director. Particular areas of interest are violations of the YMCA code of conduct, protecting children from abuse, and concerns about aquatic and transportation safety. As a member and participant you are in a position to observe not only questionable or unethical behavior at the YMCA, but also see areas in need of change.

Annual Awards Banquet

Each spring the team has an awards dinner honoring the team's achievements during the previous year. All swimmers receive participation trophies. Achievement Awards are given to swimmers who achieved certain milestones. Graduating seniors receive special recognition as they complete their GSY careers. Additional special awards are also given. A slide show commemorating the season is shown at the Awards Banquet and parents are encouraged to take pictures during the season to contribute to the team slideshow. Submit these to the aquatic director via e-mail.

Swimmer, Parent, and Coach

The relationship between swimmer, coach and parent is an important aspect of swimming. Usually it is a mutually supportive partnership, but if it becomes strained it can be harmful to a swimmer's experience in the sport. Regular and open communication is necessary to avoid misunderstandings. The swimmer, the coach, and the parent must each understand and respect his or her role so that conflicting or negative messages are not sent. Swimmers, parents and coaches may not always agree but respectful and open communication will help maintain a positive relationship. The collective goal of the swimmer-coach- parent triangle should be the maintenance of an environment most conducive to the development of the swimmer - both as an athlete and as a person.

Parents

Parents are a vital part of every child's life. They are central figures in the growth and development of their children. Parents are the primary example after which children pattern their own behavior and beliefs. For athletes, especially teenagers, the role of parents may change as others, including coaches, assume a strong role not only in their physical achievements but also in their mental and emotional development. Because coaches and teammates have such a strong impact on a swimmer, parents should fully investigate the philosophy and conduct of the program before registering their child. When a child begins swimming on a team, the parents put their faith in the program and its coaches to make the child's experience positive, rewarding, and enjoyable. There are ways in which parents can also aid the experience.

Unconditional Love

In swimming, the primary duty for parents is to love and support their swimmer(s) regardless of performance and achievement level. A child needs to know that no matter what happens, he or she is loved. Swimmers should be praised for their own personal achievements and should never be compared with other swimmers or with the past achievements of a parent or other relative. Whatever a swimmer does or doesn't achieve is a result of many factors and is not a reflection on his or her parents. Please do not try to live vicariously through your child's swimming experience.

Set a Good Example

Children tend to pattern their attitudes and behavior after the example set by their parents. Please be aware of your attitudes and behavior, especially in the team setting. Exemplify good sportsmanship and the positive values of the YMCA. The GSY program encourages swimmers to be honest, caring, respectful and responsible, to ask questions and address concerns directly and to serve others. Observing these habits in parents further enforces the lessons taught at the YMCA. After all, parents represent the team and the YMCA as much as the swimmers and coaches do.

Positive Problem Solving

We ask that parents reserve concerns and disagreements about the program for discussion with a coach or the Aquatic Director. Questioning or criticizing a coach, team member, or the program in front of a swimmer seriously damages the swimmer's trust and confidence in the coach and the team. If your swimmer has a problem, try to gather as much information as possible and address it with the coach or appropriate person directly. Avoid passing judgment, jumping to conclusions or discussing it with others. Gossip is never constructive.

Get Involved

We invite parents to become involved in the swim team in a constructive way. There are numerous volunteer opportunities that allow parents to be more involved in swimming and in the GSY team. Swim meets (all meets, but especially those hosted by GSY) require extensive volunteer efforts to run. Team social events bring parents, swimmers and coaches together in an informal and fun setting. Chaperones are needed for all team travel meets and provide an opportunity to work closely with coaches and swimmers. Help is always needed with apparel orders and distribution, bulletin board maintenance, psyche-up dinners/activities, and in other areas.

...But not too involved

Please respect the time your swimmer spends with his or her coach and teammates by not interrupting a coach or swimmer during practice or team activities. During practice times and meets please do not come on deck. (please refer to sections on practices and meets) It is distracting to both swimmers and coaches. Furthermore, please refrain from offering swimming-related instruction to swimmers (your own or others). This is confusing for swimmers and frustrating for coaches. If you have a question or concern, contact your child's coach.

