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**2017-2018**

NYCY Manta Rays Parent Handbook



# Parent Handbook

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Welcome to the YMCA of Southern Maine, Northern York County Branch Manta Rays Swim Team!

The purpose of this handbook is to help you as parents understand the expectations for both you and your child as part of our team throughout the swim season. This is a brief overview, not intended to address every potential question. Links to self help guides and information on having a fun and successful swim team experience are available on our team website, [gomantarays.org](http://gomantarays.org), "Parent Info" page. The coaches and members of the Parent Advisory Committee will also be available to provide any more detailed information you may need. Please refer to the Team Contacts section (page 8) for the people to contact if you have questions or need help in specific areas.

## YMCA Youth Sports Philosophy

The YMCA Youth Sports Programs promote growth in body, mind and spirit. The YMCA encourages participation through family involvement, positive competition and an emphasis on fun, safety, teamwork, fair play and skill development. At the Northern York County YMCA, the goals and objectives of the Manta Rays Swim Team are as follows:

1. Fun: At the YMCA, we want every participant to enjoy the swim team. To help ensure this, we make sure that everyone plays and plays fairly. We focus on teamwork and offering many opportunities for swimmers to make new friends.
2. Fitness: Swim Team helps develop a lifelong physical activity that can help swimmers keep fit through their youth, adult and even senior years.
3. Friends & Family: Swim Team is a great way for youth to participate in an activity with established friends, meet new ones and compete together on the same team. Swim Team relies heavily on parent involvement and volunteerism which allows families to enjoy the sport together.
4. Fundamentals: The YMCA also focuses on fundamentals. Our YMCA Youth Sports Leagues are instructional leagues, which means that participants will not only learn how to play the game, but will also learn skills necessary to play that game - all while having fun!

On the Manta Rays Swim Team, learning proper fundamentals means lots of work on stroke mechanics, starts, turns and finishes. We also offer team hosted social events focused on fun, team spirit, building positive relationships and a sense of belonging throughout the swim season.

## For Families & Swimmers Character Counts...

Everything you say and do should be consistent with the four core values of the YMCA:

- Caring: Treat others the way you want to be treated. Be kind and consider others' feelings.
- Honesty: Be honest with others and yourself; act so people can trust you...
- Respect: Treat yourself and others with respect. Be polite, positive and encouraging.
- Responsibility: Take responsibility for your actions. Set a good example in everything you do.

## Membership Fees

YMCA Membership in good standing is required to be a member of the Manta Rays Swim Team. Swim Team membership fees are additional. During your swimmers evaluation, Head Coach Trevor Edmunds will discuss current membership fees and available payment arrangements. Trevor will also be able to answer any other questions you may have.

### Other Fees and Costs

Team suits, practice suits, swim bags, goggles and other accessories (see Page 8) are the responsibility of the parent. USA Swimming fees (optional) include Registration Fee (\$67), Entry Fees (typically \$5 per event) and Participation Fee (typically \$10-\$15 per meet).

## Family Involvement

### Supporting your swimmer as well as their team

For parents, this is a great opportunity for you to help your child develop a strong and healthy sense of team spirit, good sportsmanship, character and self-image. The most important thing you can do as family members of a swimmer is to love and support them, both in and out of the pool.

- Be uplifting and supportive of your child throughout the season.
- Help your child plan, set, strive towards and achieve their goals.
- Be patient. Each swimmer learns and progresses at a different pace.
- Let our coaches do what they do best – coach!
- Be a good role model for your child. Demonstrate proper sportsmanship and respect for officials, coaches, other parents and swimmers.

Family involvement is critical to fostering the enjoyment of swimming in each swimmer, thus contributing to the team's overall success. Visit [gomantarays.org](http://gomantarays.org) for self help guides on motivation, goal setting and more information on volunteering.

## Volunteering

The assistance of each family is needed to conduct home swim meets and team hosted events. Parents are expected to volunteer to help run at least one home meet, and are also expected to participate in fundraisers that help support the YMCA and our team. Job Signups will be posted on the "Events" page prior to home or championship meets and team hosted events (notices also sent via email). Please note that details on volunteer opportunities can also be found on the "Volunteer" page at [gomantarays.org](http://gomantarays.org).

