

Birmingham Blue Dolphins

**Swim Team Handbook
2014-2015**

Birmingham Family YMCA
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Birmingham, MI 48009

Table of Contents

	Page
<u>The YMCA Philosophy of Competitive Swimming</u>	3
<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Affiliations</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>BBD’s Philosophy, Mission and Primary Objectives</u>	4
<u>Philosophy</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Mission Statement</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Objectives</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Responsibilities</u>	5
<u>Coaching Staff</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Swimmers</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Parents</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Financial Requirements</u>	7
<u>Practice Philosophy and Policies</u>	8
<u>BBD Boosters Organization Descriptions</u>	9
<u>Swim Meet Information for the Novice</u>	10
<u>Meet Requirements</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Types of Swim Meets</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Swim Meet Entries</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Proof of Entry Times</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Swim Meet Procedures</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Parents</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Swimmers</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Swim Terminology</u>	21

The YMCA Philosophy of Competitive Swimming

The YMCA involvement in sports has been one means by which the organization had inculcated ideals, values, and behavior based upon its purposes and goals. Sport in the YMCA has never been an end in itself, but rather a vehicle for achieving much more global purposes.

Concern for sports involvement is at the broad participation level, rather than focusing on the elite athlete. Teaching the fundamental skills, encouraging lifetime involvement in physical activity, strengthening the values of fitness, health, self respect, and respect for others are central themes in the YMCA sports philosophy.

The essential elements of the YMCA competitive aquatic philosophy are:

- ✓ To support and instruct every swimmer on the team
- ✓ To work on basic skills and teach good physical habits
- ✓ To teach fair play and mutual respect
- ✓ To help swimmers set and evaluate individual and team goals
- ✓ To foster a winning attitude, in both victory and defeat
- ✓ To encourage lifetime involvement in sports and physical activity
- ✓ To work the whole person---body, mind and spirit

EVERYBODY SWIMS, EVERYBODY WINS!

Introduction

Welcome to Birmingham Blue Dolphin (BBD) swimming! Throughout the season you may have questions about certain aspects of our program. This guide is meant as an introduction to BBD, as well as the sport of competitive swimming. As a YMCA team and a USA-S (United States Swimming) team, we are a fairly large and complex organization. Please browse through this information and direct your questions to willing members of the coaching staff, age group parents, and/or board members. Good luck!

Affiliations

BBD swimmers will participate both as YMCA swimmers, as well as in Michigan Swimming. Michigan Swimming (MS) is the Local Swim Committee for United States of America Swimming (USA-S). USS is a national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. In order to participate in our program, swimmers **must** join both organizations. A YMCA membership is obtained at the YMCA. A USS membership is obtained through the Team by reimbursement of a non-refundable **\$63 fee**, payable upon registration.

BBD's Philosophy, Mission and Primary Objectives

Philosophy

The coaching staff and BBD Parents Board wholeheartedly support the guidelines set forth in the YMCA competitive swimming philosophy. Through appropriate instruction, training, and guidance we are dedicated to developing a program full of happy, healthy, accomplished swimmers.

Mission Statement

Our purpose is to provide a healthy and age-appropriate program for swimmers from novice to national level.

Objectives

- ✓ To teach and refine the four competitive strokes in all of the distances appropriate to an age group.
- ✓ To provide a variety of opportunities to train, compete, and socialize under the guidance of a qualified, caring, professional coaching staff and supportive parents.
- ✓ To show that we value good sportsmanship and a healthy winning attitude above everything.
- ✓ To develop and set both individual and team goals and to cultivate strategies for attaining them.

Responsibilities

Coaching Staff

The coaching staff is primarily responsible for:

- Running practice
- Setting and pursuing individual and team goals by working closely with the swimmers
- Setting policies, establishing practice, and meet schedules
- Writing dual meet lineups, championship meet lineups, and all relays
- Working in cooperation with the BBD Parents Board in promoting and developing the team

Swimmers

Each swimmer is responsible for:

- Attending practice **regularly**
- Communicating effectively with the coaching staff
- Supporting his/her teammates
- Demonstrating good sportsmanship at all times
- Appreciated his/her parents
- Attending all meets in which he/she has been entered
- Wearing a BBD team suit and cap at all meets
- Attending the championship meet for which he/she qualifies
- Participating in fundraisers
- Remembering to **HAVE FUN** with his/her entire swimming experience

Parents

All parents are responsible for:

- Transporting swimmers on a **regular basis** to swim practice in a **timely** manner, as well as escorting them to and from the building
- Understanding, supporting and honoring the coaching staff's policy of **no parental observation of swim practices**
- Supporting the team as a whole through volunteer time
- Visiting and reading the BBD website regularly to keep up to date with information from the coaches and board members, scheduling, events and meets
- Signing your swimmer up for swim meets
- Making sure all of your swimmers BBD commitments are met
- Fulfilling all financial obligations related to the team in a timely manner
- Keeping communication with the coaching staff frequent and open
- Letting the coaching staff do the coaching
- **Being supportive and loving towards your swimmer(s) at all times and encouraging them to do their best, while having fun**

Financial Requirements

In order to compete, a YMCA swimmer **must** have a current, annual YMCA membership. Different memberships are available, including family memberships. The fees for these memberships are separate from the team fees associated with BBD. Various methods of payment are available. The BBD team fee primarily covers salaries of the coaching staff and outside pool facility rental. It also helps to offset the costs incurred relating to the website, yearbook and administrative assistance.

