



Swim Team
Marquette County and the Copper Country

Team Handbook



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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Welcome Letter

Welcome to our team!

Whether you are a returning family or a first-time swimmer we are glad to have you with us. I believe you'll find we run a program that provides fun and fitness, challenges and friendships. This is going to be another exciting year!

This handbook should answer many of your questions about the season including practices and meets. We also have a website www.mqtypswim.com with tons of information.

I look forward to meeting our new athletes and their families and building on the success and goals of our returning athletes.

See you at the pool,

Matthew Williams
Director of Aquatics/Competitive Swimming

Mission Statement

Our mission is to offer all athletes the opportunity to reach their potential in an environment that promotes a healthy and active lifestyle.

Practice Groups

"Future Stars"

This program is for children ages 8 and under who are new to the sport of swimming. We place an emphasis on developing proper swim skills and a strong kick while building confidence in an environment that is rich with opportunities for making new friends and having Fun. Recommended practice attendance is 2 days per week.

The minimum skill required to participate is the ability to swim one length of the pool.

Bronze Group

This group is for new athletes ages 9 & older as well as younger athletes with intermediate skills. Practice time will focus on skill improvement, aerobic development, knowledge of competitive rules and FUN. Through drills and games, swimmers will learn butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle as well as racing starts and turns for each stroke. They will be introduced to basic training and racing concepts. Practice attendance recommendation is 2-3 days per week.

The minimum skills required to participate are:

- The ability to swim 50 yards of freestyle with rotary breathing and 50 yards of backstroke.**
- The ability to kick 50 yards nonstop**
- The ability to dive head first into deep water.**
- The ability to perform underwater forward somersaults**

Practice Groups

Silver Group

This training group is for either the intermediate level swimmer with high achieving goals or the advanced swimmer who has more of a recreational interest. Practice time will focus on skill refinement, aerobic development, kicking strength, race pacing, interval training, and goal setting. Recommended practice attendance is 3-4 days per week.

The minimum skills required to participate are:

- The ability to swim 500 yards nonstop in less than 10 minutes with flip turns, underwater streamline five meters at each wall and bilateral breathing.
- The ability to swim a 200-yard IM using proper turns and technique in less than four minutes
- The ability to kick 200 yards in less than five minutes
- The ability to perform forward and backward starts using the starting blocks

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Practice Groups continued

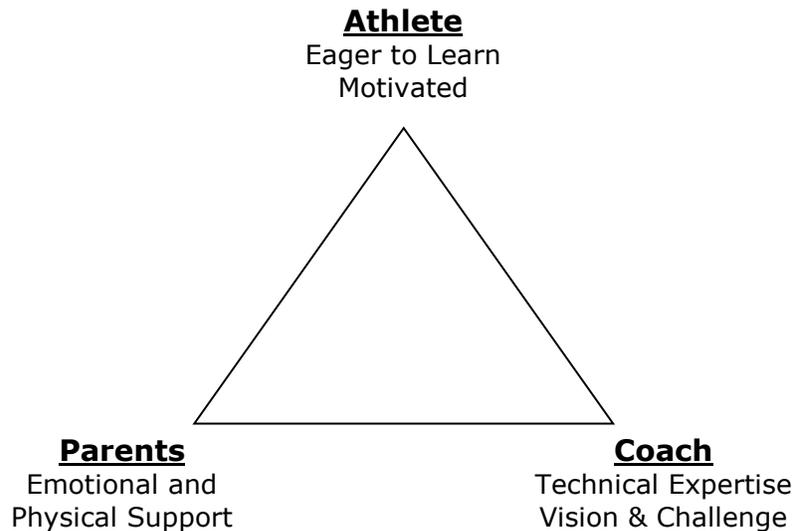
Gold Group

This training group is for the advanced athlete who is highly motivated to qualify and place at the YMCA/USA state meet, achieve National cuts and swim in high school or college. Strong skills are a must as practice times are focused on improving aerobic and anaerobic condition, strength, speed, race strategies, building mental toughness and goal setting. Required attendance is 4 days per week; recommended attendance is 5-7 sessions per week including strength training at locations where this is available.