### Manta Rays Parent Advisory Committee (MRPAC)

All parents, guardians and volunteers participating in the competitive swim program are automatically part of the Manta Rays parent organization. All are welcome to attend the monthly Manta Rays Parent Advisory Committee (MRPAC) board meetings. There are many volunteer opportunities available, and most of the job duties do not require previous experience. See the team website as well as contacts below (page 8).

## Practice and Swim Meets

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### Honor Code and Responsibilities for Swimmers

- Listen carefully and follow directions from the coaches - Be respectful.
- Work hard and always try to do your best.
- Maintain proper spacing between swimmers before you start drills.
- Do not pull, yank or hit the swimmer in front of you!
- To pass a swimmer. The best time is at end/start of a set/rep. For example 6 X 50 Freestyle. Wait until you are at the wall and then ask to please move ahead before the next 50 starts. Touch the swimmer's foot in front of you when attempting to pass. Then pass quickly in the middle when it is safe to do so.
- If being passed please make sure to stay on the right side of the lane.
- Be on the pool deck on time ready to swim when practice or meet warm ups start (not talking or hanging around in the locker room). "Ready to swim" means your equipment is ready and your goggles are adjusted.
- Follow all pool and locker room rules at both home and away meets.
- No cell phones or video games are allowed on the pool deck.
- You may bring an iPod or similar device on deck during swim meets.
- Demonstrate proper sportsmanship. There is no place in the pool or locker room for rude or belittling comments, bullying, displays of anger or disgust or talking back to coaches, officials, volunteers or other adults.
- Actively participate in swim meets, cheering your teammates on when you are in between events. Stay until the end of YMCA meets and be available to cheer for your teammates even if you have already finished your last event.
- Visit our team website for meet information and results during the season.

### Preparations for Swim Meets

For planning purposes, it is vital to register for swim meets well in advance. This gives the coach ample time to think about and place swimmers into appropriate events as well as communicate those events to you and your swimmers! Swimmers CANNOT SWIM if the registration deadline is missed. Deadlines are typically as follows:

- Regular Season YMCA meet registration deadline: 1 week prior to the event.
- USA meet registration deadline: 3 weeks prior to the event.
- YMCA State meet information is typically announced a few weeks in advance.
- Certain USA meets have odd deadlines due to popularity of the meet (Bowdoin Open, Seacoast Summer Meets to name a couple). Keep your eyes open to any changes or special instructions for these specific meets.
- Parents are responsible for being aware of each upcoming registration deadline.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** The schedule for all swim meets and team hosted events will be posted on gomantarays.org under the "Events" tab. Meet info files will also be posted with the event schedule and any rules for spectators for each facility. For each swim meet, entry reports confirming all of the events will be made available.

## How to register for a Swim Meet or Team Hosted Event

1. Log on to gomantarays.org and Sign-In to your account.
2. Click on the "Events" tab at the top of the page.
3. Find the swim meet you would like to attend. Be careful to take note of whether USA is affixed to the title (USA Swimmers only). Click the event.
4. Click on "Attend/Decline" or "Edit Commitment" when already logged in.
5. Select "Yes, please sign [\_\_\_\_] up" OR "No, thanks [\_\_\_\_] will NOT attend".
6. While registering for YMCA swim meets your swimmer may request desired events. Remember, this is a REQUEST ONLY and the final decision is up to the coaching staff. (USA swimmers may choose their own events). For further information regarding USA Swimming please see the "Parent Info" page.
7. For home meets and Championship meets, please see the Job Signups for your desired volunteer position as well. Remember, the more volunteers we have available, the more smoothly and efficiently our home meets will operate!

## How does my swimmer know what events they will be swimming?

YMCA meet events for each swimmer are selected by the coach, however requests (subject to approval) can be made in the "Notes" field. A meet entry report (pdf file) will be made available via email and on the "Events" page for each meet. Please check these resources before asking a coach what events your swimmer is swimming. The coaching staff assembles relay teams based on what is best for the team and the individual. Head Coach Trevor has final say as to who swims in which relay. Athletes will be placed into individual events based on several criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- What is best for the team?
- What is in the best interest of the swimmer?
- What haven't they swum yet?
- What events did they request?
- What events come as recommendations from their group specific coach?
- How much do they like to swim that event?

