

Buehler YMCA Blue Marlins Swim Team Handbook

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BUEHLER YMCA SWIM TEAM COACHING PHILOSOPHY

It is the goal of the Buehler YMCA Blue Marlins Swim Team's Coaching Staff, under the direction of the Head Coach, to provide an environment in competitive swimming, which will give athletes an opportunity to develop as individuals, and prepare them for the challenges and rewards of life.

By stressing the values of discipline, commitment, hard work and taking responsibility for oneself, we feel strongly that athletes who make an honest effort in all aspects of the program will be enhanced in SPIRIT, MIND AND BODY.

Working towards a goal time of qualifying for a certain swim is the key to developing the values we are seeking. There are no guarantees. That time may not be met, but what is important is that the athlete took responsibility to prepare to the best of his or her ability. Preparation is where the lessons of life are learned. Swimming fast or not swimming fast is not as important as learning from the feelings of attaining or not attaining a goal. Our hope is that all swimmers, whether they reach their goals or not, still feel good about what they have learned, experienced and enjoyed.

Contact Information

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Team Web Page:	www.blumarlinswimming.org
YMCA Web Page:	www.buehlerymca.org
Head Coach YMCA Phone Number:	847-410-5234
Aquatics Director Phone Number:	847-410-5217
Buehler Main Phone Number:	847-359-2400
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THE BUEHLER YMCA BLUE MARLINS SWIM PROGRAM

The Buehler YMCA Blue Marlins Swim Team, as a member of YMCA and USA Swimming, seeks to foster the growth and development of young people through participation in age group and senior level swimming. The Blue Marlins provide an environment in which all swimmers may develop to their fullest extent. The process of development and achievement is designed to carry over into personal development outside swimming. The Blue Marlins will promote conditioning, nutrition and good health as lifetime priorities.

Buehler YMCA provides the facilities, the staff and the means to enable participants in the program to strive for and attain personal goals and to participate and contribute to team goals. Among our long term goals is to be **THE BEST ALL AROUND** YMCA program and to see that our swimmers attain national recognition.

Coaching new and/or very young swimmer is oriented towards developing of the basics in swimming including the four strokes, turns and starts. Our emphasis in the early development stages is to foster an enjoyment of the sport and includes, along with technique work, a certain amount of fun and games.

The more experienced swimmers are exposed to coaching that becomes increasingly oriented toward conditioning and advanced training concepts including mental preparation and nutrition. A balance between technique work and conditioning is struck by gearing the pre-season to a greater degree of technique with a gradual shift to conditioning training as the season progresses.

We have several swimmers, who are at the top of our ladder, who have contributed several years of background work. They have made a commitment to aspire to become top-flight swimmers. Their regime is two to three hours daily and combines weight work, swimming and other facets of training necessary for competition at the national level.

The Blue Marlins coaching staff is composed of people with a great deal of enthusiasm, a dedication to swimmers, and a continuing desire to learn. The staff is currently comprised of many coaches with years of age group and senior coaching experience. Frequent staff meetings are designed to knit together a cohesive approach to coaching and to generate a meaningful exchange of ideas that will benefit both coaches and swimmers.

With the development of swimmers as competitors comes the growth and maturation of individual through discipline, hard work, trial and error, success and failure. It is important to realize that swimming can make for a small world, and it must be only a part of an individual's life. The most successful swimmers have a good deal of positive support from parents who realize that swimming is not the child's reason for existing. The experience of swimming is most beneficial if the goal setting process is carried out by the swimmer, not by the parent. It is from this perspective that the most lasting value is realized from the Blue Marlins program. Viewed in this respect, swimming can be a most enjoyable sport.

GUIDELINES FOR COACH-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

Parents have an important role to play in providing a supportive atmosphere for swimmers and the coaching staff. Parental involvement and encouragement are essential ingredients in a successful swimming program. Have a positive attitude and remember that swimming is only a part of life, and not the central issue.

Should parents have a pressing problem with regards to their swimmer or the coaching staff, they should resolve that problem directly with the coach, as soon as possible, rather than discuss it with other parents or swimmers.

Please realize that practice time is not the proper time to discuss matters with the coach. If you wish to contact a particular coach, please send a note to the coach at practice, and the coach will contact you as soon as possible. If the problem is not resolved after consulting with your coach and swimmer, then contact the head coach. Some guidelines for parent-coach contacts are as follows:

- Do not discuss problems with the coach during swim practice or during a swim meet.
- Parents cannot be in the area designated for coaches during meets. This is a USA and YMCA Policy.

Most of our pools do have a viewing area for parents to observe practice. While in the viewing area, the coaching staff would appreciate it if parents could be as unobtrusive as possible and keep distractions to an absolute minimum. If the watching can be limited to meets, both the swimmer and the parent will benefit. Parents are not allowed on deck at practice or meets, unless they are serving in some official capacity. This is a condition of our USA membership. **We ask parents to accompany their swimmers in and out of practice locations to assure the safety of the swimmer.** Never leave a swimmer at a practice location until you have seen that the coach is there.

The Blue Marlins Swim Team is a YMCA program, and the YMCA employs the coaches. It is very important for all parents to take any coaching concerns directly to the head coach. Finally, if you feel that resolution has not been achieved, please call the Aquatics Director 847-410-5217. In all cases, please do not take your concern to another parent because it will not resolve the issue.

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

DEVELOPMENTAL GROUP SWIMMING

The focus on the Developmental group is to treat swimming as a fun learning experience. Continuous stroke work tends to be the **RULE FOR MOST**. Group activities at this level are greatly encouraged (such as skating, parties, movies and other such activities). These outings help the swimmer develop a feeling of 'team identity'. (Parents, please consider volunteering your time to assist in organizing and supervising these activities.) The swimmer's main objective at swim meets is to swim the strokes properly and to improve his/her time, not to place or score team points.

Most importantly, the Blue Marlin coaches recognize the need for developmental swimmers to have other interests outside of swimming (soccer, baseball, piano lessons, scouts, etc.) and will try hard to **WORK WITH** their other interests. For this reason, swimmers are encouraged to attend a maximum of two to three practices per week.

We offer the Turquoise Marlins. This group is for all swimmers from beginner to intermediate. Swimmers may not be quite ready to compete and/or not want to compete, but want to be part of the swim team and work on improving their strokes. This group practices twice a week.

We also offer the Atlantic/Pacific Marlins. This group is for intermediate swimmers. Swimmers have competitive swimming experience and have mastered the 4 competitive strokes. Swimmers are expected to attend meets. This group practices three times a week.

AGE GROUP SWIMMING (8 AND OVER DEPENDING ON ABILITY)

The focus on the Age Group is to work with those swimmers that have decided that swimming is a sport that wish to continue to improve and continue to compete in but have not yet reached the senior level while still keeping swimming as a fun learning experience. While stroke work is still taught more advanced technique is introduced. Group activities at this level are still greatly encouraged (such as skating, parties, movies and other such activities). The swimmer's main objective at swim meets is to swim to improve his/her time. These swimmers will begin to place and score points for the team.

We offer the Striped Marlins for swimmers as a challenging program but still allows for flexibility to be involved in other activities. It is also designed to be a transitional period for those swimmers coming out of the 11/12 age group

SENIOR SWIMMING (12 AND OVER DEPENDING ON ABILITY)

Senior swimming offers the older athletes, from ages 12 and up, an opportunity to expand their competitive horizons and challenge themselves at practice and meets. We offer the Black Marlins practice group. The Black group is geared for athletes who wish to focus and prepare for national competitions. This program is the most challenging and demanding of all practice groups and requires strong and consistent desire and dedication.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Behind every successful swim team is a group of individuals who raise money, arrange travel, punch stopwatches, officiate at meets, organize fun activities for swimmers, and coordinate team attire. They are called parents.

All parents are encouraged to get involved and take an active role in making the Blue Marlins program a fun and rewarding experience. Because of the many hours that your swimmer will spend at practice and meets, there are some things that you as a parent can get involved in to make it a positive family experience, while building lasting memories and friendships.