To operate successfully, BBD must gather funds from other sources as well. Dual meets, YMCA/USA-S invitational and championship meets and Booster donations help to support the program. Parent participation is vital to the success of each of these avenues. Swimmers qualifying for our National Team also participate in fundraising activities coordinated by a parent volunteer. In addition, an Activity Fee is required from each swimmer upon registration to defray the cost of snacks and various activities organized and implemented by the age group parents.

This additional income is often used to supplement equipment needs (computer, pool, practice aids, etc.). A portion of these funds also provides for incentives for the swimmers and coaching staff, social events and defraying a portion of costs related to the National Team.

A sizable donation to the YMCA's Partners Campaign (to be used at the Birmingham Family YMCA) is also made through these funds.

As you can see, the expenses of running a large, successful program are extensive and varied. Some additional expenses you can expect to incur during the season will include: competitive swimsuits (swimmers are **required** to purchase a BBD team suit, which should be reserved for competition using separate suits for practice), swim goggles (buy MANY pairs), swim caps (only swim caps with the BBD logo may be worn during competition), swim fins for ages 9 to 12, miscellaneous travel expenses, and entry fees for USA-S meets and YMCA invitational meets.

Practice Philosophy and Policies

Our swimmers practice within their own YMCA age group, regardless of ability, to allow for social comfort. Within each practice, swimmers can be grouped according to ability. As the season progresses and practice objectives change, these groups may be altered. Flexibility and consistency among the coaching staff allows for an enjoyable, effective environment. During the season the swimmers will work with all members of our coaching staff.

As goals and objectives change throughout the season, the practice structure will adapt as well. The following represents the structure of a typical practice:

Dryland Exercises: Combines stretching and flexibility exercises with strength-building routines. Also provides for a bit of socializing among swimmers and coaching staff – both are important aspects of our program.

Warm-up: Usually a fairly long, easy swim, designed to warm up the swimmers' muscles (and minds) in preparation for more demanding sets. Within the warm-up, swimmers are given a drill, or activity to complete. Stroke drills, concentration on turns, breathing patterns, *etc.* are some examples.

Stroke Work/Drills: A focus for each and every practice we run. Proper technique is the basis for efficient, fast swimming. The coaching staff designs and explains drills that isolate and exaggerate certain aspects of the various competitive strokes. This is the time where conscientious swimmers can make great strides towards future success.

Work Phase: Depending upon the time of the season, sets will isolate a variety of physiological systems (aerobic, anaerobic, *etc.*). The sets are often run on timed intervals, integrating the use of a pace clock.

Warmdown: An easy swim (or set of swims) that assist in warming down the athletes' muscles (and minds). This facilitates the removal of lactic acid building up in the muscles, aiding in recovery.

BBD BOOSTER ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTIONS

The BBD Parents Board is comprised of 18 members, including the Head Coach and **eight** Members at Large. All BBD Parents Board meetings are open to parents and occur monthly throughout the year. The BBD Parents Board is directly responsible for carrying out the day-to-day activities associated with operating the Team, as well as long-term planning. All board members serve in a volunteer capacity. The current Board members are listed on the BBD website. The various positions are as follows:

President: Oversees the smooth running of the BBD Parents Board and works closely with the coaching staff and the YMCA. This is a one-year, elected position.

Vice President: Oversees committees assigned and assists the President. This is an elected position that runs for two years, one as Vice President, the following year as President.

Secretary: Takes the minutes of all BBD Parents Board meetings and attends to any necessary correspondence. This is a two-year elected position.

Treasurer: Responsible for keeping the financial records of the team, collecting and disbursing team money and preparing the yearly budget. This is a two-year elected position.

Past President: The outgoing President remains on the BBD Parents Board for one additional year to provide continuity and valuable input.

Head Coach: Reports to the BBD Parents Board regarding training of swimmers and coaching staff, makes requests and recommendations regarding the swimmers, equipment needs, policies, *etc.*

YMCA Senior Program Director: Oversees all programs conducted at the Birmingham Family YMCA as well as acting as a liaison between the YMCA and the BBD Parent Board.

YMCA Executive Director: Administrator of the Birmingham Family YMCA.

YMCA Liaison: Acts as a liaison between the Birmingham Family YMCA Board and the BBD Parents Board. Represents BBD at Birmingham Family YMCA Board meetings.

Members at Large: Consists of **eight** appointed parents of BBD swimmers. Members at Large provide balance among the BBD Parents Board, serve on committees and serve as liaisons between parents of swimmers and the BBD Parents Board.

Meet Manager(s): Any person (or persons) responsible for coordinating and facilitating a team-sponsored meet. This is a volunteer position.

In addition to BBD Parents Board members, BBD consists of many committees that oversee various aspects of running the Team. The current committee heads are listed on the BBD website.

Accommodations: Secures air fares and blocks of hotel rooms for meets located out of town.

Age Group: A group of parents (typically two or three assigned per age group) responsible for initiating telephone fanouts, organizing activities and occasionally providing snacks for the swimmers in each age group.

Awards: Obtains all necessary ribbons to be awarded to the swimmers attending swim meets hosted by BBD. Also has possession of ribbons/awards unclaimed by BBD swimmers at any of the swim meets in which the Team participates.

Banquets: Secures facilities and dates for either of the Team's two end-of-the-year banquets (8 and under, 9 and up).

Computers: Responsible for data entry, setup and operation of the computer system at all swim meets hosted by BBD.

Concessions: Responsible for organizing and conducting the concession stands at all swim meets hosted by BBD.

Entries: Compiles and submits the Team's entries for all meets.