**IMPORTANT NOTES:** At each swim meet, "Heat Sheets" listing all of the events are made available. A highlighter is handy to mark your swimmers (and their teammates) events for later reference. As Manta Rays, we pride ourselves on cheering for our teammates until the last events are swum at YMCA meets and at Y-States. If a you are planning to leave early due to another commitment please notify us (in the "Notes" section) when signing up for that meet. USA meets: Swimmers are not required to stay after their individual and relay events, but are encouraged to stay and cheer for their teammates.

## How to register and pay for a USA Swim Meet

1. Follow steps 1-7 as described above.
2. USA Swim meets are "pay to play" events. This means when you sign up for USA events at gomantarays.org, you are authorizing us to charge your card or form of payment on file with your membership for the coinciding meet fees.

## What to pack for your swimmer

- Team suit, extra suit, 2 pairs of goggles, team swim cap, extra cap.
- 2 towels (one for on deck and one for locker room).
- Water, healthy drinks.
- Healthy snacks (bananas & other fruit, veggies, granola, etc.).
- Money for concessions (just in case).
- Sweatshirt/sweatpants (to keep warm between events).
- No video games or cell phones; iPods or similar devices are allowed on deck.
- Positive attitude.

## What to pack for yourself / other spectators

- Camera/video (important, no flash at start of race).
- Layered clothes (some of the pool seating areas are very humid).
- Sandals or sneakers (in case you volunteer to time).
- Program, concession, raffle money.
- Pen and/or highlighter to highlight your swimmer's events.
- Magazine, book, paper.
- Snacks, Water.

## Away Meet Travel Guide

Notifications about away meets are sent via email with entries, pool location, warm up / start times, updates and general instructions as needed. Parents should allow extra time for unforeseen delays. Please be sure to get your swimmer to the meet at least 15 minutes before scheduled warm up time. For larger championship meets sitting next to a seasoned parent can help you learn more about how the meet is run.

## Communication

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### Parents

Parents are encouraged to speak with the coaches before or after practice or to set up a time that is convenient. Please do not try to talk to coaches during practice or when they are busy during a swim meet. Also, while email is very convenient, the swim season can be quite hectic and people may not have time to respond to emails immediately. Team notifications will typically have answers to common questions about specific events as they come up on the calendar. If you are not receiving team notification emails please let us know immediately. Parents can also add more email addresses to their account for family members that also need to be on the mailing list. A great way to always be "in the know" is to sign up to help out during team hosted events. MRPAC members can help you with common questions, and can get you started in volunteering.

### Swimmers

The coaches are there to answer your questions during practice, and also help you with your goals. At swim meets, feel free to speak with the coach about your events.

## Mentoring, Setting Goals & Team Spirit

### Saturday Mentor Program

A vital part of every successful swimmer's career is the bond formed at practices and meets with swimmers of all ages and abilities. That is to say "The Team" bonding experience helps your swimmer dream and achieve goals never before imagined. We hold Saturday morning practices for the younger groups. Veteran swimmers from the Senior group aid these practices as part of their weekly practice schedule. Younger swimmers will also be buddied up (Senior swimmers to Act as a Big Brother or Big Sister) for swim meets when possible. Older swimmers are a great source of reassurance and on-deck support for younger or less experienced swimmers.

### Setting Goals

A good goal setting strategy is to encourage your swimmer to focus on making incremental progress in improving their personal best times, rather than comparing their place or times to those achieved by their teammates or competitors at swim meets. While swimming can be considered an individual sport, it is very important for parents and swimmers to also realize that they are part of a team. Swim teams at Championship meets are ranked by the cumulative point totals of every swimmer on the team.

### Team Spirit

Occasionally the MRPAC will plan events that allow swimmers to socialize with their teammates both in and out of the pool. These events help build team spirit, a sense of belonging and camaraderie. All Manta Rays are strongly encouraged to attend.