Some of the activities that the parents organize include:

- Meet Worker Organization
- Fund raising
- Social programs
- Publicity
- Equipment and supplies
- Providing ribbons for meets
- Organizing the year end banquet
- Supporting swimming as a sport in Palatine

One of the most vital links between the YMCA and parents are our **PRACTICE GROUP REP**. Each practice group is represented by a parent who will assist in the following areas:

PARENT INFORMATION MEETINGS

In each practice group regularly scheduled parent meetings will be held to answer your questions and address your concerns. The Practice Group Rep will advise you of the dates of the parents' meetings in your swimmer's practice group.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Practice Group Rep will work with each other and coaches to plan extra 'fun' things for all of the Blue Marlins swimmers.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Squad Coordinators will assist the coaching staff with any 'short notice' information that is necessary for the parents to receive.

PLEASE REMEMBER

The parents are needed to support and enhance the swimming program; please feel free to share your ideas on how we can make our program better! We are always looking for additional parents who are willing to play an active role in our organization. If you are interested, please contact any Coach or Practice Group Rep, and let us know of your willingness to help. We have many other committees (end of the year banquet, pasta party, etc.), which are always in need of new faces. Towards the end of the season, we will begin looking for new parents who would be willing to be part of these committees, so please watch team e-mail for details.

MEET WORKER REQUIREMENTS

Your registration of your swimmer requires a work commitment of helping us run our home meets and help time at away meets. It takes every parent to run a meet that we host. When you make a commitment to work at a meet, you must be there. Emergency conflicts must be resolved by finding yourself a replacement. Solicit the help of another parent, but don't be a no-show. Respect the rights of others, and please fulfill your commitment.

It takes many parents to successfully run a Buehler meet. Below, please find a listing of various meet worker jobs.

Meet Worker Jobs

(Each job description is followed by a 'degree of difficulty code'.)

* Any parent can do this

** Takes a little bit of thought

*** Experience or a strong willingness to learn is necessary!

Admissions

When you work admissions, you need to be at the meet one half-hour before warm-ups begin, and you will collect admissions and sell heat sheets. Your responsibility is to stay until the end of the session. *

Announcer

The announcer is on pool deck and announces each event of the meet. **

Awards

Awards involve sorting and labeling the ribbons/plaques that are being presented to swimmers. Generally, the job begins a little later than most and ends when the final award has been processed. *

Clerk of Course (Bull Pin)

The responsibility of the Clerk of Course is to organize the swimmers before each event. It involves distributing heat and lane assignments and leading the swimmers into place on deck. This is also known as the 'bullpen'. **

Concessions

Our concessions are run and staffed by parents.**

Electronic Scoring

This involves running the electronic timing system at our meet, and you will be on pool deck for the duration of the session of the meet. ***

Hospitality

Hospitality workers simply make the rounds of the meet of the workers with refreshments. It's a great job to see all of your friends in! *

Marshals

The marshals are the 'police officers' of our meet. Their responsibility is to see that the swimmers are called to the bullpen, and that 'swim meet etiquette' is being followed! *

Officials

Our officials are responsible for starting and judging each event in the meet. During the swim season, you will see information about 'official's clinics' being offered, and we encourage any interested parents to get involved in the sport! ***

Runners

A runner's job is to collect the time cards from each lane and give them to the time recorder, then to take the cards from the time recorder and give them to the computer room. Runners may be asked to also pick up DQ slips. Comfortable shoes are a must for this job, and the majority of your time will be on the pool deck. *

Administrative Official

The administrative Official receives the time cards from each lane after the event is swum, then compares them with the electronic timing results. Again, this job is on the pool deck or in the office, and begins with the start of the session, and ends with the end of the session. You have to attend AO training to do this position.***

Timers

Each lane will have two timers who will record each event's time. This job begins with a timers' Meeting about 30 minutes prior to the start of the meet, and ends with the end of the session. Obviously, you will be on the pool deck the entire time, so dress appropriately!

INFORMATION FOR SWIMMERS

COMMUNICATIONS

We have mailboxes on deck for every swimmer. This where they can pick-up handouts, ribbons, and anything else they might receive. We also use e-mails to keep the team informed. All information is also available on the team web page. The coaching staff has an opened door policy, so please feel free to use it.

TEAM SUITS, CAPS AND SWEATS

Buehler prides itself on its unified look at meets. This is accomplished by wearing a team suit and a team cap. Additionally, swimmers are asked to wear a team t-shirt. All other dress at meets should be team attire, or plain attire in the team colors. Swimsuits and caps with the Blue Marline logo are available for purchase at the beginning of the swim season. Team Caps are required at meets if your swimmer wears a cap.

LOCKER ROOM PROCEDURE

Since our team practices at several pools, it is recommended that swimmers do not leave valuables unattended in the locker rooms. Also, we are guests at each pool that we use, and it is expected that each swimmer will leave the lockers and pools clean. Parents are asked to participate in monitoring locker rooms for the safety and wellbeing of swimmers. Any misuse or destruction in locker rooms will not be tolerated and could result in suspension of locker room privileges and/or practice suspension.

TEAM BEHAVIOR

The Blue Marlins coaches are always on the lookout for examples of great team spirit. Swimmers are asked to look for the Blue Marlins team area at meets, and parents are also encouraged to sit in the Blue Marlins team area so we can support all of our swimmers together.

Bullying: Bullying of any kid is unacceptable at the Blue Marlins Swim Team and the Buehler YMCA and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club is committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all of our members. If Bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach or athlete/mentor.

Behavior and Conduct: Buehler YMCA Policy

Team Guidance and Discipline Policy. The key goal of Buehler YMCA is to help children develop positive self-esteem, build trust in the world around them and develop autonomy and pride in their work.

- (a) We are governed by these three rules:
 1. A child may not disturb or hurt others, verbally or physically
 2. A child may not damage equipment.
 3. A child may not place him/herself in a dangerous situation.
- (b) We aim to keep swimmers on the team. Because of this, a positive guidance approach is used. A supportive, nurturing environment with adults who model a caring demeanor is the first step for helping children learn inner control and appropriate behavior.
- (c) Inappropriate behavior will be shared with parents so that behavior can be modified before it becomes a problem. Our goal is to keep children on our team because of the positive things that can be learned.
- (d) However, there are situations that can arise that require us to ask a child not to participate with us. These situations can be defined as “any actions of one child that are deterring the YMCA from accomplishing its goal with the team, or puts a staff member, team mate or him/herself in danger”. Asking a child not to return to our program is a last resort, but it has happened. Other alternative that may be used prior to this step, in addition to conferences with the parent (in no particular order) are:
 1. Shortened swim time
 2. Written apology letter
 3. “Time out” from activities
- (e) Every effort will be made to notify a parent ahead of time if their child will be missing activities due to inappropriate behavior. If situations with the swimmer persist, parents will be notified to pick up their child within one hour. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be notified.
- (f) We will document inappropriate behavior that breaks any of the above rules using the (3) strike system (3 “strikes” = suspension). Please note that if the situation warrants, steps may be skipped and the swimmer dismissed immediately.
 1. The first offense or “strike” will be a verbal warning, documented in writing and parents informed.
 2. The second offense or “strike” will be a written warning.
 3. If a third offense or “strike” is issued, your child may not participate in team activities for the following day or days depending on the severity of the offense.

4. If a fourth offense or “strike” is issued, your child will be dismissed from the team.
- (g) There will be no refund of fees for suspension or dismissal from team due to behavior.
 - (h) Remember, our goal is to help the swimmers make positive choices for themselves. If you feel your child/young adult is having difficulty, please let us know. Swimmers of differing abilities require different approaches. We want your swimmer to have a fun and rewarding team experience with us.

Members are expected to exhibit appropriate behaviors at all times:

1. Show respect to all members, visitors, and staff
2. Refrain from use of foul language.
3. Show respect for equipment, facilities, and amenities.
4. Dress appropriately for activities.

POLICY ON REFUNDS OF TEAM FEES

If the Swimmer quits the swim program or is unable to continue participation in the program a prorated refund may be requested. These requests will be handled on a case by case basis by the Buehler YMCA Aquatic Director.

