



YMCA OF THE NORTH SHORE  
**SHARKS**

# **YNS Welcome Letter**

*To Parents, By Parents*

Dear New YNS Sharks Parents,

If you are asking yourself, “What did I just get myself into?,” you are not alone. Being a new YNS Shark parent can be overwhelming, with tryouts and registration, clothing and equipment purchasing, and deciphering the meet schedule.

We are here to help. You and your swimmer have just become part of a remarkable team of kids, coaches, supporters and parents. The YNS Sharks swim team is arguably one of the best youth sports organizations in New England. The program is child-centered and abides by the YMCA four core values: Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility. However, with all these great things, there is much to learn from the parents’ perspective (much more than swim strokes).

Please look through this packet of information, which includes commonly asked questions, website details, important names and telephone numbers, as well as helpful links to outside websites. This is all valuable information that can help you and your swimmer make a smooth transition into our program. Certainly this packet only covers a few of the questions you may have, but hopefully it helps to give you a strong base of knowledge.

If you have any questions you might want answered from a parent’s perspective, please do not hesitate to ask! Every parent of a swimmer on the Sharks was once a new parent, too! There is a lot of information to absorb. Please be patient as most of you will “learn as you go”. Also, keep in mind that some things are more pertinent to younger swimmers, other details are for older swimmers.

Welcome to YNS Sharks! We look forward to an exciting and event-filled swim season with you and your swimmer!

Sincerely,

YNS PARENT GROUP

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# YNS Contact Information

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# What's Going On?

## How do I find out what's going on with the swim team?

- Check out the team website often for updates – [www.ynssharks.net](http://www.ynssharks.net)
- Read the swim team handbook. It's full of helpful information. If you did not receive one, the contents are available on our team website [www.ynssharks.net](http://www.ynssharks.net). Simply click on the Parents Information tab.
- Check your email for messages and read them
- Join the YNS Parents Group Facebook Page – a closed group for parents
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1544180272469272/>
- Ask other parents (see YNS Parent Group email listing on page 4)
- Ask coaches before or after practice (communicating with a coach during practice is not permitted)
- Email your coach (coaching staff and emails are found on page 3)

## Helpful Links

<http://www.ynssharks.net/Home.jsp?team=neyns>

<http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx>

<http://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=lscnes>

<http://www.varsityswim.com/>

# Commonly Asked Questions

## **When should my child start competing in meets?**

The YNS Sharks hope to present a positive experience with the sport to your swimmer and to keep them on the team throughout high school and college. To determine when your swimmer is ready to compete in a meet, begin by talking to your swimmer's coach. Each swimmer is different. However, our goal is to see all of our swimmers competing right away. We do realize that sometimes it may take a little time for a swimmer to ease into meets. In that case, our recommendation is that they try our Y meets that are held in the Fall and early December. They are a great way to try a meet in a low key environment. They could try one or two shorter events and then see how it goes.

## **How should my swimmer and I prepare for a meet?**

You should tell them to check in with the coach who will be working with them while they are at the meet as we have positive check-in at all of our meets. Positive check-in simply means that we check in the swimmers as they arrive. Sometimes the coach they have been working with at practice is the one at the meet, other times it could be another coach from our Association. We are one big team with six sites so all of our coaches are excited to jump in and work with the team. Swim meets are an exciting and great way to test all the skills they have been practicing. Tell them to encourage and cheer on their teammates and to have fun!

## **How do I sign up for a meet?**

When meets are scheduled they are posted on the website, [www.ynssharks.net](http://www.ynssharks.net), with the option to sign up and a deadline. You will receive emails reminding you of upcoming events that have been scheduled and their deadlines. If you want your swimmer to compete at the meet you will log in with your login ID, select the meet, select your swimmer's name, and declare you "will" or "will not" attend. In many cases, you will be able to choose the events your swimmer will swim. If this is the case, after you declare that your swimmer "will attend" the meet, you will be taken to a page where you can select specific events and save the entry. Your selections will be reviewed by your swimmer's coach. Please bear in mind that we are a big team and the meets fill up quickly. If you want your swimmer to participate, it is best to sign up early. If you have any questions about what your child should swim, don't hesitate to email your coach.

## What do I need to bring to a Y meet?

- Team swimsuit
- YNS team swim cap
- Goggles
- Team t-shirt
- Shorts
- 2 towels
- Sandals/flip flops (something that can be easily put on and removed quickly)
- Change of clothes (in a plastic bag to stay dry)
- Healthy snacks
- Water bottle
- Small amount of spending money
- Small, inexpensive activity for down time (e.g., book, travel game, cards)
- Parents, please label every piece of clothing and towels (including team swim caps or purchase caps with their name on them, as they are all the same!)