Outside Consultation

If you or your swimmer has questions about mechanics or desires additional help with their training and preparation, consult with his/her group coach or with the swim team director. DO NOT seek advice or instruction from other coaches, trainers or instructors.

Swimmers - Roles and Responsibilities

GSY Swimmers strive to be positive team members in and out of the pool. Most importantly, swimmers should always remember that they represent the YMCA and the GSY Swim Team. Their words and actions reflect not only on themselves but on their teammates, parents, coaches, and the YMCA. With the guidance of coaches and parents, swimmers are expected to demonstrate the YMCA's character development traits of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Focus on Team

Individual achievements are important but supporting others and working together toward a common goal raises everyone's performance level. Furthermore, shared

experiences are more fun and exciting than individual ones. *Together Everyone Achieves More.*

Act, Think, Look, and Talk Positively

Attitudes are contagious so make sure that yours is worth catching. Every member of a team contributes to the overall team experience. Help make ours AWESOME!

Take responsibility - for your belongings, words, actions, and swimming. Attend practice regularly. Be on time and remember all equipment (cap, goggles, suit, towel, etc.) Don't blame others when things don't go your way. Excuses satisfy only the person who makes them.

Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times. Athletes with good sportsmanship habits earn the respect of their competitors and gain pride and confidence in themselves. Loud, emotional, or rude displays are inappropriate, regardless of the reason. Always think before you speak or act. Remember that you represent the YMCA - at the pool and away from it.

Show respect. The best way to gain respect is to show respect. Allow others to share their opinions and ideas freely. Follow rules set forth by coaches and officials. Do not talk while others are talking, and don't talk back to coaches or officials. Refrain from speaking or acting negatively toward other swimmers, teams, coaches, or officials. Do not misuse or abuse property - in YMCAs, at meets, in restaurants, etc.

Take Pride. Give an effort that you can be proud of. Maintain an attitude that you can be proud of. Develop team pride by encouraging teammates to do the same. Don't cut corners or take shortcuts.

Be honest. Do not lie. Refrain from gossip (which often involves at least one untruth). Do what you think is right, not just what is popular. Give an honest effort toward achieving your stated goals. Communicate with coaches regarding anything that might affect your performance, or the team as a whole.

Code of Conduct

As representatives of the GSY Swim Team and the Greater Scranton YMCA, swimmers are expected to speak and behave in a manner that is respectful, responsible, honest, and caring. If each swimmer is mindful of these traits, appropriate conduct should never be an issue. These guidelines are to be followed by GSY swimmers at all practices, meets, and other team functions. Special activities, such as team travel trips, require adherence to additional activity-specific conduct guidelines.

The following behaviors are not acceptable and may result in suspension from the team:

- Unsportsmanlike conduct - taunting, teasing, or speaking negatively about teammates, competitors, officials, or coaches.
- Use of inappropriate, strong, or vulgar language or gestures.
- Lying, deceit, dishonesty.
- Littering, abuse, or misuse of equipment, furniture, or other items of property.

The first violation will receive a verbal warning. The second will result in dismissal from the practice, meet, or team function where the violation was made. The third violation will result in suspension from the team for a period of time determined by the Head Coach. A fourth violation will cause the removal of the swimmer from the program. Parents will be notified at each step.

The following actions will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the team:

- Verbal or physical abuse toward others.
- Theft of any kind.
- Vandalism or any destruction of property, public or private.
- Use of tobacco products or other illegal substances.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other illegal substances.
- Sexual activity

Dress Code

Swimmers are expected to dress with dignity and appropriate taste whenever representing the team. This includes going into and out of practices, meets and team activities. Swimmers should not show any part of their undergarments (boxer shorts, bra straps, etc.) outside of their clothes. No crude, rude or suggestive pictures or writing are not acceptable. Skirts and shorts must be of an appropriate length. Pants, shorts and skirts should not hang at the waist lower than the hip bones. Swimmers should routinely monitor the condition of their suits so that they are not worn by themselves when they no longer provide adequate coverage and support.

Coaches

Coaches occupy a unique place in a swimmer's life - part parent, part teacher, part friend. GSY coaches take these roles seriously and strive to be good role models, leaders and listeners.