YMCA Character Development

Our character shows in our behavior-how we practice our values. One of the best things the YMCA does is develop character. We challenge ourselves, members, and participants to accept and demonstrate positive values to each other.

How would one's character be defined?

A person's character consists of his or her ethical traits. A simple description is how we act when no one is looking. It is measured by what we would do if we thought would not be caught.

What is the description of a person of strong character?

A person of strong character is someone who always tries to do what is right (behaves according to positive values) even when no one is looking, because the person believes it is the right thing to do.

Which positive values make up the core values?

Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility are the four core values.

How are these values defined?

Caring: to love others, be sensitive to the wellbeing of others, to help others, putting others before self. We do our best to treat others with kindness, compassion, and understanding and to provide encouragement that is needed to meet goals. Caring is normally represented by the color red associated with a caring Heart.

Honesty: to tell the truth, to have integrity; my actions match my values, to act in such a way that I am worthy of trust. Integrity at all times. We pride ourselves as a responsible, sincere, and open member of the community. Honesty is represented by the color blue associated with True Blue.

Respect: to treat others as you would have them treat you, to value the worth of every person including self. Value staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters. We respect and value everyone as an individual. Everyone's needs are unique and so are their gifts and abilities. Respect is represented by the color yellow associated with the Golden Rule.

Responsibility: to do what you ought to do, to do what is right, to be accountable for your behavior and obligations. Each person should judge his own actions and not compare himself with others. Then he can be proud for what he himself has done. Each person must be responsible for himself. Responsibility is represented by the color green associated with Environmentalism.

YMCA SWIMMING

Our values and philosophy are generated from the National YMCA movement. YMCA competitive swimming offers wonderful, teachable moments where participants can develop personal values for a lifetime.

As a YMCA team, we participate in the Chicago District cluster of teams, the Illinois YMCA State Championships, and YMCA National Championships. We abide by all the rules of the National YMCA Swim Committee. Athlete's age for YMCA championship competition is determined by their age as of the 1st day of the meet.

USA SWIMMING

USA Swimming is the national governing body of competitive swimming in the United States. For the purposes of an USA meet, each swimmer competes at his/her age level as per their age on the first day of that meet.

USA Swimming is responsible for the selection of athletes for the USA teams for the Olympic Games, the Pan American Games, the World Championships and all other international competition.

As a member team of USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming Inc.(ISI), Blue Marlins Swim Team is able to attend local, regional and national level meets sponsored by USA Swimming and ISI. Both organizations develop and host camps and motivational programs to enhance the development of our athletes.

TYPES OF MEETS

The Blue Marlins Swim Team attends a variety of meets. Our meet schedule is developed to meet the varied needs of our athletes and strive to have a balance schedule of YMCA and USA meets. Listed below are explanations of the meets that we participate in.

YMCA Invitational – This is a swim meet open only to YMCAs. Swimmers are allowed to swim three to five events per day at these meets. This counts as a YMCA closed competition meet, and is usually only one day. Some of these Invitational's are split into sessions so it will only be half a day.

YMCA Dual/Tri Meet – This is a meet of the Blue Marlins versus another 1 or 2 YMCA teams. Swimmers usually swim two or three events. The duration of the meet is usually a half of a day, commonly in the morning.

USA – USA meets are for registered USA Swimming athletes only. Swimmers compete in an age category based upon their age the first day of the meet. USA meets usually begin on Friday evening sessions, then separate Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon sessions and concluding with Sunday mornings and afternoon sessions. They will be divided by age, with certain ages swimming morning sessions, and other swimming afternoon sessions. Some meets group athletes by times as well. This ensures the athletes will be competing against swimmers of similar abilities. Please refer to the time standards for further clarification of meet criteria.

YMCA District & Classic Championship- The Chicago District Championship is for local YMCAs. This meet has qualifying time standards for the District portion of the meet, which must have been achieved by the athletes since March 1st of the previous year (example for the 2018 meet times must have been achieved since March 1st 2017). Please refer to the enclosed time

standards for qualifying times. Finally, Classic portion of the meet is for those swimmers who do not achieve qualifying times.

Illinois YMCA State Swimming Championships – These meets includes athletes from all of the YMCA's in Illinois. To qualify for these meets, you must have made the qualifying time since March 1st of the previous year (example for the 2018 meet times must have been achieved since March 1st 2017) and it must be entered in the ILSWYMS database. Swimmers must have competed in 3 closed YMCA swim meets during the competitive season Sept. 1st up to the entry deadline for the meet.

YMCA Short Course Nationals – This meet is for Senior Swimmers who have achieve qualifying times at any inter-association meet, or YMCA championship meet in which the swimmer competed under their YMCA name is acceptable. USA-S times and high school timers are also accepted. It is usually held during the end of March/beginning of April, and is several days long.

YMCA Long Course Nationals- This meet is for Senior Swimmers who have achieve qualifying times at any inter-association meet, or YMCA championship meet in which the swimmer competed under their YMCA name is acceptable. USA-S times and high school timers are also accepted. It is usually held in late July early August and is several days long

ISI Regional Championship- This meet is the 1st level of season ending Championship competitions conducted by Illinois Swimming Inc. There are both minimum and maximum time qualifications for entry into the Regional Championships. Swimmers exceeding the maximum time qualifications compete at the Age Group Championship or Senior Championship levels in that event. Competitions are conducted in the 10 & under, 12 & under, 14 & under and Open age classifications.

ISI Age Group & Senior Championships. The Age Group Championships for ages 14 and under is the LSC Championship and is equivalent to YMCA Area Championship. This is the fastest age group meet in Illinois, and the qualifying times are strict. Age Group is limited to 10 & under, 11-12, and 13-14. The Illinois Senior Championship is open for all swimmers that meet the minimum time standard, with no age group divisions. Both Age Group and Seniors are prelims, and finals and run for three to four days.

USA Swimming Central Zone Championship- These meets features top swimmers at the Senior and Age Group (14 & Under) levels who qualify for these meets within the four designated Zones of USA Swimming: Eastern, Central, Southern, & Western. Illinois Swimming is part of the Central Zone, which includes AR, IA, IL, IN, ND, MI, MN, MO, OH, OK, SD & WI. Age Group who Swimmers qualify will represent Team Illinois in competition with teams from other Central Zone teams. The Central Zone is divided into two meets for Age Group. Team Illinois is usually assigned the Zone Meet with IA, MI, MN, ND, SD and WI. The Senior Zone Swimmers represent the Blue Marlins and Swim against Swimmers from all the states in the Central Zone. The Zone Championship concludes the summer long course season and is not conducted during the winter season.

USA Swimming Sectionals (Speedo Champions Series)- These meets conducted at the conclusion of the winter short course and summer long course seasons. The qualifying standards are quite robust, with swimmers only a step below national competitions.

The Grand Prix Series- attracts swimmers of the highest quality, normally high level high school

and college swimmers, as well as National & Olympic athletes. Grand Prix events take place throughout the winter and summer seasons. If you make a Grand Prix event, you could compete against Matt Grevers or Missy Franklin.

USA Swimming Junior National Championship- These meets are USA Swimming's ultimate championship meet for athletes 18 years of age or under. The Junior National Team that competes Internationally is selected at this meet.

USA Swimming National Championship are conducted annually and are USA Swimming's National Championships. The highest level swimmers in the country compete at Senior Nationals, including many past and future Olympians. There are 2 annual National Championships, The Short Course Championship is usually held in December and the Long Course Championship also known as US Open is held at the end of the summer long course season in August. Outside of an Olympic year the National Team is selected at the National Championships.

USA Swimming Olympic Trials- The Trials are held once every 4 years. They are not a National Championship, and exist for the sole purpose of selecting the USA Olympic Team. If you qualify for the Olympic Trials, you are one of the highest levels swimmers in the world.

High School Meets- times achieved at high school dual meets and championship meet are acceptable as YMCA if the meets results are provided with a referee's signature. Times from certain High School Championship meets may be used for USA Swimming but must be submitted.

MEET INFORMATION

Swim meets are a great family experience! They are a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets.

