

YDC PARENT TIP SHEET FOR NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Important Swim Team Information is on the YDC website: www.ydcswimteam.org.

This Tip Sheet was written by parents who remember the questions they had when their children first did winter swimming. Since then we've heard questions from other parents new to winter swimming. This sheet tries to answer the most commonly asked questions. It does not replace the important team information on the web site.

Who decides what events my child will swim at a Meet?

You and your swimmer will decide what individual events your child should swim, and the coaches will set up the relays. The coaches will send an e-mail when it's time to sign up for a meet. When that happens, all of the information for that meet will be posted on the YDC web site. You'll be able to see how many individual events a swimmer is allowed to do for that meet, when the meet and warm ups are scheduled to begin, the pool address, the order of events and any other information related to that meet. Read the information thoroughly before going to the sign-up link. Every meet is slightly different. Most 8-and-Under events are 25 yards except for the 100 Individual Medley (IM). Starting at age 9, events are at least 50-yards with a variety of longer races available.

What are "Open" events?

Swim meets are divided into age groups: 8-and-Under, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, and 15-18. The 15-18 group is often called "Senior." Swimmers compete against others in their same age group.

Open events are open to any age swimmer. Most often you will see Open events in place of 15-18 or Senior events so usually the swimmers in Open events are the oldest competitors. However, if a meet has Open events, anyone in any age group can sign up to swim in them. That's why you will see them as options when you go into the website to register your child of any age for a meet.

Parent Tip: If you have two young swimmers in different age groups, there will be meets when one of your swimmers has events during the morning session, and the other swimmer has events in the afternoon. If you can't be at the meet all day, look to see if there are any Open events during one of the sessions and sign up your other swimmer for those events so that both swimmers compete during the same session. However, only do this if your swimmer has the personality for it. The child needs to know that he or she will likely be swimming against much older swimmers. There won't be any heat ribbons or winning of that event and it means that your swimmer won't be on a relay. However, if your child is swimming just for the love of it and to try to get a Personal Best Time, this is a great opportunity.

Another Reason to Consider Open Events: If you have a young swimmer who loves longer races, such as a 100 Back or 500 Free, you'll see them available more often as Open events.

Is it OK to attend just one day of a 2-day Meet?

Absolutely. Many meets run Friday evening, all day Saturday and all day Sunday. The Meet Information on the web site will show which events are on which day and during which session (AM or PM) so if you only want to attend one day, that's not a problem and it's easy to see what events to sign up for and which to avoid.

How do Relays work?

Freestyle Relays are made up of 4 swimmers each doing Freestyle. Medley Relays are made up of 4 swimmers and each does a different stroke: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle.

The four fastest swimmers in an age group will be on the A relay. The next four will be on the B relay, etc. The coaches set up relays based entirely on each swimmer's personal best time in that stroke.

After you sign up your swimmer for a meet, the coaches will see which day/session your child is swimming and will include your child on a relay if at all possible. If a child is not listed to swim in a relay, it is because there are not enough children in that age group for that meet to make up a full relay team. For example, if there are seven 8-and-Under boys signed up for a meet, the 4 who have the best Freestyle times will make up the A Freestyle Relay. The other three will not be on a Freestyle relay because there needs to be 4 swimmers. If there had been 8 boys signed up for the meet, there could be both an A and B relay.

How do I find out if my child is on a Relay?

A few days before a meet, there will be an e-mail letting everyone know that entries have been finalized. Sign-in on the YDC web site and you will see a link to the Meet Entry Report listed below the meet name on the home page. That Report will list all of your child's events including if he or she is on a Relay. Additionally, below the Meet Entry Report you'll see a link to a Relays page. That page will tell you exactly what your child is swimming on the Relay. You'll see whether the child is swimming first, second, third or fourth on a Freestyle Relay and whether the child is swimming Back, Breast, Fly or Free on the Medley Relay. For the Medley Relay, the first swimmer listed does Backstroke, the second swimmer does Breaststroke, third is Fly and 4th is Freestyle.

Deciphering the Code

When you sign up for a meet or read the final event posting from the coaches, you'll notice that every event has a number. Meets run in Event Order. Pay attention to this order because **at a Meet, it's critical that parents help make sure 8-and-Under swimmers are at the Clerk of Course and older swimmers are behind the blocks in advance of their event.**

Coaches will help get the swimmers organized for Relays so make sure your young swimmer is near the coaches immediately after warm-ups to get set for the Relays. There often are last minute changes, for example if a swimmer called in sick. Only the coaches will know what those changes are. If there's a difference between what the coaches say and what the Heat Sheet says, *always* go with what the coaches say.

Does the Team ride together to out-of-town Meets?

There is not a team bus. Families are responsible for getting their swimmers to the meets. The address for each pool is on that Meet's information sheet on the web site.

Where do we go when we get to a Meet?

Swimmers usually need to cut thru the locker room to get to the pool. Follow the crowd or ask the person at the door where it is. Swimmers are supposed to be by their coaches 10 minutes before warm-ups begin.