## What do I need to bring to a USA meet?

- All of the above
- An extra sweatshirt and blanket or sleeping bag, as swimmers usually do not stay on the pool deck between events. Swimmers may wait between events in a holding area (gym or large room) so they are spread out on the floor with their team.
- Chair (tailgate/camping style for holding area)

## Where do I go during the meet?

- For the first meet your swimmer attends it is recommended that parents stay in one place in the designated viewing area. This gives your swimmer piece of mind because they know where you are at all times should they need you during the meet. Designated viewing areas are not all the same and vary dramatically. Some viewing areas are on the pool deck, some are above the pool, and others may be behind glass enclosures.
- Wear a bright colored shirt to help your swimmer find you. *HINT* – you will want to dress for summer on the pool deck and bleachers. It gets HOT! (Please note that the Beverly Sterling Center pool does not allow parents on deck unless working at the meet. Timing the meet is a great way to be on deck!)

- Coaches try to keep the groups together so they can line up swimmers prior to events. They will be busy organizing the swimmers and will not be available to answer your questions.

## **How do I find out what my child is swimming?**

Prior to the meet, the team website will have a link to the meet information and meet entry. If your child is signed up for the meet, their events should be listed with their previous best time or the coaches best guess of a time for an event that your swimmer may not have an official time entry. To see what your child is swimming, log in to the event page and click “edit commitment.” Coach-approved events will be listed with a black check mark beside the event. If there are no events or the check mark is not there, please be patient as the coaches may not yet have completed this task. Email your child’s coach if you have any questions about the events.

## **What if my child is worried they are in the wrong events or cannot swim a certain distance?**

Certainly many swimmers (and their parents) doubt their ability to compete in a given event. The coaches would never ask them to compete in an event they were not capable of completing, so despite the swimmers reservations, trust the coaches

## **How do I find out how my child performed?**

- After the meet, the Competitive Aquatics Office makes every attempt to update the results on the website. Be patient. These are listed by event or by swimmer’s name. If the event is at the Sterling Center you can see up-to-date results by going to [www.ynssharks.net](http://www.ynssharks.net) and clicking on the current meet. You can also go there to see past results.
- Meet Mobile – this is an app that will show results live if the host team is using it for that meet. This would be designated in the meet packet.



# Parent Volunteers

Swim meets cannot run without the help of parent volunteers. Hosting swim meets is our method of fundraising for the team, so parent volunteers are essential. **This is outlined in detail in the handbook.** Please read and know these policies ahead of time.

Working at a meet is not as intimidating as it may initially seem. It definitely makes the time go faster! Timer, times recorder, ribbon writer, and runner are all manageable jobs and take no prior experience. You will learn very quickly on the job. In addition to filling a necessary role, these tasks allow you to be closer to the action. You'll be in a position to witness the sheer excitement and energy of the swimmers on the pool deck! All Home Meet work assignments are run by Diane Vetree and she is a great resource if you have questions about a good "first" job to sign-up for.

If you have a swimmer participating in a Home Meet, you **must** sign up for a work assignment in order for your swimmer to participate. You may have to make arrangements to your schedule, so please plan well in advance in order to eliminate unnecessary stress. If you cannot work, you must contact the Head Coach prior to the deadline for that meet or your swimmer will risk being removed from the meet.

In addition, Championship meets have timing responsibilities that are assigned to each attending team. If you have a swimmer participating in a Championship meet, you must work as a timer for part of the meet. Parents usually work together to take a small portion of the assignment and then switch out.

# YMCA meets vs USA meets

- Our team is involved with two leagues: YMCA and USA
- YMCA meets involve competing with other YMCA's. These are usually one day events only taking a few hours. To compete in Y championship meets (districts and New England) swimmers must attend 2 YMCA meets. To compete in a Y National meet, swimmers must attend 3 YMCA meets and at least 1 local Y Championship meet.
- USA meets usually run over a weekend (Friday thru Sunday). You may sign up for all three days or one day depending on your swimmer and your schedule. Please be aware Friday events are usually longer distances. All YNS Sharks swimmers are registered members of USA Swimming. These meets have meet fees, coaches' fees and event fees. These will be billed upon registration via the website.
- The YMCA meets are generally the type of meet newer swimmers will compete in for the first time.
- Under the swim resources tab on the website you will find more detailed information on YMCA vs USA swimming.