Before the meet starts:

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the information printed in handouts, e-mails, webpage, or bulletin board on deck.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's swim bag, sleeping bag or blanket, preferably in the team area. Many parents also bring a lawn chair for themselves.
3. Be sure to read your Blue Marlin Team e-mail and note if the meet requires a "positive check-in". If it does, you must find the check-in area for swimmers and sign in your swimmer. Meets vary. If in doubt, ask.
4. Once you are checked in, write each event number on your swimmers hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what events to listen for when swimmers are called to the bullpen/pool deck.
5. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. A swimmer's body is like a car on a cold day – he/she needs to get the engine warmed up before he/she can go all out.

6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her belongings are and wait until the first event is called. This is a good time for a bathroom break, getting a drink or just settling in.
7. The meet will usually start 15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
8. According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of the meet should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
9. Heat Sheets - A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. They are usually \$2-\$5, and it lists all swimmers in each event in order of 'seed time'. When a team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event are listed. If the swimmer is swimming the event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a 'no-time' or NT. An NT swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

During the Meet:

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, that's why they should have the numbers written on their hand.) He/she may swim right away after warm-up, or may have to wait awhile.
2. A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to the pool deck, the clerk of course or to the bullpen. Swimmers should report with their cap and goggles, ready to swim. Generally, girls are odd-numbered events, and boys are even-numbered events. Example: "event #26, 10 and under boys, 50 freestyle, report to the bullpen/pool deck."
3. At most positive check-in meets, heat and lane assignments will be posted in several locations (team waiting area, pool entrance or on the pool deck). The swimmer should check the posting to find out which heat and lane they are to report to for their race. A clerk of course worker will normally be on the pool deck to help out any "lost" swimmers. Most meets will usually provide a bullpen just for the 8 and under swimmers to line them up on the deck and escort them to the starting blocks.
4. The swimmer swims his/her race.
5. After each swim:
 - A. He/she is to ask the timers his/her time.
 - B. He/she should immediately go to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.
6. Things you as a parent can do after each swim:
 - A. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will discuss proper stroke technique with them. You need to tell them how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
 - B. Take him/her back to the team area and relax.
 - C. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms. Have a LIGHT snack

and relax.

D. The swimmer now waits for his/her next event to be called.

7. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her individual events, he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, that you as a parent see that your swimmer has checked with their coach before leaving to ensure that your swimmer is not in a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who have stayed to be in a relay when your swimmer is expected to be there, and he/she is not. Please make sure you clean up your area before you leave. Remember we are guest at these facilities.

What To Take to the Meet:

Please check e-mails for any special facility restrictions

1. Most important – team swimsuit, team cap and goggles (if swimmer uses them). Bring an extra of each just to be safe!
2. Baby or talcum powder – to dust the inside of the swim cap. It makes the cap easier to get on and helps preserve the life of the cap.
3. Towels – realize that your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
4. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmer will be spending a lot of time on it.
5. Sweat suits – Bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
6. T-shirts – two or three. Same reason as above.
7. Games – travel games, books, cards, anything to pass the time.
8. Food – It is better to bring your own nutritious snacks, even though they are usually available at the meets.
 - 8a. Drinks – Fruit juice, Gatorade, Exceed or Allsport
 - 8b. Snacks – Granola bars, fruit, yogurt, cereal, sandwiches, etc.

Once you have attended one or two meets, this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any Blue Marlin parent for information. **Heed this advice...Make sure that your swimmer's name is on everything that you bring to the meet!**

These meets are a lot of fun for your swimmer! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to see how he/she has improved after all those hours logged at practice.

Special Parent's Note

The pool area is usually very warm, so make sure that you dress appropriately. Often the team area is cool, so it is a good idea to wear layered clothing, because nothing is worse than spending your day being too hot or too cold. Use your time at the meets to have fun and meet other parents, and you might enjoy the meets as much as your swimmer!

MEET ATTENDANCE

Our meet schedule is carefully designed to challenge and evaluate all of our athletes. The expectation is for athletes to attend the meets on the schedule that are appropriate for the individual's ability. Discuss with a coach to see which are best for your swimmer. We also realize that swimming is not the only activity our team members and their families are involved in. While we will not set a maximum number of meets to attend, we discourage swimmers from attending meets on their own that are not on our Blue Marlin schedule. Attending a meet on one's own is not in accordance with the Blue Marlin team philosophy, doesn't represent our team appropriately, and doesn't allow the opportunity for evaluation by Blue Marlin coaches. Additionally, the meet may not be in the best interest of the training schedule for the individual athlete. Questions about meet attendance should be referred to the head coach.

Swim Meet Participation Requirement:

Swimmers will be required to participate in all home meets excluding the Speedo Distance Invite. Swimmers will also be required to participate in all Illinois YMCA swimming and Illinois Swimming Championship Swim Meets that they qualify for. Under extenuating circumstances, a swimmer may be excused from a meet.

Swimmers must compete in a minimum of three regular season CLOSED YMCA meets to be eligible to swim in championship meets. Per the National YMCA Swimming & Diving Rules in order for a swimmer to participate in the YMCA Winter Season District Meet they must have competed in three Closed YMCA meets during the regular season. The only way for a swimmer to swim in the YMCA Short Course Area Meet is to achieve a "Area Qualifying Time" at the Winter District meet (this rule may be changed starting the 2010-2011 season). In order to attend the YMCA Nationals, a swimmer must have swum in a championship-culminating event, such as the YMCA Area Meet.

USA RELAYS – When our meet entries are prepared, the coaches enter an approximate number of relays based upon the swimmers in that particular age group that indicate they are interested in swimming relays on their meet sign-up form. It is each swimmer's responsibility to check with the coach after warm ups for the swimmers who have been entered in each relay. If a swimmer elects not to swim, he/she will still be responsible for his/her share of the relay meet entry fee unless that swimmer's scratching of the relay causes the entire relay team to be unable to swim. Then that swimmer will be held responsible for the cost of the entire relay entry fee.

Relays will be constructed under the discretion of the coaches ONLY.

Please note- if you are withdrawing from an invite, we ask that you give written notice to the head coach two weeks before the event. If the meet is a USA meet you will still be required to pay for the meet.

EXPLANATION OF SWIMMING SEASONS

- A. Short Course Season – This season runs from September through March of each year and swimming is done in a 25 yard pool. There are Short Course (SC) time standards, which will apply to all meets during this time.
- B. Long Course Season – This season runs from April through August of each year, and the swimming is done in a 50 meter pool. There are Long Course (LC) time standards that will apply to all meets during this time.

EXPLANATION OF TIME STANDARDS

Swimmers are always trying to improve their times in each event in their age group. To help measure that improvement, and to set minimum entry times for some meets, time standards are established.

- A. **National Age Group Time Standards** – The time standards used by USA are percentiles based on times for each age group from around the country. ISI uses two time standards based on age group times from the state of Illinois. These are ‘A’ and ‘B’. The ‘B’ time standard is the first goal that most new swimmers will strive for, if a swimmer does not have a ‘B’ time they will be placed in the ‘No Cut’ or ‘C’ category. Many meets will have a designation as to which swimmers are invited.
- B. **Y District and State Times** – These are the times set for qualification for year-end Y District and State Meets.
- C. **ISI Regional Time Standards** – These are the qualifying times for ISI Regional Championships held at the end of February for short course season and June for Long Course.
- D. **ISI Age Group Time Standards** – These are the qualifying times for the Age Group Championship Meet held in March for short course season and August for long course season. These times are faster than ‘A’ time standards.
- E. **ISI Seniors** – These are the qualifying times for the Illinois Senior Championship Meets, which are held twice a year. These meets are similar to Age Group, but are for senior swimmers ages 13 and over.
- F. **Zones** – This is a long course meet, and qualifying for Zones generally requires times much faster than an ‘A’ time. When a swimmer qualifies for Zones, they will represent Illinois, and be part of the Illinois Team at the meet. The Illinois Team competes against Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- G. **YMCA Nationals** – These meets, held in the short course season and long course season. Y Nationals are regarded as the largest meets, with over 250 teams competing against one another. The YMCA National Short Course meet is the largest meet that requires time cut offs, and this meet is the primary focus of the Senior Swimmers for the Blue Marlins Swim Team. College Scouts from around the nations attend these meets.
- H. **USA Nationals** – There are two USA National Meets run by USA Swimming during each swimming season, Junior Nationals and Senior Nationals. All National Meets have strict qualifying times, and the USS Nationals are two of the toughest meets to qualify for. Junior Nationals is open to all swimmers ages 19 and under, and is a stepping stone for swimmers aspiring to attend Senior Nationals. Senior Nationals has no age restrictions.

