

FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA

AQUA FORCE

SWIM TEAM

SWIM TEAM

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2019-2020

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Membership For All helps to ensure that everyone belongs at the YMCA regardless of income level.

FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA | www.foxvalleyymca.org | 630-552-4100

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Welcome to the Fox Valley Family YMCA’s Competitive Swimming Program,

Aqua Force Swim Team

This handbook will serve as an introduction to the Aqua Force Swim Team. Please take time to read this and keep it handy for future reference.

Aqua Force teaches swimmers to reach their potential as they improve their skills and to reach new goals by improving technique and increasing strength & endurance. We provide an outstanding developmental team that also trains skilled swimmers to be highly competitive. We also build strong character, promote unity among peers and develop leadership skills.

If you have any questions or concerns about the swim team, please contact:

Aquatics Director/Head Swim Coach: Kim McGraw

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Head Age Group Swim Coach: Mike Click

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Head Developmental Swim Coach: Alex Ahlberg

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Practice schedules can be found in the FVFY program guide and online at the Aqua Force Team Unify website, under the “Team Info” tab. Meet schedules are on the home page of the Aqua Force Team Unify website under the “Meets” tab. Team activities and schedule updates are on the home page of the Aqua Force Team Unify website under the “Functions” tab.

WELCOME

FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA’s SWIM TEAM

The Aqua Force Swim Team embraces the core values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Respect, & Responsibility. Additionally, the team seeks to provide opportunities for social and emotional development, a physical recreational outlet, and an atmosphere of good sportsmanship, teamwork, & fun for all.

FVFY Aqua Force swim team enables every child to gain from his or her experience, regardless of the order of finish. The total swim team experience should be an enjoyable one. The program proceeds in a manner that will enhance and improve one's interest and respect for the sport of swimming.

The team participates in both YMCA and USA Swimming events. All swimmers are required to be Fox Valley Family YMCA members to be on the team and USA Swimming members to participate at certain meets that require USA Swimming Membership, like Age Group Champs or the Speedo Classic.

AQUA FORCE SWIM TEAM OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure swimmers grow in confidence and to learn life skills that will benefit them in and out of the water.
2. To provide instruction, training, and competition to swimmers of all abilities.
3. To learn the value of hard work, commitment, and teamwork.
4. To know, and always show, a high level of good sportsmanship and positive attitude.
5. To provide a structure for family togetherness and interaction.

MISSION & VISION

PRACTICE GROUPS

PRACTICE GROUPS

**Little Ripples** (5-9 years)

Swimmers with most technique basics in freestyle and backstroke and can confidently swim the length of the pool (25 yards).

**White** (5-12 years)

Swimmers with most technique basics and can swim a 50 free non-stop, 25 breast, 25 fly and 25 back.

**Little Ripples and White** swimmers do not have any practice or meet expectations.

**Silver** (6-12 years)

Swimmers with most technique basics and can swim 200 Free non-stop, 50 breast, 50 fly and 50 back.

**Purple** (7-12 years)

Swimmers with proper technique basics and can swim a legal 100 IM and have a 100 free time under 1:30.

**Black** (9-12 years)

Swimmers with proper technique basics and can swim a legal 200 IM and have a 200 free time under 3:00.

**Pre Senior** (12-21 years)

Swimmers with most technique basics and can swim 200 Free non-stop, 50 breast, 50 fly and 50 back.

**Senior** (12-21 years)

Swimmers with proper technique basics and can swim a legal 200 IM and have a 200 free time under 2:50.

**Senior State** (12-21 years)

Swimmers with 2 times faster than Y State 13-14 qualifying standards or can swim a legal 400 IM and have a 200 free time under 2:25.

**Silver & Pre Senior** swimmers are expected to attend 2 or more practices a week and be available for Y Districts.

**Purple & Senior** swimmers are expected to attend 2 or more practices a week and be available for Y Districts and Y State.

**Black & Senior State** swimmers are expected to attend 3 or more practices a week and be available for Y Districts and Y State.

SWIMMER PLACEMENT

All new swimmers must be evaluated and placed into the appropriate practice group. Returning swimmers will be emailed their appropriate practice group but if they feel like they have improved, they can attend a placement date to be evaluated. Aqua Force coaches are experienced and knowledgeable; please trust the coach’s determination for which practice group best fits your swimmer. Injuries and insecurities can develop when swimmers move to more advanced practice groups too soon.

MANDITORY ORIENTATION MEETINGS

All families must have a parent attend an orientation meeting. 1st year swim families will attend an hour long meeting and veteran families will attend a 30 minute meeting. Aqua Force is always striving to be the best it can be and will have some changes each year to continue the improvement of the team.

