



7.30.2021

Hello and thank you for inquiring about the RAYS swim program and how to register for the 2021 - 2022 swim season!

Basic Information About Our Club

The RAYS swim team is a YMCA Swim Team with a USA Swim affiliation (9 Over). We participate in both YMCA and USA swim meets.

The philosophy of our program is one that supports all athletes that want to have a swim team experience. Our coaches and directors work hard to create a healthy balance and a program that is inclusive to all levels of swimmers.

The RAYS home pool is the Mary Freebed YMCA located on Burton Street, however we use all YMCA Grand Rapids pools and rent outdoor facilities in the summer months!

Registration

August 3rd - August 4th RAYS "Loyalty" Registration

Registration will be open to those families that have been with the club for three - plus consecutive years (from the fall season date). Registration will come via email in the form of a "Google Form" and families will be given 24 hours to secure their season programming spot. This will include all swimmers of that family. The form will be sent at 8:00 AM on 8/3; and close on 8/4 at 8:00pm

August 7th - All RAYS returning swimmers will be able to register. This will be online registration and will be open to swimmers that have swam for one session - two years with the RAYS. Please visit the RAYS Website at 9:00 am on 8/7.

August 8th & 9th - All swimmers are welcome!

August 20th - Registration is closed.

Note: RAYS promotes small group sizes with fewer kids in a lane than many swimmers clubs. As we continue to move forward with some COVID uncertainty, we are able to swim safe and swim with the best coach to swimmer ratio possible. Our groups will fill up, after groups are filled a waitlist is created.

Groups

Team Philosophy: It is the YMCA & RAYS belief that swimmers feel better about themselves when they are training with people of their own age. They build relationships and also have more fun when they're with their friends. Differentiated practices are designed by coaches to meet each swimmer's ability while maintaining workouts that are age-appropriate. This keeps swimmers loving and competing in the sport long-term.

If a swimmer wishes to "swim up" with a different age group, swimmers should review the "RAYS Group Hopping Policy" located on the team's website.

RAYS 2021-2022 Group Descriptions

Group	Age Guidance (start of the season)	Description
Junior RAYs	8U	Swimmers are new to competitive swimming, but have taken swim lessons and are working towards learning how to legally swim all four competitive strokes.
Red	9/10/11 3rd - 5th Grade	Swimmers are generally 9-11 year olds that continue refinement of strokes and skills. This can be a great start up group for new swimmers who are looking for an introduction to a swim team.
Black	9/10/11 3rd - 5th Grade	Swimmers are generally 9-11 year olds and are more advanced and have been a part of a competitive swim program.
White	12 - 13 years old 6th - 7th Grade	White group swimmers are generally 12 to 13 years old and focus on advanced refinement of strokes and skills. At this point swimming is becoming one of your main activities and meet attendance is essential. Dry land is introduced creating a full athlete.
Gold	8th Grade <i>7th grade swimmers who are 12 must comply with RAYS group hopping policy to be registered for this group.</i>	Gold group swimmers are generally middle school (8th grade) and are 13/ 14 years old. Swimmers receive more advanced training and technique work. The goal is to prepare them for their high school years and to prepare them for a high level of competition. Dryland with Certified Personal Trainer 3x per week is added to this group's practice opportunities.
Seniors	9th - 12th Grade <i>Swimmers must be entering 9th Grade.</i>	High school swimmers that want to stay in shape year round. Technique is a primary focus and an increase in volume and intensity should be expected. Dryland with Certified Personal Trainer 4x per week is added to this group's practice opportunities.

National	If a swimmer is within 2 seconds of a National cut (100) or 1 second (50), they may be invited by the head coach to train with this group.	The National Group is for HS Swimmers who have achieved a YMCA National Cut time in a YMCA, USA of HS Meet. This is a high achieving training group preparing for national levels of competition with a strategic focus on each athlete's needs to excel in the sport. Meet and practice attendance is crucial, expected and monitored. Dryland with Certified Personal Trainer 4x per week.
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Group Confusion / Assessments / Try-Outs

All new swimmers (including 8U) should register for a swimming assessment with Coach Brian Vigna. This assessment will allow for a recommendation of grouping, and a parent/coach/athlete discussion on what the best fit may be. This assessment does not secure a spot on the RAYS swim team, but will offer guidance in the registration process. Swim assessments will be held at the Mary Free Bed YMCA on Tuesday, August 3rd and Tuesday, August 10th with time slots available from 6:00 - 8:00 PM.

If you are a current swimmer with the RAYS and are uncertain about what group your child should register for, we ask that you follow the process outlined below:

1. Please email the team's head coach, Brian Vigna at grrayscoach@gmail.com
2. Our head coach will reach out, listen and offer advice on where your swimmer fits.
 - a. If needed, our head coach will connect with the swimmer's current coach, and team registrar to find the best fit.
 - b. If needed, the head coach will recommend a swimming assessment

To register for a swim assessment please do so [here](#).

[SIGN UP TO BE ASSESSED / TRYOUT](#)

Dates / Meets

Our season will open on *Wednesday, September 8th* with the exception of the *Junior RAYS* which will begin practices on *Monday, September 20th*. The fall season typically runs through late February / early March, pending on Championship Meet Timing and Time Qualifications. RAYS also offers a spring & summer session for additional pricing.