END OF SEASON AWARDS

(awarded at the end of fall/winter season only)

Minor Awards: Swimmers are eligible to win these awards each year

- A. District All Round:** Given to swimmers who achieve district times in all individual events for their age group.
- B. State All Round:** Given to swimmers who achieve area times in all individual events for their age group.
- C. IM Ready:** Designed and awarded by USA Swimming for registered USA swimmers, the first step in the IMX Challenge is IM Ready (or IMR). To get "IM Ready," swimmers compete in a series of five events at shorter distances. This award is available for both short course and long course.
- D. IM XTream:** Designed and awarded by USA Swimming for registered USA swimmers, the IMX ranking includes a series of five or six events at longer distances. Once completed the swimmers IMX score will be ranked on a national, zone, LSC and on the club level. This award is available for both sort course and long course.
- E. All-Star Practice:** Swimmers are always on time to practice, hardly ever miss a practice. When they are at practice they are respectful of coaches and other swimmers. They are not messing around the in water. They take criticism well and are constantly trying to improve. They are always giving 100% at practice. One All-Star Practice is awarded to a male & female in each practice group.
- F. Team Spirit:** Swimmer that puts the team ahead of themselves. Can be cheering for teammates. Giving up a spot on a relay for someone else. Putting the good of the team ahead of one's self.
- G. Break Out Performance of the Year:** This Award is given to the swimmers whose performance(s) stand out in relation to other years, with emphasis given to the District and Area Championships.
- H. Relay Performance of the Year:** This award is given to the best team relay performance of the year, with special emphasis on the District and Area Championships.
- I. Race of the Year:** This award is given to the swimmer with the greatest single individual race of the year, with special emphasis on the District and Area Championships.

Major Awards: Swimmers are only eligible to win a major award as long as they have not won a major award the previous year.

- A. Hardest Worker:** Constantly working hard at practice. Be it on the track, in the weight room, in the water. They are always on top of the practice. They are striving to get everything they can out of practice.
- B. Most Improved:** Can be a seasoned swimmer or a new comer. Someone that has taken their swimming to a new level either from last season to this

season, or from the beginning of this season to the end. The improvement doesn't have to be in time drops, it can be in attitude, practice ethic, etc....

C. Rookie Award: For new swimmers 2 years or less on the team. They are an all star in practice and really step it up at meets.

D. MVP: Swimmer has to qualify in an individual event for the YMCA Area Championship. Swimmer is a stand out on the team. Someone the team looks up to. A leader in practice. A leader at meets.

E. Coaches Award: It is all the other awards combined. Swimmer is an all around stand out.

TEAM RECORDS

Team Records will be kept in Short Course Yards, Short Course Meters, Long Course Meters & Open Water for the following age groups: 6 & Under, 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-21 and Open. In order for a swim to be considered for a team record the following must be met.

- A. The swimmers age will be based on the swimmers age 1st day of the meet that the swim was swum at.
- B. The swim must take place at a team scheduled swim meet.
- C. The event must be a scheduled meet event.
- D. Due to the inaccuracy of many of the times, relay lead-off legs will not be used for the purpose of Team Records.

Records will be kept for IMX and IM Ready scores for both Short Course Yards and Long Course Meters. The age groups and scores tabulated by USA Swimming will be used. Swimmers age on the first day of the meet that an event is swum at is the age used for scoring purposes.

APPENDIX

Rule Primer

From USA swimming

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules that is observed by an official, a disqualification (DQ) will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. A disqualification may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

DQs are also results of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

FREESTYLE: Walking on the Bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.

BACKSTROKE: Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.

BREASTSTROKE: An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissor (sidestroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

BUTTERFLY: Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style kick; touching with only one hand at the turns and finish.

For specific language on any technical rule consult the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book. Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee. The rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for the disqualification. If your child is disqualified in an event, be supportive rather than critical. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke need to be corrected. They should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in schoolwork—they point out areas that need further practice. Disqualifications are necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, coach, and parent can make a positive situation out of the disqualification.

Nutrition and Sports Medicine

Hydration & Nutrition

How much you drink and what you drink is important to your performance and your health. Both are jeopardized when adequate amounts of fluids and food are not consumed during long-term events like a preliminary-finals champion meet, even when environmental conditions are not severe. If inadequate replacement fluids and fuels are not consumed during long-term exercise, dehydration, glycogen depletion, and low blood glucose levels can occur. This ultimately leads to reduced endurance, strength, and performance.

With the wealth of information available on fluid replacement and eating during events and the expensive advertising about sports drinks and energy bars, it is amazing how many swimmers overlook the importance of these practices during endurance training and competition.

When muscle glycogen levels are low and blood glucose levels have dropped- no matter how fast you may want to go in a race- your body cannot respond, and you have “hit the wall”. During exercise, carbohydrates either in liquid or solid form appear to benefit performance by providing an additional source of energy.

Post-Event Nutrition

The race is over, you pack up your gear and drink 10-12 ounces of water. After collecting your ribbons, you jump into your car and drive two hours home before you sit down to a meal.

The next day you are tired the whole day and, even after a good warm-up, you still feel sluggish during your workout. For many years people have told you that you just went too hard in the race and may not have enough training or yardage in order to recover from such a hard race. We now know better.

Your muscles and liver have not completely refilled themselves with glycogen, which is the sugar that's stored in the liver and muscles, and is of primary importance in sustaining power output during exercise. Research has shown that workouts or races that last over 60 to 90 minutes can put severe demands upon your body's glycogen stores. If the workout was long and hard enough, your muscles may even “bonk” during the event.

In addition to endurance exercise, high intensity exercise can deplete your glycogen stores rapidly. As little as 10 intervals lasting 90 to 120 seconds can severely deplete your carbohydrate stores. So when training and competing in our sport, swimming, your muscles will most likely be depleted of glycogen in this situation.

Recovery

Generally, swimmers and coaches have not considered post-event nutrition as important as pre-event eating or nutrition during the event. Following the completion of hard training or competition, it may take up to 24 hours to resynthesize muscle glycogen provided ample carbohydrate is consumed.

Recover: Crucial to Future Performance (continued)

As we have seen there may be times when you will train or compete several times a day, like during our Championship meets, so it is important to rebuild muscle and liver glycogen stores as quickly as possible. Because stores of glycogen are essential for maximum performance, you may need to regenerate these energy stores as rapidly as possible, such as between prelims and finals. Research has repeatedly shown that when no carbohydrate is consumed after exercise, very little glycogen synthesis occurs over the next 24 hours. So, eat carbohydrate as soon as possible after exercise. This is especially true during the championship season, when we are competing more than once a day. After completing preliminary events, there is a 90-minute break before finals. During this period, time is of the essence if you hope to ingest enough carbohydrate to restore glycogen stores.

Hydration is of extreme importance to swimmers and athletes in general. I would expect each swimmer on our team to have a water bottle at the end of your lane filled with water or Gatorade. You should be drinking 7-10 oz every 10 to 15 minutes of exercise. In fact, never pass up a water fountain during the day without taking a drink. Keeping your body hydrated is an ongoing process.

As a general rule of thumb here is recommended swimmer's diet.

60-65% carbohydrates

12-15% Protein

20-25% Fats

You should consume 3 to 4 grams of carbohydrate for each pound of body weight.

Eat "good quality" carbs. As a society, we are eating way too many simple carbohydrates. They are concentrated calories. Try to get more complex carbohydrates in your diet, more fruits & vegetables, and more whole grain cereals and breads for starters. Avoid fast food and eat a salad everyday.