MEMBERSHIP & FEES

All swimmers must be current members of the Fox Valley Family YMCA. Each family will be required to fill out a registration packet which includes a meet fee deposit and USA Swimming registration fee. Bank draft forms are required to process fees throughout the season and will be charged at the end of each month. (USA registration is not required for Little Ripples)

FUNDRAISING

Hosting large meets is the best way to raise money for Aqua Force. Instead of selling things at booths or to our families and friends, Aqua Force will host meets. Each family is expected to volunteer a total of 6 sessions between the two following meets; Fall Classic and Town & Country Districts. This requirement is per swimmer and families with more than 1 swimmer will have 2 additional sessions per additional swimmer, with a cap of 10 sessions per family. Families will be expected to pay $25 per session not fulfilled.

PRIVATE COACHING

FVFY offers private coaching for all swimmers. Private coaching is a great way to improve on some specific skills. Private coaching request forms are available at the front desk. The times coaches are most available are over holiday breaks and between seasons. It’s best to do private coaching at least a month before the last meets of the season to give them time to practice their improved technique.

REGISTRATION

TEAM APPAREL

* We will have a suit fitting and equipment sale the first day of practice. Any practice groups that start after 5pm should arrive 15 minute early if they know they will need to try on swim suits. There will also be googles, paddles, fins and more for sale.
* Aqua Force holiday spirit wear orders forms will be available in late October and are due by mid-November so they will be received before Christmas.

SWIM PRACTICE ATTIRE/EQUIPMENT

* Please make sure your child brings a one piece swim suit, towel, goggles and water bottle. Swim bags with fins and hand paddles are recommended for all groups and required for Purple, Black/Senior & Sr State groups. Black/Senior & Sr State should also have a lap swimming snorkel.
* Swimmers should wear gym clothes for dryland practices. Closed toed gym shoes are required.

AQUA FORCE DATES & DEADLINES

Aqua Force Team Unify website will have specific dates and deadlines posted for all swim meets, activities and orders. Regularly check the meets and team functions tabs to see upcoming events and schedule changes.

TEAM PICTURES

Team and individual pictures are done for the Fall/Winter season in mid-November. Order forms will be in team file folders in the swim hallway by the beginning of November.

NO PRACTICE/CANCELED PRACTICE

Aqua Force takes off practice for major holidays and has a month off between the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter seasons. When we have bad weather and do not cancel, all families are to use their own discretion to determine if it would be safe to drive to practice or meets, cancelations will be emailed and posted on Facebook.

GENERAL INFORMATION

TEAM WEBSITE

The Aqua Force Team Unify website is your best resource for information. You will receive an email with your log in instructions.

* Be informed by checking emails and the “Meets” and “Functions” tabs regularly. This is where you will find info about swim meets and team activities.
* Most information and updates are distributed via email.
* TU is also how you manage your family’s team account.
* In TU you will sign up for swim meets and volunteering, look up your swimmers times, check balances and more.

FACEBOOK GROUP

We post in our Facebook group “Aqua Force Swim Team”.

* The Aqua Force Facebook group is a good place to ask general questions, Parents and Coaches respond regularly.
* We encourage posting photos from swim meets and team events.

COMMUNICATING WITH COACHES

Aqua Force strives for good communication between coaches and parents. The coaches encourage parents to come directly to them if there are problems or disagreements, rather than simply discussing these issues with other parents.

* Monthly Newsletters will be posted on the website and printed for the hallway.
* Meets and events posted on Team Unify.
* Emails will be sent out regularly.
* Check family mailboxes in hallway file cabinet weekly.
* Talk with coaches in person before or after practices. Please schedule a meeting time if it is a personal matter or will require a longer conversation.
* Emergency text alerts are sent through Team Unify. You must verify phone number on your TU account.

PARENT COMMITTEES MEETINGS

Aqua Force parents will meet with a couple coaches to plan activities, organize volunteers, give feedback and help guide the team to be its best.

* All parents are encouraged to attend parent committee meetings.
* Parent committee meeting will be once or twice a month and will be posted on the TU “Functions” tab.

COMMUNICATION

PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTAIONS

* Support the YMCA’s core values – Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility.
* Encourage good sportsmanship and behavior by setting a good example and using positive reinforcement.
* Provide support for all swimmers, coaches, and officials at every practice, meet and event.

**VOLUNTEER**

* The Aqua Force Swim Team has embraced a requirement for parent volunteering when a swimmer attends home meets and is strongly encouraged for away meets or other team events. Volunteers are needed to assist with timing and other duties at swim meets and team activities. It is easy once you give it a try.
* Officials are needed to run meets and to offer low cost or free meets for athletes. It is a learning process and you do not need a swimming background to become an official. We will get you trained.
* All swim team families are expected to provide a volunteer at all home meets and some away meets. Home dual, tri and time trial meets are free when a volunteer is provided for that family.
* You must check in with the volunteer check in table to when you volunteer to ensure it has been documented.