Coaches:

- instruct swimmers in all aspects of the sport: technique, training methods, mental preparation, competitive strategy, etc.
- offer encouragement, constructive criticism, and honest assessments with suggestions for improvement
- demonstrate and encourage values and behaviors consistent with the principles of the YMCA

- lead the team at competitions
- make decisions about group placement, meet opportunities, and events for swimmers (based on a number of factors and with the interest of the swimmer and the team in mind)
- communicate with swimmers and parents about plans, issues, and philosophy within the program

Points to Keep in Mind:

- Individual swimmers develop emotionally and athletically at different rates. This fact alone may cause stress for swimmers and external pressure cannot quicken or slow the pace of natural development. Excessive pressure can, however, contribute to burnout.
- Coaches, swimmers, and parents are human. Mistakes are inevitable. The most productive response is to admit them, excuse them, and move on. Grudges help no one.
- Let the coaches coach, let the swimmers swim, let the parents support.
- The process, not the awards, is the most valuable part of competitive swimming. The friendships, lessons, skills, and memories gained from participating in the sport and the team last forever. They help create a healthy, happy and strong person.
- As stated before, parents, swimmers and coaches may not always agree but honest and open communication maintains mutual respect and a positive relationship.

Health and Nutrition

Swimming is an ideal sport to promote total health and fitness. Here is some basic information on health and nutrition to prevent injury and to help ensure improved performance in practice and meets.

Health

All pools have safety rules posted. Please read and follow them. These standard pool safety rules always apply:

1. Don't run.
2. Never swim alone.
3. Look before you dive.
4. Never bring glass containers on a pool deck.
5. No horseplay on pool deck or in locker rooms.

Some other safety guidelines pertaining to swim practices and meets:

1. Inform coaches of medical conditions and prescription drugs.
2. Swimmers with asthma should always bring an inhaler and have it ready for use.
3. Swimmers should always bring and use a water bottle for practice and meets.

4. Wear proper shoes and clothing for outdoor activities.

Swim coaches are required to be trained in First Aid, CPR, and either Lifeguarding or Safety Training for Swim Coaches.

Injuries

Injuries incurred during practice, meets, or team activities will be treated immediately and parents will be notified. Sometimes swimmers experience pain that is not the result of a particular wound or accident. Muscle pain is common, especially as swimmers mature and their muscles develop further. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between soreness and injury. If pain restricts movement or lasts more than 3-4 days, swimmers should seek medical attention. Coaches are not doctors and can only give advice, not diagnosis or treatment. It is, however, important to keep coaches informed of injuries, treatments, and rehabilitation.

Illness

In case of illness, swimmers should let their bodies heal by restricting activity. It is also better to miss a practice or two than to expose many other team members and coaches to the same illness. Once recovered, swimmers can return to practice and work to regain their strength in the water.

Swimmer's Ear

Otitis Externa, commonly known as "swimmer's ear," is an infection of the skin in the ear canal. The dark, warm, wet environment of a swimmer's ear canal is a breeding ground for such an infection. To prevent swimmer's ear, dry the ear well after each time in the water. Use a towel, Q-tip (carefully), or gently shake the head on its side. Commercial products aid in the prevention and treatment of swimmer's ear. A cheap and easy remedy is to make a solution of 50% rubbing alcohol and 50% white vinegar. A couple of drops in each ear will help kill some of the normal bacteria and will help dry out the ear. ** Alcohol or vinegar should not be put in the ears of children with PE tubes in their ears or holes in their eardrums. (Information borrowed from Dr. Raymond B. Coors, MD.)

Nutrition

Food is the body's fuel, and the body's performance can be helped or hindered by the quality of food that is consumed. In terms of quantity, young swimmers must strike a delicate balance between consuming enough calories and nutrients to promote growth and skeleto-muscular development on the one hand, and not eating so much that they are sluggish due to excess food storage. As for quality of food, carbohydrates should make up the highest percentage of a swimmer's diet. Carbohydrates provide the greatest source of energy during physical exertion. Because calorie needs vary from person to person depending on age, size, amount of training, etc., swimmers should concentrate on the kinds of foods that make up their diet. **In general, a swimmer's diet should contain 55-65% carbohydrates, 15-25% protein, and 20-30% fat.**

Swimmers may need a boost of “fuel” before and after practice, so eating smaller meals plus snacks during the day can be helpful in sustaining a swimmer’s energy. Furthermore, the body more quickly and efficiently digests smaller amounts eaten throughout the day than it does large meals eaten three times a day. This is particularly important during meets that can last several hours per session. Snacks at meets should be small, easily digestible, and able to be quickly converted to energy (foods high in carbohydrates and low in fat). Try to leave at least 20-30 minutes between the time you eat a snack and the time you swim your next event.