## Championship Meets

### YMCA Maine State Championships

All Manta Ray swimmers are required to attend the YMCA State championship meet. To be eligible for Y-States, a swimmer must have entered at least 3 YMCA meets over the course of the season (and still be in good standing with the Y and the team). All Y-State eligible swimmers will be signed up for Y-States automatically. Y-States is historically held at the University of Maine in Orono. Events will be chosen by the coaching staff, with the emphasis on putting each swimmer in the events where they are most likely to achieve the highest level of success for themselves and for the team. Swimmers may swim a maximum of 3 events. This meet takes place over several days, so most families stay overnight at a hotel. Transportation and accommodations are the responsibility of the parents. If a swimmer misses Y-States, their current season will end and they forfeit early registration in the future. If a swimmer makes a habit of not attending Y-States, their spot on the team will be released. This is to allow another swimmer, who is willing to meet the Manta Rays membership requirements, to join the team.

## YMCA New England Championships

Unlike Y-States, swimmers must meet qualifying times for Y-NE. This prestigious meet is held at MIT Cambridge, Mass in late March. Qualified swimmers are encouraged to attend this meet if possible, however participation is not required even if qualifying times are achieved. Transportation and accommodations are the responsibility of the parents.

## YMCA National Championships

Nationals are held each April, most recently in Greensboro, NC. Unlike Y-States and Y-New England Championships, which are age group meets, the Nationals team consists of only the senior division (12 + older) that have swum faster than an established cut off time. All travel costs, except the meet registration/team costs are the responsibility of each swimmer. Swimmers that meet financial need/hardships may apply for financial assistance to attend this meet.

## MSI Junior Olympic Championships (USA Swimming)

MSI (Maine Swimming Inc.) Junior Olympic Championships have historically been held either at Bowdoin College or the University of Maine, Orono two weeks after the YMCA State Championship meet right around St. Patrick's Day. Swimmers need to have met qualifying times in prior swim meets. The coaching staff chooses relay teams for championship meets based on what is best for the team and the individual. Swimmers individual and relay costs will be covered by the YMCA. Meets requiring optional USA Swimming registration will have "USA" in the title.

## USA Swimming Time Standards Explained

Less than B      B      BB      A      AA      AAA      AAAA



Developed by USA Swimming, Age Group time standards can be used as a reference for goal setting. "B" times are considered the average times among each respective age group and should be viewed as a good baseline or starting point. "AAAA" times are considered elite. Regardless of whether a swimmer meets "B" or "AAAA" standards, there is always room to improve. It is very important for swimmers to realize that they should strive for individual best times rather than comparing their times to those achieved by their teammates. This mindset is essential for maintaining the positive attitude necessary for continuous improvement in the pool.

## Qualifying Times / Personal Best Times / Team Records

Refer to our team website, gomantarays.org, "Events" and "News" pages for qualifying times and time standards for championship meets. Throughout the season there is an ongoing effort to maintain the most up to date and accurate database of personal best times possible for our swimmers. Refer to "Top Times" and "Records" pages for current top times, team records, and virtual SCY, LCM, and SCM team record boards in pdf format. The "Manta Rays Team Records" board on the pool wall is updated annually before the start of each fall season.

## Manta Rays Swim Team Awards Banquet

Our end of season banquet is typically held on a Sunday in April. All of the medals or trophies and special recognition awards from the season are given out. Manta Rays team participation certificates will also be presented to each swimmer.

## Manta Rays Team Suits, Gear and Accessories

Visit the [gomantarays.org](http://gomantarays.org) "Events" page for up to date information and how to order.

## Team Contacts

Coaching Staff	Email address
Trevor Edmunds, Head Coach Office Hours by Appointment, 283-0100 ext 405	<a href="mailto:tedmunds@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org">tedmunds@ymcaofsouthernmaine.org</a>
Leia Lowery, Assistant Coach	<a href="mailto:melowerys@roadrunner.com">melowerys@roadrunner.com</a>
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Jenny Cowing, Chairperson	<a href="mailto:herbey@gmail.com">herbey@gmail.com</a>
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Open Position, Head Timer	
Open Position, Parent Group Reps (3)	