**BOUNDRIES**

* Address questions or communicate concerns with coaches before or after (not during) practices.
* Do not coach or instruct the team or swimmers at practices and meets or interfere with coaches on deck.
* Please sit in the viewing hallway during practices unless needed on the pool deck.
* Only address questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials directly to a member of our coaching staff. Parents do not address officials directly.

PARENT COMMITTEES

* Each committee will have one selected chair with additional committee members. There will be a sign up emailed and posted in the pool hallway the first week of practice. Parents can be in multiple committees but we will limit the total amount of committee members and expect members to attend at least half of the meetings.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

SWIM MEET ATTIRE/EQUIPMENT

* Swimmers are recommended to wear an Aqua Force team cap and swim suit or a one piece swim suit that has black and purple as the primary colors.
* Tech suits and caps are an exception. Other caps are allowed as long as it does not have another team’s logo.
* Sandals are important anytime a swimmer is on deck to protect their feet.
* Warm clothing like a hoodie or jacket with sweat pants or shorts to keep them warm between events.
* Snacks and drinks to keep them hydrated and nourished.

SWIM MEETS

* Swimmers will be asked to sign up for meets well in advance of the competition date. Sometimes entry deadlines are 4-8 weeks before the meet. Please be sure to pay close attention to entry deadlines and sign up before them. You can email the Head Coach if you miss a deadline but we cannot always get you in a meet after the deadline.
* Families are to log into the team website, commit to the meet, and leave notes about preferred events or if they cannot attend the entire meet session. Coaches will make the final decisions on events.
* Swimmers should arrive 20 minutes before warm ups start to allow enough time to get ready. Any changes to warm up times will be emailed a day or two prior to the meet.
* Invites typically use positive check-in. You will need to find the check-in and highlight your swimmer in for all events. Swimmers should check in with coaches once on the pool deck for all meets.
* Swimmers should write down all event information, specifically event number, heat, and lane. This is commonly done on the skin (hand or arm) with a permanent marker.
* Swimmers should pay attention to the progression of the meet and be ready for each event blocks or at the bullpen.
* Swimmers and parents should wait in assigned areas. Some meets do not allow swimmers on the bleachers or the parents on the pool deck.
* Immediately **following each race, swimmers need to see the coaches.** It is important the swimmers and coaches can discuss the event, what they did well and how to improve going forward.
* If possible, Aqua Force families should sit together at meets to be a great cheering section.
* Swimmers must be with a parent/guardian at all meets. In the event that a parent cannot travel with a swimmer, that family must find another parent to be responsible for the swimmer.

PREPARED AT SWIM MEETS

TYPES OF SWIM MEET

SWIM MEET STRUCTURES

**Home Time Trials, Dual, or Tri Meets**

Great for a swimmers first meet and recommended for all swimmers.

**Away Dual or Tri Meets**

Great for a swimmer’s second or third meet and recommended for all swimmers.

**Closed YMCA Invite Meets**

Great for experienced swimmer’s and recommended for all swimmers.

**USA Invite Meets**

Great for experienced swimmers recommended for all swimmers except Little Ripples.

**Championship Format Meets**

Great for veteran swimmer’s and recommended for all Purple, Black and Senior State level swimmers who qualify. These meets usually have time standards that are required to participate in the meet, which will be posted online and in the pool hallway. 10 and over swimmers typically have prelims and finals for most events, meaning they could swim in the morning and the evening of the same day for that event.

SWIM MEET PROGRESSIONS

**C Swim Meets** are used primarily as training to continue to develop the swimmers for better technique and speed. They are a great way to practice the skills swimmers are learning.

The focus is on how they will improve from the meet and swimming at meets without recovering from training allows for faster swims at their last meets of the season.

**B Swim Meets** are used as training to continue developing the swimmers for better technique and speed but also to get time improvements for personal goals and achieving time standards. These meets are important to attend for experienced swimmers who are trying to qualify for Championship meets like Y State.

**A Swim Meets** are what swimmers prepare for to get their best performances of the season and are typically limited to one or two meets near the end of each season.

* Districts is our primary A swim meet for our swimmers who are not qualified for Y State in multiple events.
* Y State is our primary A swim meet for swimmers who qualify. It is our most important championship meet for our team to strive to perform our best at. Winter Y State does require 3 Y meets to be eligible and 2 for swimmers who participate on their HS swim team. Please make this meet a priority and be available to attend.

