
Parent Volunteers

Parents, it's very important that you get involved. We know it's a big effort just to get your swimmers to the pool day after day, but remember: we're trying to do more than just make them good swimmers, we're trying to make them good people. We need you to help set a good example for them.

- Get the practice schedule and the meet schedule into your personal calendar. Your child may not know whether they'll be attending a particular meet, but you probably do. If your child is going to attend a meet, make sure they sign up before the deadline. Likewise, if they're not going to attend, please make sure they don't sign up.
- Volunteer at our home meets. There's a lot of set-up and clean-up, and during the meet we need timers, computer operators, officials, and a lot of other people to make things run smoothly. (See "Instructions for Volunteers" for more information.)

Note: At some meets, such as the Twin Cities Invitational, Sections, State, and the Regional meet, each team is assigned a number of volunteer positions to fill. If your swimmer(s) are participating in the meet, you should consider this an obligation.

- Support the team. Get to know the other parents and their swimmers, and cheer for all the Blazers. Help out with car-pools, phone trees, and anything else that comes up.
- We can always use more officials, so please consider taking that training. There's a half-day class, after which you need to pass an on-line test. It's long, but it's multiple-choice and open-book, and there's no time limit. You don't need to have a background in competitive swimming. If you're interested, talk to the coaches.
- There'll be other events during the year – particularly our year-end celebration – that we'll need help with.

This is how you show your children that their swimming is just as important to you as it is to them.

Background Check

For the safety of the swimmers, it is the policy of the YMCA to conduct a background check on all volunteers:

- Gather your residential address information (street, city, state, & zip code) for the last seven years.
- Go to this web site:
<https://secure.sterlingdirect.com/portals/bgconsent.aspx?icode>.
When prompted for your Invitation Code, enter
EB456F5D469C4B-B8BFF6BA

The form takes only a few minutes to complete. Please complete it within five days. If you have any questions about the information that Sterling InfoSystems is compiling, feel free to contact (800) 943-2589. Choose option 1.

Instructions for Volunteers

Arm Writers

When swimmers arrive at the pool, use a Sharpie (no other brand!) to write their event numbers on their arm – something like "#19 50 FR 2/3", which means "Event 19, 50-yard Freestyle, Heat 2, Lane 3", or "#7 MR(2) 1/4", which means "Event 7, Medley Relay (second swimmer), Heat 1, Lane 4". You'll need a copy of our team's entry list, which you can get from the coaches.

Head Timer

Before the meet, recruit Timers – usually two per lane – and make sure that each lane has:

- two stopwatches,
- two pushbuttons,
- a clipboard and a pen.

Attend the officials meeting and make notes on the lane/timer sheets showing where swimmers have been added or scratched. After the meeting, distribute the sheets to the timers.

During the meet, carry one or two stopwatches. Start these for every race, so that you can provide a backup in the event that any Timer has a problem with their watch.

Timers

There should be two Timers for each lane.

- Before the meet, make sure you understand how to start, stop, and reset your stopwatch.

- Before each race, check your swimmer's name against your lane/timer sheet. If you don't have the right swimmer, if your swimmer is missing, or if you have a swimmer when your sheet says your lane should be empty, signal the starter to wait. (We sometimes combine races. If you have a swimmer when you think your lane should be empty, that may be what's going on.)
- Before the start of the race, make sure you've reset your stopwatch. Also, make sure you know how long the race is, so when your swimmer returns to the wall, you know whether they're finishing or just turning.
- When the race is about to start, look at the starter. Listen for the sound of the horn, watch for the flash of the light, and start your watch immediately.
- If you fail to start your watch immediately, if you realize you forgot to reset it, or if it malfunctions in any way, signal the Head Timer and exchange your watch for one of theirs.
- When your swimmer is about to finish, step forward and look over the edge of the pool so you can see them touch the wall. At the instant they touch, stop your watch and push your button. *It is not your responsibility to judge whether a swimmer has done a legal turn or a legal touch.*
- Record the times from your watch and your partner's watch on your lane/timer sheet. When you've done that, reset your watch.

Sometimes, if a swimmer misses their race, we'll allow them to swim in a later race. Because of this, you may get a swimmer in your lane when you're not expecting one. Please be sure to get their event, name, and time written down somewhere.

Shepherds

Sometimes called "wranglers," shepherds are stationed around the pool to help swimmers make their way to the right lane of the right heat of the right event at the right time. You'll need to have a copy of the meet program showing which events have been combined.

Runner

Working with the shepherds, update the numeric display showing which event numbers are being called.

Since the timing system cannot be used for the 25-yard events, bring the appropriate pages of the lane/timer sheets back to the computer operators.

Any time an official fills out a DQ slip, take it from them and deliver it to the Referee.

Computer Operators

We use Windows-based software to run our meets. It's not difficult, but some training is necessary. A good way to get involved is to offer to help at one of our home meets.

Officials

At least two officials are necessary to run a meet, and more is better. You must be certified as a YMCA Official, which entails a four-hour class followed by an open-book, multiple-choice, on-line test. Swimming experience is not required. If you're interested, talk to the coaches.