Perhaps the most forgotten element of good nutrition is water. Swimmers need to drink water consistently to aid in digestion, keep the body cool and replace fluids lost during workout. (Yes, you do sweat in the pool.) The best indicator of adequate hydration is the color of your urine. Pale urine indicates good hydration. Dark urine means you need to drink more! A good rule of thumb is to drink before you are thirsty. Sports drinks can help replace some nutrients and electrolytes during intense exercise but some may have high amounts of sugar and sodium. As a general rule, if an athlete is exercising continuously for 90 minutes or longer then he/she would benefit from a sports drink with carbohydrates. Diluting sports drinks with water can help replace carbohydrates without consuming as much sugar and can help those athletes whose stomachs are upset by the strong taste of such drinks.

Refueling the body after a workout is as important as fueling it beforehand. Within 30 minutes after the completion of a rigorous workout, athletes should start replacing the energy (carbohydrates, fluids and a small amount of protein) that they depleted. Having a small, easily digestible snack on the way home can help the recovery process significantly. Sports drinks, water, energy bars, crackers, bagels, etc. are good choices for replenishment following a workout.

The best diet for swimmers is one that is well-balanced, includes a variety of foods, and is accompanied by a large amount of water. Some swimmers like to take multivitamins to ensure that they are receiving recommended amounts of vitamins and minerals. Dietary supplements are not necessary if these guidelines are followed naturally. We do not encourage alternate methods of muscle or energy building such as creatine loading.

Good sources of carbohydrates:

breads, bagels, cereal, pasta, fruit, green vegetables, corn, beans, milk, potatoes, rice, granola bars, crackers

Good sources of protein:

lean meat & poultry, fish, lowfat yogurt and milk, soups with lean meat, peanut butter, beans, eggs

Foods to limit:

sugary foods, fatty foods, greasy foods - ie. candy, chocolate, potato chips, french fries, fried anything, butter, mayonnaise, creamy sauces, ice cream, cookies, cake, cupcakes

Each person has different likes, dislikes, and preferences. Swimmers should be conscious of their food choices and listen to their bodies. Variety is the spice of life; but enjoy everything in moderation.

An excellent source for nutritional information pertaining to young athletes is Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook. USA Swimming also has a nutrition section on their web site.

USA Swimming provides a *Nutrition Tracker* feature on their website (www.usaswimming.org) that is a helpful tool for older swimmers to use.

Glossary

“A” time (also AA- double A, AAA- triple A, AAAA- quad A): Letters are used by USA Swimming to categorize times in each event and age group. These designations begin at “B” and progress to BB, A, AA, AAA, and AAAA. See appendix for a chart of the current time standards.

Age group - Swimmers are divided into groups by age. The age group designations for YMCA swimming are 6 & Under, 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 11/12, 13/14, 15-18 (senior). For USA Swimming they are the same, except there is no 6 & Under or 8 & Under. The terms “age group swimming” or “age group meet” refer mainly to groups and meets for 12 & Under swimmers (sometimes 14 & Under) in which swimmers are divided by age group.

Ascend - To increase times or get slower as a swimmer progresses through a swim or a set.

“B” time (also “BB”) - see “A” time

Bulkhead - A wall, usually moveable, used to divide a pool across the center.

Check-in - Some meets require that swimmers check-in for certain events, esp. distance events. Names are checked or initialed to verify that they will, in fact, swim those events.

Circle seeding - A system where the fastest swimmers are placed in the middle lanes of the final three heats. The swimmer with the fastest entry time swims in the center lane of the last heat. The second fastest swims in the center lane of the next to last heat, etc.

Clerk of course - In a designated area, this person or people arrange swimmers by heat and lane, give them each a card to take to their lane’s timers, and send them behind the blocks to swim.