The RAYS Swim Team typically plans to attend 6-8 swim meets throughout the regular season, with additional championship meets thereafter (State Meets, Zone Meets & National Meets). All swimmers are expected to attend "RAYS host meets." Meets are a crucial element of competitive swimming and are an opportunity to bond as a team, support fellow swimmers and swim your best times!

The initial schedule is typically shared early - mid September, however, you can always access confirmed meet dates on our website if you should need them earlier.

Practice Schedules:

Group	Practice Times
Junior RAYS	Tuesday & Thursday: 7:15 - 8:15 PM Sunday 5:00 - 6:00 PM
Red	Monday - Thursday: 5:00 - 6:00 PM
Black	Monday & Wednesday: 5:00 - 6:00 PM Tuesday & Thursday: 5:00 - 6:30 PM
White	Monday & Wednesday: 7:00 - 8:15 PM Tuesday & Thursday: 7:00 - 8:00 PM Friday: 7:00 - 8:30 PM Sunday: 5:00 - 6:30 PM
Gold	Monday & Wednesday: 6:00 - 7:30 PM Tuesday & Thursday: 6:30 - 8:00 PM Friday: 6:30 - 8:00 PM Sunday: 6:00 - 7:15 PM <i>Dryland:</i> Three 30 minutes prior to practice per a week.
Seniors	Monday - Thursday 8:00 - 9:30 PM Friday - 5:00 - 6:30 PM Saturday- 7:00 - 8:30 AM Sunday - 7:15 - 8:45 PM <i>Dryland:</i> Four 30 minutes prior to practice per a week.
Nationals	In addition to the Senior schedule: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30 - 9:45 PM Sunday 8:45 - 9:00 PM

Pricing

The RAYS swim team is a non-for profit organization. It is our goal to keep our operating cost as equal to our billing as possible. The projection of expenses and accrued costs is not an exact science, but has been hugely successful in our years of operation.

A commitment / registration to the team is non-fundable, as pricing is based on the maximum group size. The RAYS swim team is unable to reduce the cost for any swimmer, regardless of the reason (timing of practice, alternate sport, vacations etc.).

In addition to the RAYS costs, all swimmers must hold a current YMCA membership (youth membership or family).

RAYS cost is broken down into registration fee (includes team shirt, cap, and USA Membership), and dues (includes pool rental, coaching, dryland training (pending group assignment) and baseline coaches travel). Meet fees are in addition to the baseline cost of the program.

	JR. RAYS	Red	Black	White	Gold	Seniors	National
Registration Fee Billed Sept 1st	\$50.00	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$110.00
Monthly Dues OCT 1st NOV 1st DEC 1st JAN 1st FEB 1st	\$90.00	\$125.00	\$135.00	\$150.00	\$175.00	\$175.00 (see note)	\$185.00
Host Team Meet Fees Review Meet Packet for costs. Billed the 1st of the month following the meet	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.	TBA by host team. Includes event pricing & surcharge.
Championship Coach Fees State, Zone or National Meet Fees / see note below.		State/Zone Qualification	State/Zone/ National Qualification				
Senior Pricing	Senior Pricing is reduced (per an hour of swim time), to offset the HS swim season. Like all of our groupings, the Senior group does have a cap for participants. The commitment is for the full season.						

Championship Travel Meet fees are not included in the yearly pricing, there will be an additional RAYS fee added to those meets to offset coaching costs such as travel, meals, hotels and wages during the time frame of that meet. If you do not attend the meet, you will not be charged.

Meet	Fee
State Meet	\$25.00
Zone Meet	\$50.00
National Meet	\$150.00
Additional championship meet w/ 5 or more swimmers.	\$150.00
Additional championship meet w/ 4 or less swimmers.	\$200.00

Coaching Staff - The RAYS coaching staff each brings different talents and strengths to the table! We are proud to announce our team of coaches for the 2021-2022 season.

Brian Vigna - Head Coach (National/Senior/ Gold)

Mike Holter - Group Coach (Gold)

Rachel Holt - Group Coach (White)

Emma Leary - Group Coach (Junior RAYS)

McKenzie Adler - Group Coach (Black / Red)

Sam Hoover - Coaching Support

Dennis Neat - Coaching Support

Volunteering - "All Hands On Deck" :)

Parent volunteering is a crucial part of the RAYS program. RAYS swim parents are required to volunteer at team hosted events if their child is swimming.

Equipment

All RAYS swimmers are asked to have a gear bag with the following items. Gear will not be shared & should be labeled with your name. Gear will need to travel back and forth between home & the pool and may not be left on the YMCA pool deck.

- Competitive swim flippers (all swimmers)
- Kick board (all swimmers)
- Jump rope (all swimmers)
- Pull buoy (black/white/gold/seniors)

Team Uniform

Practice suits should be functional and appropriate. Swimmers should not wear team suits at practice, they should be reserved for meets only. Any swim cap is acceptable.

Team suits will be new for the 2021-2022 season, and will remain the team suit for 2-3 years (pending availability). Additional information on team suits will be shared at the start of the fall practice dates. The 2021-2022 team cap will be required for meets.

Fundraising / Sponsorship

The RAYS team provides several opportunities to raise money for the team, as well as individual swimmer credits to help with expenses. Opportunities include the SCRIP Program, restaurant nights, and kick backs for sponsorships & significant donations to the swim-a-thon. More information will be shared on these programs and opportunities once the team has been solidified.