On occasion, swimmers may get an upset stomach from drinking Gatorade. Some people are more sensitive to this type of drink than others. For those swimmers, you will just have to stick with plain old water. But don't underestimate the benefits of plain water. Water has zero calories and zero sugar, but a good drink of water can reduce hunger, but you still need to eat! Water helps your body metabolize stored fats, helps maintain proper muscle tone and helps rid the body of waste. You can survive about a month without food, but only 5 to 7 days without water. The whole family can benefit from the above nutrition guidelines.

Inherent Risk Information Sheet

Swimming, like every other competitive sport, does have inherent risks involved with participating. The following are common injuries that happen to swimmers. We as coaches will do everything possible to prevent injuries.

Water comes with risks that you must be aware of. Any swimmer can panic in the water at any time and need assistance from a coach or lifeguard.

Pulled muscles- This injury generally happens from not stretching properly or not at all.

Shin splints and cramps- Swimming can cause cramps, even in the best swimmers. A way to help avoid cramps is to **drink plenty of water before and during practice** and avoid extremely salty foods.

Minor cuts and scrapes- Swimmers may, on occasion, hit the lane line or catch another swimmer's fingernail, causing a scrape or cut.

Bumps and bruises- Swimmers may, on occasion, swim into another swimmers, swim into the wall, or get accidentally kicked or hit by another swimmer. The pool deck is often wet and can cause a swimmer to slip and fall when walking on the deck.

Heel injuries- When working on flip turns, swimmers may over extend their feet and catch the gutter with their heels.

Swimmer's ear- Chlorinated water that sits in the ear will remove earwax from the ear and can cause a swimmer to get water is called "swimmer's ear". It is suggested that swimmers carry a solution to remove chlorinated water from the ear. You can purchase such solutions from a pharmacy.

Breathing difficulty- swimmers who have experience breathing difficulty during practice should sit out for a bit until the breathing returns to normal. Chlorine releases a gas that is not harmful to swimmers, but can cause them to have a little difficulty breathing and sometimes can be irritating to the throat.

Head Aches- Head aches are a common ailment in swimmers. Here are a couple of reasons and remedies; A) swim caps- remove the cap for a short period of time and replace with a looser cap, B) dehydration- drink plenty of water all day long and during practice, C) Hard work- push through it, it will get easier. If you have a head ache before you arrive at practice, take medication at least 30 min. before practice begins. Taking medication during practice will not help, because most medications do not take affect for at least 30 minutes.

GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

“A” Cut – The qualifying time in a given event for the ISI “A” classification level.

Add Up- Aggregate Time - times achieved by 4 swimmers in individual events which are added together to arrive at a provable relay entry time.

Admission- Certain swim meets charge for spectators to view the meets. These are usually the larger more prestigious meets. Sometimes the meet program (heat sheet) is included in the price of admission.

Age Group- Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Some LSC's have divided the swimmers into more convenient divisions specific to their situations: (i.e.) 8-under, 13-Over, 15-Over, Junior, Senior. For YMCA we are divided by 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-21.

Age Group Championships – Meets held at the end of each season for 14 and under to determine the Illinois Age Group champions. Cut-offs or qualifying times are generally National AA Time Standards.

Age Group Meet – All USA registered swimmers, 18 years of age and younger, who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s) are eligible to participate in their age category. A swimmer's age on the first day of competition shall govern for the entire meet.

Age Up – The processes when a swimmer moves from one age group to another. This can either be on their birthday or on a specific date of December 1st for Winter Season and June 1st for Summer.

Alternate- In a Prelims/Finals meet, after the finalist are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalist are designated as alternates. The faster of the 2 being first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moments notice.

Anchor- The final swimmer in a relay.

Approved Meet- Swim meets conducted by organizations (that are open to teams other than USA member clubs) that have applied to USA or the local LSC for approval. If approval is granted, swimmers may use times achieved as USA qualifying times. A USA official must be present at all sessions of the meet. Approval does not mean Sanctioned.

“B” Cut – The qualifying time in a given event for the ISI “B” classification level.

Backstroke- One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, and 200 yds/mtr. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd back)

Banner- A team sign that is displayed at swim meets. Banners are usually made from nylon material and carry the Team Logo and possibly the name of a popular team sponsor. Some size restrictions are enforced at certain meets.

Beep-The starting sound from an electronic, computerized timing system.

Bell Lap- The part of a freestyle distance race (400 meters or longer) when the swimmer has 2 lengths plus 5 yards to go. An Official rings a bell over the lane of the lead swimmer when swimmer is at the backstroke flags.

Blocks- The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool, and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.

Bonus Heat- The heat held during the finals session of a Prelims/Finals meet, that is slower than the swimmers participating in Big Finals. The Bonus Heat may refer to Consolation Finals or an extra heat in addition to Consolation finals.

Breaststroke- One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, and 200 yds/mtr. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd breast)

Bullpen – Area adjacent to the Clerk of Course in which swimmers are assembled and assigned to a heat.

Butterfly- One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, and 200 yds/mtr. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd butterfly)

Button- The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. There are usually 3 buttons per lane. It is the timers responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.

Camp- A swimming function offered by USA Swimming, your LSC, or a USA Swimming coach. There are many types of camps for just about every level of swimmer. When selecting a camp, ask for your coaches advice as to what will be the best for the swimmer, or call USA Swimming for details on the many camps they offer.

Cap- The latex or silicone covering worn on the head of swimmers. The colors and team logo's adorning these caps are limitless. National Caps, State Team Caps, award caps, plain practice caps, etc.

Cards- A card that is either handed to the swimmer in the bull pen or given to the timer behind the lane. Cards usually list the swimmers name, USA Swimming number, seed time, event number, event description, and the lane and heat number the swimmer will swim in. Backup times are written on these cards. Each swim has a separate card.

Carbohydrates- The main source of food energy used by athletes. Refer to a Nutritional Manual for more information.

Championship Meet- The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.

Championship Meet Qualifier- A swimmer who has made the necessary cut off times to enter the championship meet.

Championship Finals- The top 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals. The fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held. Big Finals.

Check-In- The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

Circle Seeding- A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes. (I.e.) Lane 4 in the final 3 heats. See rule book for exact method for seeding depending on the lanes in the pool.

Classification of Meets – A swimmer's ability level determines his or her class of competition at USA meets. A, B and "No Cut" meets are sanctioned by ISI. Each class had ISI time standards for each stroke at each distance for each age group. Swimmers new to competition are classified as "No Cut" swimmers in their first meet. Thereafter, swimmers must check their meet result times against ISI time standards to determine what class of competition to enter for each stroke and each distance. Quite often, a swimmer will be a "B" swimmer in one stroke at one distance, and a "A" swimmer in another stroke at another distance. USA classifies swimmers in percentiles based on times from the entire United States.

Clerk of Course – The person responsible for assigning heats and lanes to swimmers.

Clinic- A scheduled meeting for the purpose of instruction. (I.e.) Officials clinic, Coaches clinic.

Closed Competition- Swim meet which is open to the members of an organization or group. YMCA only swim meets are considered to be "Closed Competition".

Club- A registered swim team that is a dues paying member of USA Swimming and the local LSC.

Code of Ethics- A Code of Conduct that both swimmers and coaches are required to sign at certain USA Swimming/LSC sponsored events. The Code is not strict and involves common sense and proper behavior.

Colorado- A brand of automatic timing system.

Consolation Finals- The first or slower of two heats of finals at a championship meet.

Course – Designated distance over which the competition is conducted - 25 yd., 25 m or 50 m.

Cuts – Qualifying times for specific types of championship meets.

USA Swimming Deck Pass- An online platform that tracks swimmers' times and rewards them with digital incentives. USA Swimming members can track their best times, set goals, check their IMX scores and earn digital patches for their achievements. All swimmers can track their times via the log book and also set personal goals. Deck Pass also allows you to connect with friends and family and you can also share your achievements by connecting your account to Facebook. A mobile app is also available that has the same information as your online account. SWIMS pushes new information daily to both the mobile and website at the same time so the two should look exactly the same.

Deck Seeding – A procedure for assigning swimmers to the proper lanes and heats immediately before each event in the bullpen.

Disqualifications (DQ's) – Stroke and turn judges watch each race. Swimmers with improper form or technique are disqualified and told why. Swimmers should not be discouraged by a DQ. Most team members have had the same experience. Pay attention to the judge's remarks and work doubly hard on stroke perfection in practice. Swimmers may swim the remaining events that day and may enter the same event at the next meet.