Championship/Consolation heat - In a prelims-finals meet format, the top finishers in prelims (the number depends on the number of lanes in the pool) swim in the championship heat and the next fastest group of finishers (number depends on number of lanes) from prelims swims in the consolation heat.

Cut - Slang term for a qualifying time needed to swim in a particular meet.

Deck seeding- Assigning swimmers to heat and lanes immediately before each event.

Descend - Decrease time or get faster as a swimmer progresses through a swim or a set.

Disqualification/DQ - A swim is nullified due to the swimmer committing an infraction of a rule. (ex. kicking flutter kick on butterfly or touching the wall with one hand on breaststroke).

Dolphin kick - Kick used in butterfly and sometimes when pushing off the wall in freestyle and backstroke. Feet and legs are together and kick up and down in unison.

Drag/Dragsuit - Drag is resistance against a swimmer's movement. A dragsuit creates extra drag with excess material for the purpose of building strength and increasing a swimmer's ability to combat extra resistance.

Drill - an exercise focusing on a particular part of a stroke with the goal of improving the overall stroke technique.

Dryland training - Exercises performed outside the pool to improve overall fitness and enhance swimming performance.

Dual meet - A competition between two teams.

Event - A particular swimming race - eg. 100 Freestyle, 200 Backstroke, 400 IM, etc.

False Start - A swimmer moves forward or dives before the horn, beep, or gun is sounded to start a race. A swimmer is disqualified if she/he does this.

False Start Rope - If a swimmer false starts, the starter sounds the horn, beep, or gun several times and this rope, across the center of the pool, is dropped to stop the swimmers.

Fastskin - A type of suit made of a material that is meant to resist water and thus aid in the hydrodynamics of a swimmer who wears it. These suits are very expensive and their benefit remains the subject of debate in the world of competitive swimming.

Finals - In a prelims-finals meet format, each event is contested twice. The top finishers (number determined by the number of lanes in the pool) in the preliminaries

(the first time the event is contested) swim again in finals. The order in which swimmers finish in finals determine their placement, points, and awards for each event.

FINA – The international governing body for competitive swimming.

Flags/Backstroke flags - A line of triangular flags strung across the pool, 15 ft. from each end of the pool in a short course yards pool and 5 meters from each end of the pool in a long course or short course meter pool. These signal to swimmers that they are nearing the end of the pool.

Flutter kick - The kick used in freestyle and backstroke. The feet and legs move up and down alternately in short fast motions.

Group/Training Group/Practice Group - Swimmers are organized into groups according to age, ability, and commitment.

Heat - Events are divided into heats. In each heat there is one swimmer in each lane swimming a particular event or race. The number of heats in each event depends on the number of competitors in each event.

Heat Sheet - A listing of the swimmers in each event, divided into heats and lanes (indicating which swimmers swim in each heat and lane).

IMX – USA Swimming program designed to motivate swimmers to compete in all strokes and in longer distances of each stroke. Swimmers' times in the designated events are ranked nationally with all other swimmers in the respective age group.

Individual Medley/ IM - An event in which each competitive stroke is swum in this order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. This is competed in distances of 100 (1 length each stroke), 200 (2 lengths each stroke), or 400 (4 lengths each stroke).

Invitational Meet - A meet involving more than 2 teams, usually lasting 2 or more days.

Juniors - A slang term for USA Swimming Junior Championships or the time standards required for that meet.

J.O.s - short for Junior Olympics, this is actually a nickname for the age group championship meet, held in the spring and the summer.

Lane/lane ropes - pools are divided into lanes - by lane ropes or a line of floating markers- so that swimmers may compete side by side.

Long course - a 50 meter pool; competitions in the summer are held in long course (50 meter) pools.

LSC - Local Swimming Committee; United States Swimming's regional branches which oversee the conduct of meets and records, and rules under USS guidelines.

Lap counter - Square plastic device with moveable numbers used by a person to count laps for a swimmer competing in an event 500 yards or longer.

Medley - An event involving all four competitive strokes. An individual medley is swum by one person; a medley relay has 4 swimmers - one per stroke.

Meet Director - Person who organizes and oversees the conduct of a meet.

Negative split - swimming technique in which the swimmer swims the second half of a distance faster than the first.

NTV - National Time Verification - A form issued by a verification official certifying that a national qualifying time was made by a swimmer.