The minimum skills required to participate are:

- **The ability to swim 20 x 200 yds on a 3:15 interval holding under 3:00 using flip turns, proper streamline and underwater dolphin kick beyond 5 meters.**
- **The ability to kick 10 x 100 on a 2:00 interval holding under 1:50**
- **The ability to swim a 400-yard IM using proper technique in less than six minutes**
- **The ability to self-motivate, follow instructions and complete tasks independently**

Relationship Among Athlete, Parents & Coaches



Eager to Learn - Always mentally ready to participate in swimming and listen to the coaching staff's instructions

Motivated - Excited to swim and achieve goals

Emotional Support - Understand the athletes' goals and support them with encouragement. Help them develop a balanced and positive philosophy regarding sports and life.

Physical Support - Provide necessary swim gear. Transport swimmers to practice and swim meets. Help them eat right and get enough sleep.

Technical Expertise - Maintain currency in certifications. Continue to learn and expand coaching skill set.

Vision and Challenge - Understand abilities of each swimmer and develop individual guidance as needed to help them reach their goals.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

As swim team parents/guardians, we will:

- ◇ provide encouragement and support to our athlete(s)
- ◇ provide transportation to/from practices, arriving 15 minutes before practice starts so our athlete(s) will be on the pool deck and ready to begin 5 minutes prior to practice. We will also arrive promptly at the end of practice to pick up our children.
- ◇ ensure our athlete(s) attend practices each week and if unable to do so, establish a routine which provides consistency for our athlete(s) which will bolster our child's responsibility and ensure improvement
- ◇ not disturb the coaches before or during practice as this time is reserved for practice preparation and for our athlete(s)
- ◇ approach the coaches after practice or call/email them to discuss any issues/concerns we have
- ◇ not voice any concerns we have to our athlete(s) so as not to undermine the coach/athlete trust we are all striving to create
- ◇ provide feedback to the coaches, positive thoughts as well as constructive concerns as appropriate
- ◇ request assistance from the Parent Advisory Committee in resolving an issue if it becomes too emotional
- ◇ promptly read all communications from the coaching staff and respond as appropriate
- ◇ provide transportation to/from meets
- ◇ observe practices from the observation area, not on the pool deck
- ◇ participate in team parent meetings
- ◇ participate in team socials and potlucks
- ◇ submit online meet entry forms on time; and understand that if we don't, our swimmers won't be able to enter that event
- ◇ NEVER compare our swimmer(s) to others so as not to lower our swimmers' self-esteem, build animosity and competition among teammates or undermine our swimmer's goals
- ◇ NEVER critique a swim. Critiquing is the responsibility of the coaching staff
- ◇ ALWAYS be positive and encouraging - especially after a practice or a difficult result

Athlete Code of Conduct

The YMCA swim team expects all athletes and coaches involved in athletic competition and events, who are representing the YMCA, to present themselves in a positive manner at all times.

CATEGORY I

In order to maintain a positive image of the team and support its performance objectives, the YMCA strictly prohibits:

- A. The use or possession of tobacco in any form.
- B. The purchase, possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages.
- C. The purchase, possession, use or sale of controlled substances.
- D. Insubordination, illegal acts, vandalism, promiscuity or conduct in direct violation of YMCA rules.

CONSEQUENCES

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct as established in Category I may result in payment for any incurred damages, if necessary, and:

- A. First offense: a one-month suspension from all team activities.
- B. Second offense: suspension from the team for the remainder of the season.
- C. Third offense: permanent suspension from team activities.

CATEGORY II

In order to take full advantage of the Y swim team experience and to ensure the safety of all team members, each athlete is expected to:

- A. Pay attention and apply him/herself at all practices and meets.
- B. Display proper respect, honesty, and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, chaperones, parents and fellow competitors.
- C. Maintain a lifestyle that will allow proper rest and nutrition to ensure a healthy body, mind and spirit.
- D. Display a positive and supportive attitude toward the YMCA program, coaches and teammates.