Head Official: A BBD parent who is a certified YMCA Level II official, responsible for securing officials from BBD, as well as other teams at times, to provide officiating at swim meets. May act as head official at a swim meet.

Marshalling: Responsible for organizing and implementing the marshalling function at all swim meets hosted by the BBD.

Merchandise: Orders and sells BBD t-shirts, sweats, swim bags, parkas, etc. at Team functions.

Publicity: Acts as a liaison between BBD and local media. Writes and/or submits pertinent information (such as meet results) to the media.

Record Board: Keeps track of BBD records and updates the record board, as necessary, located in the lobby above the stairway leading to the lower level at the Birmingham Family YMCA.

Scoring: A certified Level I Official, responsible for performing the scorekeeping function at swim meets hosted by BBD (primarily dual meets, as larger meets are scored by computer).

Swimsuits/Caps: Orders and distributed BBD swimsuits and swim caps. Swim caps are available for purchase on a year-round basis, swimsuits are typically ordered at the organizational meetings at the start of the winter swim season.

USA-S Registration: Compiles and submits registration of BBD's swimmers to United States swimming.

USA-S Representative: Acts as a liaison between BBD and USA-S. Represents BBD at USA-S/MS meetings.

YMCA National Team: Makes travel and accommodation arrangements for the Birmingham YMCA National Team. Coordinates BBD parent volunteers while at the national meet, as well as organizing fundraisers throughout the season.

Zone Dinner: Organizes and hosts a dinner for all BBD swimmers who qualify to attend the YMCA Zone Meet.

Age Group Parents

Each age group is assigned two or three parents to occasionally provide snacks and organize activities for that group of swimmers usually at the conclusion of a practice. These gatherings act as an incentive and give the swimmers valuable time to socialize and interact after a demanding workout. Our age group parents are enthusiastic and have been known to be very creative! In addition, age group parents initiate a telephone fan out or e-mail program that enables communication of important (and very often last-minute) information to you on short notice. Feel free to call them with questions or suggestions. This year's volunteers are listed on the website.

Swim Team Information for the Novice

MEET REQUIREMENTS

Each swimmer on the Team is **required** to compete in at least **three** YMCA meets (dual or invitational) per season. However, swimmers are **strongly** encouraged to compete in an additional three meets (either YMCA or USA-S) for a total of at least six meets per season, **before** the championship season.

TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

Mini Meets: These meets are offered for the benefit of swimmers aged eight years or younger. Each swimmer competes only against children of the same age.

A, B, C Meets: Participation is limited to swimmers with corresponding time achievements. Often meets are offered with a format that combines only one or two of the various time standards (i.e. A-B Meets or B-C Meets). A swimmer with a few “C” times and a few “B” times would be able to swim many events at a B-C Meet. “A” , “B” and “C” times for each age group may be located on the goal sheet provided to each swimmer by the Team at the onset of each winter swim season.

Swim-Your-Own-Age Meets: Swimmers compete only against swimmers the same age.

Invitationals: As the name suggests, only certain teams are “invited” to attend, at the discretion of the host team.

Dual Meets: “Dual” meaning two teams: one team competing against another. The team that accumulates the highest number of points wins the competition.

Championship Meets: ALL SWIMMERS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ALL CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS FOR WHICH THEY QUALIFY! There are a series of YMCA championship meets **and** a series of USA-S championship meets. Each is described in greater detail below.

YMCA SWIM MEETS

Important Note Regarding Age Determination: Determination of a swimmer’s age for a particular swim season, with respect to YMCA age group swimming, is that swimmer’s age as of December 1st. In other words, when a swimmer experiences a birthday, that swimmer is still required to swim in whichever age group they were categorized at the outset of that season based upon the December 1st date guideline mentioned above. They do not “age up” on their actual birth date for any YMCA competition.

YMCA Dual Meet: A competitive, scored swim meet between two YMCA teams. As is the case in other sporting events, the team earning the greatest number of points becomes the victor. There are no qualifying times for these types of meets. Competition is designed to serve as a learning experience and to serve as a measure of improvement for swimmers. As a YMCA team, BBD is required to participate in several YMCA dual meets each season. Typically, YMCA dual meets are conducted in one afternoon. Registration for those swim meets occurs one to two weeks prior to the Meet. Registration procedures and details regarding the meet are made available in the weekly BBD Newsletter.

YMCA Invitationals: These meets are sponsored by a local YMCA. Typically, there are no minimum time standard requirements (or “time cutoffs”) for entry.

YMCA 8 & Under State Meet: This meet is the **required** championship meet for all of BBD’s 8 & under swimmers. There are no qualifying times for this meet and it is a wonderful experience for both new and old swimmers alike. BBD has participated in this meet since its inception. Swimmers that have participated in BBD’s Pre-Team Program are invited to enter.

YMCA Cluster Championship: Attendance at this Meet is strongly encouraged by the Head Coach. This is the only opportunity for our entire Team (all ages and all ability levels) to swim together as a team. Teams from the YMCA’s Michigan “Cluster” (Birmingham, Royal Oak, Rochester, Livonia, Farmington, Flint, and Grand Rapids Area, to name a few) compete for the Michigan Cluster title. There are no qualifying times for this meet. In order to participate, swimmers **must** have swum in **three** YMCA dual or invitational meets during the season. ***This requirement is also essential in order to compete in any of the following meets:***

YMCA State Championship: *All swimmers who attain qualifying times are required to compete in this championship meet!* As the title suggests, this meet involves every YMCA team with qualifying swimmers in the state. One of our primary team goals is to achieve an outstanding performance at this meet.