SWIM MEET VOLUNTEERS

**SWIM MEET VOLUNTEERS**

**Good Newer Swim Family roles:**

* **Timers:** Each lane will have two timers to record each swimmer's time. This job begins with a timers meeting about 15 minutes prior to the start of the meet. This is easy once you try it.
* **Marshalls:** The Marshalls see that safe sport and good etiquette is being followed and that parents and swimmers are only in the areas designated for them to be in. They will be stationed at area access points or make rounds through locker rooms and restricted areas.
* **Concessions:** Concessions are sold by parents.
* **Clean Up:** After each meet the timing system, bleachers, chairs, tables, and computer equipment has to be organized and put away. Trash will be cleaned up as well as any other tasks to leave the facility how we found it.
* **Set Up:** Arrive about an hour before warm ups to set up the bleachers, chairs, tables and timing system. We will limit how many new parents volunteer for this role at a time.

**Good Veteran Swim Family roles:**

* **Welcome table:** You need to be at the meet early and will check in volunteers and sell spirit wear.
* **Announcer:** The announcer is on deck and announces each event in the meet.
* **Awards:** This job involves sorting and labeling ribbons that are being presented to swimmers and ends when the final award has been processed. Aqua Force ribbons get filed in the family folders.
* **Bullpen:** The Bullpen organizes swimmers before each event, usually 10 & unders or 8 & unders.
* **Electronic Timing System:** This involves running the timing system, so it requires you to be on the deck for the duration of the meet.
* **Runners:** Runners collect the time cards from each lane and give them to the computer scoring table. Runners will also take results from the table and post them in the hallway for parents and swimmers to see, hand out water and do misc. tasks. Athletic shoes are recommended.
* **Hospitality:** At our larger meets volunteers staff the coaches and officials hospitality room. This includes serving, cleaning up, and possibility picking up food.
* **Officials:** Our officials are responsible for running the meet. We are always looking for new officials and you do not need any prior swim knowledge, as you will learn it all in the officials’ training.

PRACTICE GROUP INFORMATIO

AQUA FORCE POLICIES

TEAM CHARACTER CONTRACT

All parents and swimmers are required to read the Aqua Force Swim Team Character contract and sign in the registration packet that you agree to its policies.

USA SWIMMING SAFE SPORT/MAAPP

All parents are required to read the Fox Valley Family YMCA Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, MAAPP, and sign in the registration packet that you agree to its policies.

FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA POLICIES

* Children under 12 years old must be accompanied by an adult at least 16 years of age or with a coach while swimming. They will not be able to swim before or after practices unless the adult is on the pool deck with them.
* Unattended children must be in Kid Zone
* Do not use the pool door except in emergencies or when the pool is being used for meets or special events.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

If an incident occurs where a swimmer or parent conducts himself/herself in such a manner which jeopardizes their safety or the safety of others, the following steps will be taken:

* Warning: Depending on the nature of the incident, the swimmer may be given up to 3 warnings within one day. If the behavior persists, a violation will occur.
* First Violation: The swimmer may be removed from a portion of the practice/meet/event and a coach will address the issue directly with the swimmer. Parents will be notified.
* Second Violation: The swimmer may be suspended from the team for a portion of the season. A coach will address and document the issue directly with the swimmer. Parents will be notified.
* Third Violation: The swimmer will be dismissed from the team till given permission to rejoin.

A swimmer who acts in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner or interferes with the competition at a swim meet may be disqualified by the officials.

PRACTICE GROUP INFORMATIO

SR STATE & BLACK ATTENDANCE

Our top practice groups will have an attendance requirement of 3 practices a week. Each day at a swim meet will count toward a practice. Swimmers that go two weeks without meeting the attendance requirement will have to swim in the previous practice group, Purple or Senior, meeting 3 practices a week till they are ready to move back up. Sr State swimmers will have the option of swimming at 3:30p or 6:30p M-Th giving busy High School swimmers the flexibility for better time management. If there are several swimmers needing an extra practice and there is not a swim meet, an occasional Sunday make up practice will be scheduled to accommodate them.

TRAINING CYCLES & PROGRESSION

Aqua Force uses training cycles to develop technique and increase the strength and endurance of the swimmers. Typically every 4th week will be a technique review and physical recovery week. These recovery weeks are lined up with **A** or **B** meets to promote time drops. Taking days off scheduled practices to rest for meets is not necessary. The recovery weeks will provide extra rest for meets as needed. Swimmers who have 80% or higher attendance for two consecutive training cycles often get personal best times in most of their events at their next **A** or **B** meet. Friday and Saturday practices are an important part of training and should be attended regularly for those who are training to attend Y State.

DRYLAND TRAINING

Consistent dryland training will develop increased mobility and stability, reducing long term risk of injury. As swimmers progress to more advanced dryland workouts they will develop strength and speed to increase their power. These are important components of developing competitive swimmers who stay healthy and become highly competitive.

NUTRITION

A healthy well rounded diet is an essential part of the development of all growing kids & adolescents but even more important for developing athletes. 3 nourishing meals with high protein breakfasts, high carb lunches, well-rounded dinners and 2-3 healthy snacks each day will help provide them with the proper balance of nutrition. Please attend our nutrition clinic in the fall.

TRAINING PROGRESSION