Dive- Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warm-ups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmers coach.

Diving Well- A separate pool or a pool set off to the side of the competition pool. This pool has deeper water and diving boards/platforms. During a meet, this area may be designated as a warm-down pool with proper supervision.

Division I-II-III- NCAA member colleges and universities are assigned divisions to compete in, depending on the schools total enrollment. Division I being the large universities and Division III being the smaller colleges.

Double Dual- Type of swim meet where three teams compete in dual meets against each other, at the same time. Separate Meet scores would be kept for Team A vs. Team B, Team A vs. Team C, and Team B vs. Team C.

Draw- Random selection by chance.

Dropped Time- When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".

Dry land- The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

Dry Side- That part of the Code book (rule book) that deals with the "Administrative" Regulations of Competition.

Dual Meet – Meets conducted with two teams. Dual meets usually have a limitation on the number of entrants per event from each team.

Entry- An Individual, Relay team, or Club roster's event list into a swim competition.

Entry Chairperson- The host clubs designated person who is responsible for receiving, and making sure the entries have met the deadline, or returning the entries if the meet is full. This person usually will find discrepancies in the meet entries and notify the entering club to correct any errors.

Entry Fees-The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the LSC and type of meet.

Entry Limit- Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they can not exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Electronic Timing- Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touch-pads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers time.

Eligible to compete- The status of a member swimmer that means they are registered and have met all the requirements.

Equipment- The items necessary to operate a swim practice or conduct a swim competition.

Event – Any race or series of races in a given stroke and distance.

False Start- When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.

False Start Rope- A recall rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. The rope is about 1/2 way on yard pools and about 50 feet from the starting end on meter pools.

Fastest to Slowest- A seeding method used on the longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events will alternate one girls heat and one boys heat until all swimmers have competed.

Fees- Money paid by swimmers for services. (i.e. Practice fees, registration fee, USA Swimming membership fee, etc.)

FINA- The international, rules making organization, for the sport of swimming.

Finals – The session of a meet where qualifying rounds (prelims) were held previously to determine the finalists (usually 6-16 depending on pool size and whether or not consolation finals are conducted). Results of the finals determine the ultimate placements in a given event. Most 'final' types of meets are at the championship level (i.e. YMCA District, Area, and Nationals, USA Swimming Junior Nationals and Senior Nationals).

Final Results- The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.

Fine- The monetary penalty assessed a swimmer or club when a swimmer does not achieve the necessary time required to swim in an event, and cannot prove they have done the time previously.

Fins- Large rubber fin type devices that fit on a swimmers feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.

Flags- Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall

Format- The order of events and type of swim meet being conducted.

Fund Raiser- A money making endeavor by a swim team/club usually involving both parents and swimmers.

Freestyle- One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yds/mtr, 100 yds/mtr, 200 yds/mtr, 400 mtr/500 yd 800 mtr/1000 yds, 1500 mtr/1650 yds. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd free)

Freestyle Relay – Four swimmers on each team, each swimmer swims one fourth of the distance using any desired stroke.

Gallery- The viewing area for spectators during the swimming competition.

Goals- The short and long range targets for swimmers to aim for.

Goggles- Glasses type devices worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by the chlorine in the water.

Heat – A division of an event into a series of races. Each race is one heat. Heats are needed when more swimmers enter a race than there are lanes available in the pool.

Heat Award- A ribbon or coupon given to the winner of a single heat at an age group swim meet.

Heat Sheet – A list of swimmers entered in each event with their respective entry times. Pre-seeded meets will also list swimmers in pre-assigned heats and lanes. The host team of a meet prepares heat sheets and sells them to spectators for a nominal fee.

High Point- An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre meet information.

HOD- House of Delegates. The ruling body of an LSC composed of the designated representative of each club plus the board of directors (BOD) of the LSC. One vote per club: board member and coach representative.

Horn- A sounding device used in place of a gun. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system.

Illegal- Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification.

Individual Medley (IM) – All four of the competitive strokes are swum in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

Insurance- USA Swimming offers "accident insurance coverage" which is automatic when swimmer, coach, official, pays their USA Swimming membership fee. Many restrictions apply, so check with your club for detailed information.

Interval- A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.

Invitational- Type of meet that requires a club to request an invitation to attend the meet.

ISI – Abbreviation for Illinois Swimming, Inc., the Illinois Administrative Organization for USA.

IST- A brand of automatic timing system.

Jump- An illegal start done by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th member of a relay team. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.

Kick- The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to "yell" to encourage swimmers during a race.

Kick Board- A flotation device used by swimmers during practice. A lightweight object used with great accuracy by coaches.

Lane- The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. (I.e.) Lane 1 or Lane 2. Pools with starting blocks at only one end: As the swimmers stand behind the blocks, lanes are numbered from Right (lane 1) to Left (Lane 6).

Lane Lines- Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.

Lap- One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.

Lap Counter- The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

Late Entries- Meet entries from a club or individual that are received by the meet host after the entry deadline. These entries are usually not accepted and are returned to sender.

Leg- The part of a relay event swam by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.

Length- The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See lap.

Long Course – A type of competitive pool which measures 50 meters or 50 yards in length. The standard size for all International competition and all world swims is the 50 meter course.

LSC- Local Swim Committee. The local level administrative division of the corporation (USA Swimming) with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by the Corporation.

Malfunction- A mechanical or electronic failure - not a human failure by the swimmer.

Mark- The command to take your starting position.

Marshall- The adult(s) (official) who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet.

Medley Relay – Four swimmers on each team, each swimmer one fourth of the prescribed distance continuously in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle.

Meet Director - The individual in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet.

Meters- The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the metric system. Long course meters is 50 meters, short course meters is 25 meters.

Mile- The slang referring to the 1500 meter or the 1650 yard freestyle, both of which are slightly short of a mile.

Motivational Times- Time standards designed to encourage age group swimmers to step their swimming up to the next level. These time standards guide you from just starting out in your age group to reaching your highest potential.

NAIA- National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics

National Reportable Times- A list compiled by USS that recognizes the top number of swimmers in each age group (boys and girls) in each event and distance on a national level.

Nationals- YMCA or USA senior level meets conducted in March/April and August. See Senior.

Natatorium- A building constructed for the purpose of housing a swimming pool and related equipment.

NCAA- National Collegiate Athletic Association

Non-Conforming Time- A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet, or vice versa.

Novice- A beginner or someone who does not have experience.

NRT- National Reportable Time. A time list published once a year, which if a swimmer equals or betters the time on the list, they may submit their time in that event for consideration for national recognition.

NT- No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.

Nutrition- The sum of the processes by which a swimmer takes in and utilizes food substances.

Officials- The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition.

Olympic Trials- The USA Swimming sanctioned long course swim meet held the year of the Olympic Games to decide what

swimmers will represent the USA on our Olympic Team. Qualification times are faster than Nationals.

OME- Online Meet Entry

Omega- A brand of automatic timing system.

OT- Official Time. The swimmers event time recorded to one hundredth of a second (.01).

OTC- Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

OVC- Official Verification Card. A 3 copy form for certifying a national qualifying time made by a swimmer and issued only by a verification official of the area in which the meet was held.

Open Competition- Competition which any qualified club, organization, or individual may enter.

Pace Clock- The large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.

Paddle- Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice.

PALA – The official abbreviation for the Buehler YMCA Swim Team for use on all entry forms for meets.

Parent On Deck- Mobile App. that allows new-found knowledge at swim meets, tracking attendance, viewing their child's best times and comparing them to local and national time standards, viewing news to your team's web site and viewing and signing up for jobs and all events on the team. This system works with the teams Team Unify System.

Parka- Large 3/4 length fur lined coats worn by swimmers. Usually are in team colors with logo or team name.

Positive Check In- The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded or pre seeded meet. Check In The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

Practice- The scheduled workouts a swimmers attends with their swim team/club.

Prelims or Trials – In certain meets, the qualifying rounds held for each (Preliminary Heats) event to determine the finalists.