YMCA Zone Championship: *All swimmers who attain qualifying times are required to compete in this championship meet!* Teams from the YMCA’s “Great Lakes Zone” (Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia) compete for the Great Lakes Zone title. Time standards (qualifying times) for the Zone Meet are determined by the YMCA Zone Committee. BBD has traditionally performed extremely well at this very competitive meet.

YMCA Nationals: *All swimmers who attain qualifying times are required to compete in this elite championship meet!* As the title suggests, this meet involves every YMCA team in the nation that has swimmers who have qualified. This meet represents the ultimate swimming experience for YMCA swimmers and features the highest level of competition available within the nationwide YMCA organization. The “best of the best” are pitted against one another in this exclusive four-day meet.

The qualifying times are tough, as is the competition. “Short course” (25-yard pool) national championships occur in the spring and “long course” (50-meter pool) championships take place in the summer.

USA-S SWIM MEETS

Important Note Regarding Age Determination: There is no date cutoff that determines a swimmer’s age for a particular swim season (as is the case with the YMCA policy). A swimmer’s age with respect to USA-S meets is their actual age on the first day of a swim meet. In other words, when a swimmer experiences a birthday, that swimmer is now required to swim in that age group. They must “age up” on their actual birthday – even if it occurs mid-season.

12 & Under State Championships: *All 12 & Under swimmers with a valid USA-S membership who attain qualifying times are required to compete in this championship meet!* As the title suggests, this meet involves competition between 12 & Under swimmers from every USA-S team in the State that has swimmers who have qualified. This is a three-day swim meet, following a “prelim/final” format. Time standards (qualifying times) for this meet correspond to the Michigan Swimming “AA” times that appear in the Michigan Swimming Swim Guide. This publication is available online from the Michigan Swimming website.

13 & Above State Championship: *All swimmers aged 13 and older with a valid USA-S membership who attain qualifying times are required to compete in this championship meet provided that the date of the meet does not conflict with the YMCA Zone Meet!* As the title suggests, this meet involves competition between swimmers aged 13 & above from every USA-S team in the State that has swimmers who have qualified. This is a three-day swim meet, following a “prelim/final” format. Qualifying times for this meet correspond to the Michigan Swimming “AA” times that appear in the Michigan Swimming Swim Guide. This publication is available online from the Michigan Swimming website.

Junior and Senior Nationals. *All swimmers with a valid USA-S membership who attain qualifying times are required to compete in these prestigious championship meets!* As the title suggests, this meet involves competition between the nation’s fastest and most talented swimmers. Qualifying times are published annually by United States Swimming of America. BBD has been extremely proud to have sent several talented swimmers to each of these meets in past years.

Swim Meet Entries

INTRODUCTION

Parents are responsible for entering their children in meets. Coaches do not prepare individual entries, although they are happy to answer questions about what events you should choose.

Entering a meet is done by reviewing the information on upcoming meets available on the BBD website and selecting the events you wish to enter using the online meet entry process. The meet Entry Chair then gathers all the entries from all the swimmers, provides the compiled entries to the coaching staff for preparation of relay entries and sends the entire BBD team entry to the club hosting the meet. Because the host team has a deadline for accepting entries, BBD needs to impose a deadline for collection of our entries. Due to the amount of work which must be done after we collect the individual entries and the short window we have to complete this work to get the entire team entry in before our deadline, the BBD entry deadline is strictly enforced.

The process is simple and, it is even simpler now that we have adopted an on line entry system. The number one thing parents can do to make this process work is to visit the website regularly and keep track of upcoming entry deadlines.

THE ENTRY PROCESS

The Meet Packet

For each meet on the schedule we will post a “Meet Packet” on the BBD website. The Meet Packet will be posted on the Schedule and Entries page. The Meet Packet has details regarding the meet such as where and when it will be held, warm up and meet start times, and a list of events along with any other pertinent information. The Meet Packet will also identify and provide contact information for the particular meet entry chair who will be handling the entries for that meet. The Meet Packet will also set forth, in bold letters, the entry deadline.

Host clubs generally do not provide us with this information until fairly close to the meet. We post our packet as soon as we receive it but generally there will only be a 2 week window from when it is first posted until the entry deadline. (This is why it is important to check the website regularly).

Preparing Your Entry

Review the packet and make sure there are no qualifying times or other criteria which would make your swimmer ineligible for the meet. (The vast majority of our meets are open to everyone). Once you have determined you want to attend a particular meet and that you are eligible to swim in that meet, select the events you

wish to enter. (Again, make sure you meet the qualifying time, if any, for each event.)

Note that you do NOT enter relay events. The coaches prepare all relay entries.

Submitting Your Entry On-Line

For the 2014-2015 season we will be using an on line entry and payment system.

- The entry website will be accessible from a link on the BBD website.
- After you are at the website, log in using the user name and password you will be provided. You will have a separate log in account for each child in your family.
- Once you log in, you will have access to a list of meets for which we are currently accepting entries.
- Select the meet you wish to enter.
- You will then see a list of events for your child.
- Select the events you wish to enter by checking the box next to the event.
- You may be required to enter an entry time for your child. Please do not submit an entry without a time. Even an educated guess is better than no time. Best times for BBD swimmers are available on the BBD website.
- After you have completed your selection of events and entered your seed times, click on the submit button.
- You will pay for your meet with a credit card or online check during the meet entry process.
- You will receive an email confirming your entry. Please review it for any errors you may have made.
- After the deadline, the team entries will be posted on the BBD website. Please review these entries to make sure you are entered in the correct events. While this system is basically foolproof, it is possible to enter yourself in the wrong meet if we are accepting entries for 2 or more meets simultaneously so please check your entries.