CONSEQUENCES

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct as established in Category II may result in the following actions:

- A. First offense: discussion between parent, athlete and coach.
- B. Second offense: removal from the event (practice, meet or team function) and further discussion between the parent/guardian, athlete and coach
- C. Third offense: team suspension for up to one month

PROCESS FOR DETERMINING VIOLATIONS

Coaches, officials, chaperones, YMCA personnel, athletes and parents should inform the Head Swim Coach or YMCA officials of any violations. In the event of a violation, the head coach or his/her representative shall have the responsibility of exercising the consequences listed by category as soon as he/she has been notified of a violation. It shall be the coach's prerogative to exercise less than, but not more than the stated consequences if he/she feels it is in the best interest of the athlete. The coach shall notify the parents/guardian of the athlete of the violation as soon as it is practical. Thereafter, the coach shall arrange a meeting with the athlete and parents or guardian. The YMCA administration shall act as arbitrator if an athlete or the athlete's parent or guardian feels they have been treated unfairly.

Fees, Billing Policy and Procedures

As a team, we are made up of a group of people who are working toward the common goal of providing a quality swim program where our swimmers can excel and grow. The only paid personnel are the coaches and lifeguards. Everything else is done by parent volunteers.

Each swimming season will have its own program fee based on length of the session which determines the costs (i.e., coach and lifeguard wages and pool rental). These fees are paid to the YMCA Marquette via their on-line billing system.

Additionally, as members of the YMCA, all swimmers are required to maintain a \$19/month YMCA membership.

Meet entry fees are additional to the team fee and are deducted through the YMCA bank draft system.

We hope we never have to use it, but there is a \$20 per 15 minute increment late fee for any late pickup after practice. If practice ends at 6 pm, the late fee will be invoked for pickup after 6:15. A pickup at 6:20 would incur a \$20 charge, etc.

We expect all parents/guardians will live up to their financial commitments to their swimmers and the team. We ask that everyone pay their fees on time. If special arrangements are needed, please contact the YMCA-Marquette Chief Executive Officer or Financial Officer to discuss individual family situations.

Financial assistance may be available through the YMCA Strong

Kids program. Additionally, in the Copper Country there is the John Vincent Scholarship. For more information, contact a coach.

Equipment for Our Swimmers

- ~~✓~~ Swimming suit (cost \$15-60 depending on style and fabric)
- ~~✓~~ Goggles (\$10-15, prescription goggles \$15-\$25)
- ~~✓~~ Swim Cap (\$2-\$15)
- ~~✓~~ Fins, Speedo Optimus recommended (\$20)
- ~~✓~~ Towels

Make sure you put your swimmer(s)' name(s) or initials on each item.

Parent/Guardians and Volunteer Roles

Home Meets

We typically host 2 major meets and 2 novice meets in Marquette and two mid-sized meets in Houghton. Parents'/guardians' involvement is vital to ensure our meets are successful. Home meets have two important goals:

1. Provide all athletes with a meet that is easy to attend.
2. Raise funds for the team

We ask all families to participate in the following ways for the mid-sized and major meets):

- * Provide a concession item for or monetary donation for events held at your locale
- * Help at the meet in your home area

The following is a list of all positions, with their descriptions, required to orchestrate a successful home meet. We have jobs that are good for first-time parents. Just ask for suggestions. The volunteer coordinator will begin putting together the team about 6 weeks before the home meet:

Technical Coordinator/s: Responsible for computers, scoring and scoreboard operation (Meet Fee for one child is waived for this job)

Head Timer: Coordinates, educates, & supports all timers

Officials: Officiate swim meet (meet fee for one child is waived for each session served). Training and job shadowing provided.

Marshals: Coordinate event boards and help young swimmers find their way to the race

Advertising Coordinator: Sell happy ads, business ads and procure ad designs.

Concession Coordinator: Assigns concession items, coordinates concession stand (Meet fee for your child is waived at home meets for this person)

Concession helper: Work a shift at concession stand

Sales: sell heat sheets and 50/50 or raffle tickets

Awards: label and sort awards during the meet for distribution to teams afterward (medals, ribbons, heat ribbons/prizes), post results at the conclusion of events

Set Up: Helping set up pool and athlete areas.