Official - A certified judge on the pool deck who enforces swimming rules.

Open - In reference to a meet or event, anyone may swim, regardless of age, and sometimes, time.

Pace clock - A clock, either digital or with rotating hands on a face, which counts seconds and minutes so that the swimmers may do interval training sets.

Preliminaries/Prelims - In a prelims-finals meet format, the prelims session is when each event is first contested. All swimmers compete in their events in prelims; the top finishers in each event compete again in finals.

Pre-seeded - Swimmers are assigned heats and lanes before the start of the meet.

Proof of Time - A requirement at some meets, particularly championship meets, to prove that swimmers have legally met the time standards for the meet and have actually swum the times at which they are entered.

Psyche sheet - A listing of entries for a meet, divided by event but not heats. These are subject to change as swimmers scratch events before the meet.

Qualifying time - The minimum time needed to swim a particular event in a particular meet.

Referee - The official who has authority over all the other officials at a meet. He/she makes final decisions and sees that a meet runs efficiently.

Relay - Event in which four swimmers compete as a single team, one after another.

Re-seed - Re-assigning swimmer to heats and lanes after a change occurs.

Ribbon writer - Person, usually a parent volunteer, who writes names and times, or puts computer generated labels on ribbons or medals to be awarded to swimmers.

Runner - Person, usually a parent volunteer, who collects cards from timers after each heat is swum and takes them to the computer operator.

Sanction - Official approval of a swim meet, given by either an LSC (for USA Swimming meets) or a YMCA field coordinator (for YMCA meets). To receive a sanction, a meet must be conducted according to the rules set forth by the body (YMCA or USA Swimming) issuing the sanction.

Scissors kick - The feet begin apart and move straight toward and then past one another. This kick is illegal in breaststroke.

Scratch - Removal of a swimmer from an event.

Seeding- Placement of a swimmer in an event based on their entry time in that event.

Seniors - All 13 & older swimmers are “senior” swimmers. In the YMCA program this term commonly refers to the annual program for 13 & older swimmers. Also, it is a slang term for the USA Swimming National Championships.

Senior Circuit - Designation for meets for 13 & over swimmers having two 13/14 AA strokes. Swimmers with one 13/14 AA time may compete in these meets but may not compete in Senior Development meets thereafter.

Senior Development - Designation for meets for 13 & Older swimmers who do not have two 13/14 AA strokes, or have one AA time but do not choose to swim at the Senior Circuit level.

Session - A distinct portion of a meet, having its own warm-up time and slate of events to be swum.

Shave - Swimmers shave the hair off their bodies before their focus meet in order to gain a fast feel in the water and thus a psychological boost for their swims. Shaving is not recommended for 12 & under swimmers.

Starter - official who starts each race by saying "Take your mark", then sounding a beep, horn, or firing a gun.

Starting blocks - Platforms at the starting end of each lane, from which swimmers dive (or start in the water for backstroke) to begin each race.

Streamline - Swimmer's body position used when starting or pushing off walls to reduce water resistance. The body is fully extended. Feet and legs are together with toes pointed. Arms are extended above the head with one hand on top of the other.

Taper - Gradual reduction in yardage and intensity allowing the muscles to rest and recover for peak performance. Taper is effective for teenage swimmers whose muscles have developed to the point that they are able to "break down" during long periods of intense training. Taper also incorporates positive mental preparation for peak performance. Because taper has a strong effect on the body and mind, it is most effective as part of a training cycle and is incorporated into the season plan at intervals that allow for sufficient intense training between periods of taper.

Team travel meet - A meet in which swimmers travel to and from a meet with their teammates and coaches, stay with their teammates, and function completely as a team for the trip. Parents are welcome to attend such meets but lodge and travel separately from their children.

Timed finals - Meet format in which each event is only contested once (no prelims or finals).

Timer - Person, usually a parent volunteer, who uses a stopwatch to time a swimmer in each heat and record the swimmer's time on a card.

Time standards - Minimum swimming times required to earn specific designations such as BB, B, A, AA....

Time trial - An event swum outside of a regular meet, usually swum by a swimmer to achieve a certain qualifying time.

Top 16 Award - Recognition given each season by United States Swimming to the fastest 16 swimmers in each event and age group.