IN GENERAL

Please Note: *There are times when entry deadlines are very close to the date the swim meet information is published online. It is imperative that one pay very close attention to these deadlines!* Please be prompt in submitting entries, as due to the size of BBD, this is a monumental task for the entry chairpersons! When possible, meet entries that have been submitted to the host club by the BBD entry chairpersons are posted on the website. *It is highly recommended that these posted entries be reviewed prior to attending the meet to ensure accuracy and to allow for any corrections to be made prior to the meet.* Direct any questions or concerns to the appropriate entry chairperson. Please remember that our meet entry chairpersons are volunteers. Kindly treat them with respect, and be respectful of their time.

Meet fees vary and are usually charged on a “per event” basis, often with a small surcharge for USA-S meets in order to assist in covering the cost of championship swim meets. Fees for each meet are listed on the website along with all other pertinent information regarding that particular swim meet.

PROOF OF ENTRY TIMES

In order for a swimmer to be entered in a championship meet, the swimmer must have swum a time that is equal to or faster than the entry time cuts that have been established for the championship swim meet (USA-S State Meets, YMCA State Meet, YMCA Zone Meet, and YMCA National Meet) *and be able to produce written PROOF (attached to the BBD entry form) of when and where the time was achieved.* An acceptable proof of time consists of a copy of the official meet results (i.e. signed by the meet official). The BBD proofs chair has all of the official meet results from any swim meet (YMCA and USA-S) that was attended by BBD as a team. However, *any times achieved by a swimmer at any swim meet other than that attended by BBD as a team (i.e. middle school, high school, USA-S), the swimmer is responsible for obtaining a copy of the official meet results and providing them to the BBD Proofs Chair in order to provide acceptable proof of entry time. These times are eligible for YMCA championship meets.* It is highly recommended that obtaining a copy of the official meet results be accomplished as soon after the meet has occurred as possible. Sometimes, copies of the official meet results from swim meets can be purchased from the host team for a nominal fee. The more time that passes, the less likely it will be to obtain a copy of the official meet results. Often official meet results are not retained by teams or coaches. Thus, waiting until the end of winter swim season and the eve of a championship swim meet to seek a copy of official meet results often proves unsuccessful. Results from Michigan USA-S swim meets can possibly be obtained by the BBD proofs chair from the Michigan Swimming website. However, *the swimmer is responsible for informing the BBD proofs chair which times cuts were achieved at which meet.*

Please note that according to United States of America Swimming rules, entry times must be **exact** times achieved in either an individual event or as the lead-off swimmer in a relay. Relay splits other than that for the lead-off swimmer in a relay are **not** expectable. For the most part, qualifying entry times for championship meets must be achieved by a swimmer in the current swim season. A few times for championship meets must be achieved by a swimmer in the current swim season. A few exceptions are: YMCA Zone Meet and YMCA Nationals, which will allow qualifying times achieved at the prior year's championship meet. USA-S championship meets typically accept qualifying times that were achieved at any officially sanctioned Michigan swim meet (USA-S, YMCA Invitational, Zone, YMCA National, High School Leagues, and High School State Meet) that occurred at any time within the prior year from the date of the championship meet. Please note that times achieved at YMCA, Middle School & High School **dual** meets are not eligible for USA-S championship meets. Also note that summer league swim meets (NSSL, SISCA, MICA) are not officially sanctioned Michigan swim meets and, therefore, times achieved in these venues are ineligible.

Assembling the proof book for championship meets is monumental undertaking, especially for a team of BBD (300 + swimmers). **PLEASE NOTE: *If the BBD Proofs Chair is not in possession of written proof of a swimmer's entry time at the time the team's entry is due, the swimmer will NOT be entered in the championship meet.*** If you are in doubt as to whether, or not, the BBD Proofs Chair is in possession of written proof of a swimmer's entry time it is recommended that you contact him/her to verify that you have the same times **BEFORE** the team's entry is due.

Fines are incurred for entry times that are not provable and sometimes penalties are levied against the team. ***Fines are the responsibility of the swimmer; they must be paid immediately on site, and will not be paid by BBD.***

Recommended Swim Meet Procedures

PARENTS

Arrival: Allow ample time for travel to ensure that swimmer(s) report promptly *on the pool deck* for proper check in and warm up.

Relays are often designed based upon which swimmers are present at the time of warm-up. It is **extremely** difficult and frustrating for the coaching staff to incorporate swimmers who arrive late into the completed relay lineup.

Purchase a meet program and thoroughly review it: Most swim meets have printed programs available for a small fee. (An exception to this is YMCA Dual Meets.) Meet programs (sometimes referred to as “Heat Sheets”) allow you to ensure that your swimmer has been entered properly in all events selected on his/her entry form. For new or younger swimmers please write the event number, heat and lane on their hand. The program is also a valuable tool for assistance in located the heat and lane in which your swimmer will be swimming, as well as keeping track of teammates.

If your swimmer has not been entered correctly, contact the coaching staff. Typically, this does not present a problem, provided the error is caught before the start of the swim meet. At times errors are made by BBD, by the host club, or by the parent of the swimmer on the meet entry form. Sometimes a swimmer’s time will have been improved since the meet entry form was submitted, therefore making that swimmer ineligible to compete in the event in which he or she was originally entered. For example, a swimmer who has recently attained a “B” time can no longer compete in that particular “C” event. “A”, “B”, and “C” times for each age group may be located on the Goal Sheet provided each swimmer by BBD at the onset of each winter swim season.