Timers: 2-3 timers per lane. Time events and record on a worksheet. Work with head timer

Runners: collect cards from timers; deliver to 'results' computer station

Clean up: take down, clean up, put away at the meet conclusion.

Fundraisers

All parents/guardians are needed to ensure successful fundraisers that support the team. All parents/guardians have talents that can be used to raise monies for socials, meet entry fees, banquets and state competition. We ask that everyone shares their talents to the best of their abilities.

Committees

If parents/guardians would like to become more involved, we are

always looking for adults who would be willing to serve on a committee or volunteer for other roles. Help is never turned down and always greatly appreciated.

- Parent Advisory Board: This committee assists the YMCA coaching staff in matters pertaining to the smooth functioning of a competitive swimming program within the framework of the YMCA's values, purposes, policies and objectives. This committee typically meets every month. We try to have parent representatives of each age group on this committee.

- Social/Spirit Committee: This committee plans family and team social activities and the year-end banquet.

General Practice Policy Information

- ~~1.~~ No practices are held at a school facility if school is cancelled (i.e., snow day). Practices **will be held** at the NMU and YMCA pools on these days. Use your best judgment regarding safe driving conditions.
- ~~2.~~ The coaching staff supervises swimmers during swim practice hours only. Practice will end promptly at the scheduled time and all parents should be onsite for pickup at that . Our coaches must stay until the last child is picked up—**even if your child is a teen with a cell phone**. This is to ensure child safety. Late pickup will result in a \$20/15 min charge. All late pickup charges will be mailed as an invoice and then debited at the next scheduled fee draft.

Meets

Swimmers are encouraged to participate in our home meets. Away meets are encouraged but not required.

Eligibility

A swimmer **MUST** be a member of a YMCA **30 days prior** to competing in regular 'Y' meets, and **90 days prior** to either a state or national championship. Swimmers are divided into different age groups for competitive purposes, most often they are: 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15 & Over. During the fall/winter season, the age of the swimmer is determined by how old he or she is on December 1. In the YMCA summer season swimmers are grouped by their age on the day of the meet.

How to Enter

We provide an electronic entry system on our website. It will contain a listing of all the races divided by age category. Parents enter their child in the meet and may request desired events. The coaches may change a race or two after talking to the swimmer, based on their observations in practices.

Things to keep in mind when selecting events to participate in:

- Choose races the swimmer is **ready** for
- Choose a race that 'challenges' the swimmer
- If in doubt, discuss with coaches

Meet Fee Structure

Each event a swimmer participates in has an entry fee. Once we submit our entries to the host team, these fees are nonrefundable, even in the event of illness or injury. An athlete involved in a 4-person relay who does not show up is responsible for the fees of the other three members. Coaches will make every attempt to find substitutes for relays when there is a "no show."

What Should Swimmers do at Meets:

- ✓ Find the staging area (usually a gym or cafeteria) and set up camp. The team usually sits in one place together
- ✓ Report to their coach at the pool at least 10 minutes prior to their warm-up time and should be prepared to swim
- ✓ Keep warm during the meet
- ✓ Write their event numbers on their forearms or thighs or have a parent do it
- ✓ Pay attention to the event order and make sure they know when their event is called. They will want to arrive at the blocks three heats before they swim. If they are 8 or under, they will likely report to a marshalling area.
- ✓ Sit with their teammates and cheer them on
- ✓ Keep their eye out for really fast swimming
- ✓ Talk to a coach after their swim; coaches will provide feedback

What Parents/Guardians do at Meets

- ◇ Ensure swimmers arrive at the pool ready to swim at least 15 minutes before warm-ups are scheduled
- ◇ Purchase a heat sheet. These are usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for \$2-\$5 per day. They list all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is submitted, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed.