Pre-seeded- A meet conducted without a bull pen in which a swimmer knows what lane and heat they are in by looking at the Meet heat sheet, or posted meet program.

Proof of Time – A requirement at some meets (usually A or above) to make certain that all swimmers entered have legally met the time standards of the meet. Also, swimmers who place and earn points and a ribbon or medal in a USS event but do not swim fast enough that day to make the qualifying time for that event must show their proof-of-time card before they will be given their award and points. At some meets like J.O.'s of Indianapolis, there are fines if you can't prove that you previously swam the qualifying time.

Psyche Sheet- A list of swimmers entered in each event with their respective entry times. Swimmers are typically listed from fastest to slowest with no lane assignments.

Pull Buoy- A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.

Pyramid Seeding – Also known as “circle seeding”, this is the seeding system used in prelims where the final three heats of event are arranged so that the three fastest swimmers occupy the middle or fastest lane in their heat; the next three fastest swimmers occupy the next fastest lane, etc.

Qualifying Times- Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer. See appendix times.

Race- Any single swimming competition. (I.e.) preliminary, final, timed final.

Ready Room- A room pool side for the swimmers to relax before they compete in finals.

Recall Rope- A rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. The rope is about 1/2 way on yard pools and about 50 feet from the starting end on meter pools.

Referee – The official who has authority over all other officials at a meet. He enforces all rules, decides all questions about conduct of the meet, and is responsible for the efficient running of the meet.

Registered- Enrolled and paid as a member of USA Swimming and the LSC.

Relay – An event where four swimmers are part of a single, team oriented event.

Rest Area- A designated area (such as a gymnasium) that is set aside for swimmers to rest during a meet.

Safety- The responsible and careful actions of those participating in a swim meet. USA Swimming and each LSC now have a "Safety Coordinator" and each meet must have "Marshals" in charge of safety.

Sanction – Official or authorized approval from USS to sponsor a meet.

Sanction Fee- The amount paid by a USA Swimming group member to an LSC for issuing a sanction.

Scratch- To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

Seed- Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.

Seeding – The process by which a swimmer is assigned a certain lane and heat in an event. Competitors are assigned to lanes based on their seed times as follows:

6 lane pool – lanes numbered 3, 4, 2, 5, 1, 6 (with the fastest time in lane 3)

8 lane pool – lanes 4, 5, 3, 6, 2, 7, 1, 8 (with the fastest time in lane 4)

Seed Times- The times that a swimmer uses to enter a meet. These times appear on the heat sheet and the entry cards, and they determine the swimmer's heat and lane assignment in a meet.

Senior- A USA Swimming meet for swimmers of any age as long as the qualification times are met.

Senior Swim Meet – All USA registered swimmers who have met the Senior qualifying time standard for a given event eligible to compete.

Session- Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, type of competition, or age group.

Short Course – A type of competitive pool, which measures 25 yards or 25 meters.

Simultaneously- A term used in the rules of butterfly and breaststroke, meaning at the same time.

"**Splash**"- USA Swimming newsletter that is mailed bi-monthly.

Split – A per lap time that coaches often record for teaching the concept of pacing. For instance, a swimmer's time for each 25-yard leg of a 100-yard event are his or her four splits.

Stations- Separate portions of a dry land or weight circuit.

Start- The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race.

Starter – The official at a meet responsible for the proper, legal start of each race.

Still Water- Water that has no current caused by a filter system or no waves caused by swimmers.

Stand-up- The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position

Step-Down-The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.

Straight Seeding- Swimmers are assigned to lanes in heats from slowest to fastest, In a given heat, the fastest swimmers swim in the middle lanes and the slower swimmers swim in the outer lanes.

Strokes – There are four official racing strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Stroke Judge – A certified official who determines the legality of swimmers' strokes and disqualifies those who do not conform to the USS or YMCA rules.

Submitted Time- Times used to enter swimmers in meets. These times must have been achieved by the swimmer at previous meets.

Swim-off - In a Prelims/Finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise ties stand.

Swimmer's Age - The age at which a swimmer will compete. This may be their age as of the first day of the meet or may be their age as of a certain date. Typically December 1st for Winter and June 1st for Summer.

Swimmer's Log Book – In all types of competition, keeping accurate records of race results for each stroke at each distance is very important. Though the coaching staff keeps team records and times, each swimming family should keep records of their own swimmer's times. This is an excellent way of keeping track of your swimmer's improvement. Log books may be purchased at most USS meets and sport and swim shops.

“Swimming World” – A monthly magazine with articles and stories about competitive swimming as well as some regional and all national meet results. For subscription information write: “Swimming World”, P.O. Box 45497, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Taper- The resting phase of a senior swimmer at the end of the season before the championship meet.

Team- YMCA or USA Swimming registered club that has the right to compete for points.

Team Records- The statistics a team keeps, listing the fastest swimmer in the clubs history for each age group/each event.

Team Unify- Online team management software that allows coaches and parents to access swimmers information anywhere there is internet access. System includes OME and job signup. System also has a free mobile app. “On Deck” for both parents and Coaches.

Timed Finals – Competition in which individual heats are swum, and the final replacements are determined by the times performed in all of the aggregate heats. All swimmers are seeded from the slowest times to the fastest times. Each heat is set up by ascending order of times (i.e., if 48 swimmers are entered in the 50 yard backstroke, the 8 slowest times would be swum in heat #1, and the 8 fastest times would be swum in heat #6).

Time Standards – Certain qualifying times which have been set up by the Association of the USA and the National USA for all events in all levels of meets to insure that all competitors are of reasonably the same ability in their respective meets.

Timer- The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system

Time Trial- An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.

Top 16 – A tabulation of the top 16 times in every age group and every event of all USA competitions from the previous season. The short course Top 16 are published in August, and the long course Top 16 are published every March.

Touch Pad – The part of an electronic timing system that rests in the water at the end of each lane. Swimmers times are automatically recorded when the swimmer touches the pad.

Transfer- The act of leaving one club or LSC and going to another. Usually 120 days of unattached competition is required before swimmer can represent another USA Swimming club.

Tri-meet- A meet with 3 team competing for points to see who places 1st-2nd-3rd.

Unattached – The status assigned to a swimmer when switching from one USA club to another or when not affiliated with any club. A swimmer must be unattached for 120 days from their last competition with their previous club. During this time, the swimmer may compete individually, but not in relays.

Uniform- The various parts of clothing a swimmer wears at a meet. May include: Parka, Warm-up jacket, Team duffel bag, sweat pants, suits, hat, goggles, T-shirt, etc.

Unofficial Time- The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after the race. After the time has been checked, it will become the official time.

USA – Abbreviation for United States Swimming, Inc., which is the governing body for amateur swimming in the United States. National headquarters are in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

USA Meet Rules – All USA competition is conducted in accordance with the United States Swimming as set forth in Official Rules for Competitive Swimming, a rule book published annually by USA.

USA Number- A 14 part number assigned to a swimmer after they have filled out the proper forms and paid their annual dues. The first six part is the swimmers birthday. The next three parts are the first three letters of the swimmer's legal name. The next

part is the swimmer's middle initial. If they do not have one an * is used. The last 4 parts are the first four letters of the swimmers surname. For example: USA Swimming # for swimmer Kent Michael Nelson, a member born Aug.27, 1976 = 082776KENMNELS

USOTC- United States Olympic Training Center located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Vertical- At right angle to the normal water level.

Vitamins- The building blocks of the body. Vitamins do not supply energy, but are necessary for proper health.

Warm-down- The loosing a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.

Warm-up- The practice and loosing session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.

Watch- The hand held device used by timers and coaches for timing a swimmers races and taking splits.

Weights- The various barbells / benches / machines used by swimmers during their dry land program.

Whistle- The sound a starter/referee makes to signal for quiet before they give the command to start the race.

Work Out- The practice sessions a swimmer attends.

Yards- The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the American system. A short course yard pool is 25 yards (75 feet) in length.

Yardage- The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.

Zones- The country is divided up into 4 major zones: Eastern - Southern - Central - Western. At the end of the long course season (in August) the Zone Administration sponsors a championship age group & senior meet.