Please Note: *The details of entering combination (A/B/C) swim meets and keeping track of “all those times” can be tricky. Swimmers with all “A” times and one or two “B” times can sometimes enter events at an “A” swim meet. It is important to carefully check the swimmer’s best time against the “A” and “B” cutoff times indicated on the Goal Sheet. Check with the coaching staff if you have any questions.*

Uniform: All BBD swimmers are **required** to wear the team swimsuit and team cap when representing BBD in competition.

Jewelry: Ensure that your swimmer has **removed any and all jewelry** from their person. This is a safety issue and could result in the swimmer’s disqualification according to the rules!

Marshalling: Upon arrival, familiarize yourself and your swimmer with the marshalling area procedures. This will ensure that no swimmer misses an event. Make certain that your swimmer reports to marshalling on time.

Scratching: Removing a swimmer from an event is allowable **only with permission from the coaching staff.**

Departure: *Never* allow a swimmer to leave a swim meet prematurely. *Always* check with the coaching staff before departing. Most swim meets offer relay events at the conclusion of the individual events (i.e. at the end of the meet). Please understand that it can be extremely upsetting to the remaining three members of a relay team to be scratched from competition because of a teammate's premature departure. *Please be considerate of your BBD teammates!*

OBSERVE, ENJOY, APPLAUD, SUPPORT AND, ABOVE ALL, NEVER CRITICIZE YOUR SWIMMER'S EFFORTS—it's not as easy as it looks!

Swimmers

Arrival: It is extremely important that you promptly arrive on the pool deck for proper check in and warm-up.

Check-in: *Immediately* check in with the coaching staff in attendance. Relays are often designed based upon which swimmers are present at the time of warm-up. It is *extremely* difficult and frustrating for the coaching staff to incorporate swimmers who arrive late into the completed relay lineup.

Scratching: Removing yourself from an event ("scratching") is allowed *only with permission from the coaching staff.*

Post Swim: Immediately after each of your swims, speak with a member of the coaching staff.

Departure: When you have completed your individual events, notify the coaching staff before you leave. Most swim meets offer relay events at the conclusion of the individual events (i.e. at the end of the meet). Please understand that it can be extremely upsetting to the remaining three members of a relay team to be scratched from competition because of a teammate's premature departure. *Please be considerate of your BBD teammates!*

SWIM FAST AND HAVE FUN!

Swim Terminology

Age Group Swimming: The program through which USA-S provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are: 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and 15-18. Local meets may also include events for 8 & Unders.

Backstroke: The name of a swimming stroke executed on the back consisting of alternating circular arm pulls and a flutter kick.

Backstroke Flags: A string of pennants stretched over the pool so that when performing the backstroke, swimmers will know how far away the wall is in order to successfully execute their turns and finishes.

Block: The starting platform used at the commencement of a race in competition.

Breaststroke: The name of the swimming stroke executed in a prone position by extending both arms in front of the head beneath the water surface while drawing the knees forward and outward and then sweeping the arms back with palms out while kicking outward and backward. To be performed legally, the arms must remain above the waist and there can be no flutter in the kick. The kick appears easy, but is difficult for young swimmers to master.

Bulkhead: An upright removable partition designed to divide a pool into different sized pools (or “courses”), such as dividing one 50-meter pool into two 25-yard pools.

Butterfly: The name of the swimming stroke executed in a prone position by simultaneously moving both arms in a circular motion above the water surface while kicking the legs up and down simultaneously (i.e. a dolphin like kick). This stroke requires a great deal of proper timing and strength. To be performed legally, both arms **must** go above the water at the same time and both legs (with the angles held together) **must** kick together.

Circle Seeding: A method of “seeding” swimmers in a swimming event that enables the fastest swimmers entered in that event to compete in the center lanes in order to experience less resistance (drag) in the water. Entrants in the event with the fastest times are placed in the two center lanes of each heat; entrants in the event with the next fastest times are then placed in the two outside adjacent lanes of the center lanes of each heat, etc. This seeding method is most often utilized in championship meets with a prelim/final format.

Coach: A person who instructs or trains athletes in the fundamentals of a competitive sport and directs them strategy.

Code of Conduct: An agreement signed by a swimmer prior to travel, stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

Crawl: The name of a competitive swimming stroke consisting of alternating overarm strokes and a flutter kick performed while in the prone position on one's stomach.

Cut: Slang terminology describing a qualifying time. It is a time standard necessary to enter a particular swim meet or event.

Deck Entry: As the name suggests entry into a swim meet on the pool deck on the day of the meet. Due to paperwork difficulties, this sometimes may mean that the swimmer must swim in the slowest heat and may be ineligible for awards, depending upon the format established prior to the meet.

Deck Seeding: A method of "seeding" swimmers in a swimming event that categorizes swimmers into heats according to each swimmer's best time, from slowest to fastest (i.e. the slowest swimmers compete in the first heat and the fastest swimmers compete in the last heat of the swimming event). As the term suggests, entrants are "reseeded" on the pool deck at the swim meet, if necessary, based upon those entrants who are actually present at the time of the meet in order to eliminate entrants from the heats who are not present.