If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

- ◇ Write your child's event information on their arm or leg with a marker. This ensures all meet volunteers, officials and coaches can assist your child at any time.
- ◇ Sit with other team parents/guardians and cheer the team on; it's a great opportunity to meet some more super swimming supporters
- ◇ Ask swimmers what the coach had to say to help reinforce any recommendations for improvement; remember not to critique the swim
- ◇ According to USA and YMCA swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), remain off the pool deck unless serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. Coaches will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
- ◇ Be considerate of fellow parents/guardians watching races around you; try not to stand in front of chairs, bleachers, etc.
- ◇ Ensure your child makes it to all their events including relays

What to do in the Event of a Disqualification (DQ)

- ◇ Swimmers: Don't be discouraged. It happens to everyone as some point. Talk to the coaches to see what happened and develop a strategy to prevent it in the future. Remember the 'thing' that caused the DQ and practice not doing it at practices
- ◇ Parents/Guardians: This is one of the toughest parts of swimming you'll have to deal with. A DQ is more common than not, especially for new swimmers. Please encourage your swimmer and let him/her know that a DQ is not the end of the world, it's something that can be fixed, and he/she can always try again and do better at the next meet. Swimmers who receive a DQ need support and encouragement more than anything else right after it happens, and they need to get right on to their next races. Please help the coaches keep DQs from being totally devastating...a positive attitude about learning and trying again make all the difference in the world.

What to Take to a Meet

Most swimmers swim in multiple events, both individual and as a member of a relay. This often times can lead to a full day at the pool. The following list is provided to assist with keeping the swimmers warm and dry, nourished, and entertained. It will also help the parents/guardians and any siblings who attend as well. It is not all inclusive; it's a starting point that can be tailored based on the families' needs.

- ◇ MOST IMPORTANT: Swimsuit, cap, and goggles
- ◇ Several towels for drying after races
- ◇ A robe for staying warm between races (fleece works very well and doesn't absorb water like cotton does)
- ◇ Permanent marker (to write race/heat/lane info on arm)
- ◇ Highlighter (to highlight your heat sheets)
- ◇ Portable sports chairs
- ◇ Blanket or sleeping bag to lounge or nap on
- ◇ Healthy snacks & drinks (each meet organizer usually has a concession stand to help raise money for their teams, so we try to support them as we hope they would support us at our home meets)
- ◇ Footwear such as sandals or flip flops
- ◇ Homework (ha ha ha)
- ◇ Entertainment (Electronic games, coloring books, decks of cards, crossword puzzles, Mp3 players, etc.). Anything to pass the time.

THE BONUS OF MEETS

One wonderful side benefit of traveling to swim meets is... Family Time. The family spends time together away from the rat race usually experienced at home; there are no dishes to wash, clothes to fold, floors to vacuum. You can spend time together doing whatever it is your family enjoys...playing games, swimming, eating out, visiting a museum before/after swimming depending on the time of your swimmers' events...possibilities are endless. Consider it a mini-vacation.

Glossary of Swimming Words and Terms

(DNS, DID NOT SHOW, DID NOT SWIM —

DQ, Disqualified—

LONG COURSE — 50 meters (55 yards to be recorded as 50 meters).

SHORT COURSE — 25 yards or 25 meters.

FORWARD START — a forward entry facing the course.

HEATS — a division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.

LANE — the specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim; e.g., lane one.

LANE MARKINGS — the guide lines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes running from the starting end to the turning end.

LEG — (relay) the part of the relay event that is swum by a single team member.

NT, NO TIME—

PROGRAM — the order of events, including starting times and intermissions in a meet or portion thereof, sequentially listed by class of competition, sex, age group, distance, and stroke as set forth in meet announcement.

REFEREE — Shall have full authority over all officials and shall assign and instruct them; shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed.

SCRATCH (from an event) — withdraw an entry from competition.

SEED — to distribute the swimmers among the required number of heats and/or lanes, according to their submitted times.

SESSION — any portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, or type of competition, i.e., preliminaries and finals; morning and evening; Senior and Age Group, etc.

SPLIT TIME, SPLITS — time recorded from official start to completion of an initial distance within a longer event.

STARTER— Upon signal from the Referee, shall assume control of the swimmers until a fair start has been achieved.

STROKE JUDGE — Shall ensure that the rules relating to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed.

SUBMITTED TIMES — those filed with an entry, as having been previously achieved.