"Deek" or DQ: Slang terminology describing being disqualified from a swimming event after the race has occurred due to swimming rule violations with regard to such things as the swimmer's start, stroke technique, turn or finish. The time achieved will be considered null and void, just as if the swimmer had never swum the race and no points will be attributed to the Team's score, if the swim meet is being scored. The letters "DQ" will appear, rather than the time achieved, on the official results of the meet. Some rule violations must be seen by two officials in order to declare a "DQ". At the conclusion of the race an Official will take the swimmer aside, inform them of the disqualification, and explain the reason. As difficult as it may sometimes be, this should be viewed as a learning experience. In this instance, please make certain that the swimmer consults a member of the coaching staff present at the swim meet.

Distance: A term used to refer to swim events 400 meters/500 yards or greater in distance.

Drag: Resistance in the water that retards motion.

Drill: A swimming exercise or specific maneuver, sometimes performed in the water, involving a portion of a stroke, used to improve technique.

Dryland Training: Exercise training performed out of the water (i.e. on dry land) that assists in developing strength and endurance to aid and enhance swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics and/or weight training.

Electronic Timing: An electronic timing system existing partially in and partially out of the water utilized to accurately record each swimmer's time for a race. The electronic timing system is used in conjunction with computer software to facilitate the most accurate compilation of the "official results" of the meet (i.e. times and placement for all events swum). Large "touch pads" placed slightly beneath water level register each swimmer's time immediately upon contact with some portion of the swimmer's body at the conclusion of the race. Young swimmers are notorious for not touching the pads hard enough, so often three back-up timers are used to record their times.

False Start: An illegal start at the commencement of a race that occurs when a swimmer is moving, in any way, prior to the sound of the official "start" of the race (signified by the starting gun or the "beep" from the electronic timing system). At a USA-S swim meet, swimmers are allowed only one false start which results in disqualification from the race. At some other swim meets, swimmers are allowed two false starts before disqualification occurs.

Final: The championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight qualifying swimmers (depending on the number of lanes in the pool) from the preliminary meet compete.

Finish: Signified by swimmers touching the wall at the end of a race.

Free or Freestyle: The name of a competitive swimming event in which the competitor is given more latitude than in related events (i.e. the swimmer is "free" to swim a stroke of their choice). However, the term is more commonly used to describe the competitive swimming stroke otherwise known as the (front crawl or "crawl". (See "crawl")

Goal: A specific time achievement a swimmer sets and strives for. It can be short- or long-term.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows and is recirculated through the filtration system.

Heat: A group of swimmers comprising a portion of those swimmers entered in a single event of a swim meet. Often more swimmers enter one event than can compete simultaneously due to pool size limitations. In other words, if twenty swimmers enter Event No. 20 and the venue consists of an eight-lane pool, not all swimmers may race at the same time. The entrants are then divided into "heats" based on speed. Typically, the slowest swimmers will compete in the first heat and the fastest swimmers in the last heat. Times swum from each participant in that event are then analyzed determining placement (finish order) in the event.

Heat Sheet: Slang terminology describing a printed “program” for a swim meet that indicates the type of order of occurrence of each swim event (including the participants’ names and fastest time swum in the past) listed in order of appearance by “heat”. These listings allow participants and spectators to see where each swimmer is “seeded” in an event. Sometimes swimmers’ ages as well as specific lane assignments are included, making it easier to follow the meet and locate certain swimmers. Often other pertinent information is included in the head sheet, such as a listing of the teams participating in the meet, the names of the head coach for each team and number of swimmers entered from each team; qualifying times for various championship meets; and various advertisements.

High School Rules: A set of rules established to govern high school swim meets. These rules are also occasionally utilized to govern swim meets other than high school swim meets. This set of rules differs from USA-S and YMCA rules.

I.M.: Slang terminology describing a swim event called the Individual Medley. Participants in this event are required to swim each of the four swimming strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

Interval: A specific time interval determined by the coaching staff within which swimmers are required to perform specific maneuvers or stroke drills during a training session. Interval training is a technique used to assist in gaining endurance and overall conditioning of the swimmers.

Junior Nationals: National level swim meets held in both short-course and long-course seasons; one of each to be held on the eastern side of the United States and one of each to be held on the western side of the United States, limited to swimmers 18 years of age and under. Qualifying standards must be met, and swimmers are limited to entry in four individual events and three relays.

Lap Counter: A set of plastic display numbers that is used to facilitate in counting the number of a swimmer’s laps swum during a long distance race. Also can be used to refer to the person stationed at the “turn end” of the pool, who is performing the duty of selecting the appropriate plastic display number and submerging it beneath water level in order to communicate with the swimmer and assist in counting the number of laps swum.

Long Course: A swimming pool that is 50 meters in length. USA-S conducts most of its outdoor summer competition in long course pools.

Long Distance: Any freestyle event equal to or greater in distance than 800 meters.

LSC: The abbreviation for Local Swim Committee, which is the USA-S governing body for swimming on a local level.

Marshalling: A process utilized in age group swimming to facilitate the flow of swimmers to the starting blocks promptly and in an orderly fashion in order to keep the meet moving along at a reasonably quick pace. Upon arrival at a swim meet, parents and swimmers should immediately familiarize themselves with both the marshalling area and procedure utilized by the host swim club to inform participants when events are being marshaled. When a swimmer's event number is being "marshaled," the swimmer should go directly to the marshalling area and check in. Swimmers are then organized by lane and heat and escorted to the starting blocks by workers of the host club at the appropriate time.

Middle (Mid) Distance: A term referred to events equal in distance to at least 200 yards/meters but not greater than 500 yards/meters.

National Age Group Time Standards: A set of time standards (qualifying times) derived from previous years' results that are broken down by age and sex, as well as by "B," "A," "AA," "AAA," and "AAAA" divisions. These time designations are national in nature and may be used for entry or qualifying purposes at various swim meets. Many LSCs have their own time standards as well.

National Age Group "Top 16" Times: A set of time standards set for both short and long course swim meets based upon previous years' achievements. Only times meeting these standards may be submitted to USA-S each year for consideration of a national "Top 16" ranking.

Negative Split: A technique or strategy of swimming the second half of a race at a time which is equal to or faster than the time swum in the first half of the race.

Official: A judge who patrols the deck of the pool at a sanctioned swim competition who enforces the set of rules chosen to govern that particular swim meet (i.e. USA-S, high school, etc).

Pace Clock: A large clock containing a large "second" hand and a smaller "minute" hand that is used to check swimmers' pace or maintain time intervals at swim practice (may also be digital in nature).

Prelims: Slang terminology referring to those races, heats or trials in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation final races of an event.

Pre-Seeding: A method of "seeding" swimmers in a swimming event that categorizes swimmers into heats according to each swimmer's best time, from slowest to fastest (i.e. the slowest swimmers compete in the first heat and the fastest swimmers compete in the last heat of the swimming event). This method differs from "deck seeding" in that entrants are **not** "reseeded" on the pool deck at the swim meet, if necessary, based upon those entrants who are actually present at the time of the meet in order to eliminate entrants from the heats who are not present. Those

lands assigned to entrants that are not present will remain empty during the competition.

Program: (See “Heat Sheet”)

Proof of Times: Some championship meets require that entry times for swimmers be proven prior to competition. This is done by providing the officials at the championship meet with a copy of the official meet results (signed by the meet referee) from the meet in which the entry time was attained.

Q-Time: Slang terminology referring to a qualifying time necessary to be achieved in order to enter and compete in a particular event and/or competition.

Relay: A swimming event in which four swimmers compete together as a team achieving one time.

Safety: The condition of being safe and secure from danger, harm or evil. Safety procedures are designated to prevent accidents or injury.

Scratch: To withdraw from a swimming event in a swim competition.

Seed: One’s ranking among a group of competitors in a sporting event (i.e. in one event of a swim meet). There are three different methods utilized: (see “Circle Seeding”, “Deck Seeding” and “Pre-Seeding”).

Senior Swimming: The program through which USA-S provides fair and open competition in National Swimming Championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning and develop a pool of talented athletes for international competition. There are no age restrictions on senior competition.

Shave Down: The act of shaving the body of hair prior to championship competition to reduce resistance (drag) and heighten sensation in the water in an effort to assist in increasing speed.

Short Course: A pool consisting of 25 yards or 25 meters in length. USA-S conducts most of its winter competition in short course pools.

Split: A swimmer’s intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 yards or meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is on record pace according to a goal. Under certain conditions, splits may also be counted as official times. In a relay it is the time swum for one of the four individuals comprising the relay team.

Sprint: A term used to describe short distance events. In training it is to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

Streamline: A position in which the swimmer’s body is as straight and tight as it can possibly be. The arms are positioned about the head with elbows locked, hand over hand.

The head is tucked down between the arms and the legs are held together tightly with knees locked and toes pointed. This technique is used to reduce drag, gaining maximum distance beneath the water during a “start” and/or “push off” from the wall.

Warm Down: A technique constituting the final phase of a training session in which low intensity swimming is used by swimmers in order to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and the gradually reduce heart rate and respiration. It may also be utilized immediately after competing in a race.

Swim Meet: A sporting event organized by a swim team or swimming body in which certain swimming events are designated and established for swimmers to enter and compete. Some swim meets employ the use of qualifying times required for entry. Competition is designed to serve as a learning experience and to serve as a measure of improvement for swimmers. By implementing what has been learned and achieved in practice, swimmers test themselves against the clock in an effort to achieve certain goals established by the swimmer in conjunction with the coaching staff.

Taper: A process utilized in training in which workout intensity is gradually reduced just prior to championship competition to allow the swimmer’s body and mind to rest and recover from rigorous training (facilitating the process of rebuilding and increasing muscle mass).

Touch Pad: A large sensitive board placed slightly beneath water level on the wall at the “finish end” of the pool, which registers each swimmer’s time immediately upon contact with some portion of the swimmer’s body at the conclusion of a race. Touch pads are used in conjunction with computer software to facilitate the most accurate compilation of each swimmer’s “official” time.

USA-S: An abbreviation for United States of America Swimming, Inc., the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming.

USA-S Card: A card issued by United States of America Swimming signifying that a swimmer is a registered member of that organization, indicating the swimmer’s name and official USA-S Number. Swimmers **may** be asked to provide proof of membership at a USA-S swim meet; therefore the card should accompany swimmers to all USA-S swim meets.

USA-S Number: A number unique to every swimmer assigned upon joining the United States Swimming organization, that consists of a combination of letters and numbers (the date of birth [six digits]) followed by the first three letters of the swimmer’s legal first name, the first letter of the swimmer’s middle name, and the first four letters of the swimmer’s last name). For example, Kevin Michael Fogarty, born on May 20th, 1996, would have a USA-S number of 052096KEVMFOGA. If the swimmer’s first or last names do not contain enough letters (or if the swimmer has no middle name) as asterisk will be used to fill in the empty places. If a duplicate number should occur, the computer at USA-S will send the swimmer a new membership card, as well as notify the swimmer’s registration chair and the BBD swim club.