At many meets there is very little bleacher seating. When seating is limited, swimmers are supposed to leave the seats for spectators. Swimmers should go to the swimmer rest area between events. That's usually a gym or cafeteria down the hall from the pool. Many parents of younger swimmers hang out in that room between their swimmer's events. People set up chairs and blankets. Many people bring books to read, games for the kids to play and snacks. Meets also have concession stands but food is not allowed in the pool area so the gym is the place for your swimmer to eat something if there is a lot of down time between his or her events. The Clerk of Course is often in or very near the gym/rest area.

Winter meets have an admission charge for spectators. Most people pay the admission and find a place to sit on the bleachers after their swimmer is heading to the coaches for warm-ups. If your swimmer is young, don't be surprised if you spend much of the day walking back and forth between the gym and the bleachers and the gym and the bleachers and the gym and the bleachers.

What should we bring to the Meet?

Suit, cap and goggles of course. A spare cap and goggles are a good idea. And it's useful to have 3 towels - one will be pretty wet after warm-ups; a second will be wet after 2-3 events; and that will leave a 3rd towel dry (or relatively dry) for the end of the meet.

The gym or rest area is often quite cool compared to the pool area. Bring an extra set of sweats and a sweatshirt for the swimmer to wear between events. Those clothes will get wet so you'll want to have a dry set of clothes to wear home.

How Are Meets Run?

Meets are run in event order and each event has a certain number of heats based on the number of entries. Most pools have 6 or 8 lanes so if there are 12 swimmers in an event, there will be two heats. Swimmers are grouped with other swimmers who have similar personal best times. The slowest group will be the first heat and the fastest group will be the last heat. Grouping children of similar abilities gives every child a chance to be a **Heat Winner**. **Heat ribbons** are given out in the 8-and-Under and 9/10 age groups.

Race results will be posted in the hall outside the pool area. Points are given for top finishers. If you see a DQ next to your child's name after a race, it means they were disqualified for some reason. It may have been an early start, or not doing a stroke correctly. This is *very* common with new swimmers. Don't worry about it! If a child gets a DQ, the coaches will find out why and will work on that at practices.

Two great goals for new swimmers are to not get DQ'd (that means they've learned a lot!) and to get a **Personal Best** Time (PB). Some people call it a PR (Personal Record). Setting reasonable, personal goals is a great motivator and keeps swimming fun!

What is a Heat Sheet?

Heat Sheets are available for purchase at every meet. It lists every child who is swimming in every event along with which Heat and Lane that child will swim in. You can buy a heat sheet when you pay for admission. A copy is also usually posted somewhere on a wall inside the pool area.

An event listing will look something like this:

#11 Girls 8 & Under 25 Yard Freestyle

<u>Lane</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Seed Time</u>
Heat 1 of 2				
1	Paulette Perch	6	YDC	NT
2	Makenzie Muskie	7	YDC	20:38
3	Sarah Starfish	6	DFAC	18:39
4	Sienna Seahorse	8	YDC	17:89
5	Delaney Dolphin	8	BAC	18:03
6	Sally Stingray	7	SWAT	19:45
7	Teri Trout	8	GBY	21:06
8				

This is the first of two Heats for Event #11. A Seed Time is the fastest time that girl swam that event in the past. Paulette Perch has never swam this event before so she has NT (No Time) listed. There are only 7 swimmers in this heat. Lane 8 will be empty. Note that there are multiple teams represented. As opposed to summer swimming in Madison, most winter meets are attended by multiple teams.

Writing on Hands

It's helpful, especially for young swimmers, if parents write their event information on the swimmer's hand, arm or thigh to help the swimmer remember what he or she is doing. Usually parents write the **Events, Heats, Lanes** and a reminder of what the stroke is. "Grids" often look like this:

E	H	L	
1	1	3	MR-B, Fly
11	3	2	Fr
21	1	4	Ba
41	2	5	Br

This child is on the B Medley Relay (Event #1) doing the Fly which means she's the third swimmer. Her Relay will be in Heat 1, Lane 3. She is also swimming Freestyle, Backstroke and Breaststroke individual events which are Events 11, 21 and 41. For Freestyle, she is in Heat 3, Lane 2. When writing, use black Sharpie. It will stay on thru the meet but will wear off within a day or two.

What is Clerk of Course?

Clerk of Course is where 8-and-Under swimmers go prior to their events to get lined up. Volunteers get the kids in Heat and Lane order and escort them to their starting area at the appropriate time. **PLEASE make sure your child gets to Clerk of Course at least 10 minutes before his or her event.** Listen to the Announcer for when swimmers should report to the Clerk. If you can't hear the Announcer, pay attention to what event is in the pool and get your child to Clerk of Course with at least 3 events still to go before your child's event. So, if your child is swimming in Event 22, get him to Clerk of Course if you see that event 19 is in the water, or even sooner if it's a small meet with only one heat of each event. Clerk of Course is an excellent place to volunteer if you want to be near your young swimmer and get to know the other kids on the team.

Do swimmers have to participate in every meet?

No. But they can if they want to. YDC offers lots of meets but swimmers are not expected to attend every one. Swimmers should attend the 5 meets hosted by YDC. Beyond that, it's up to each family to determine what is the right amount of meets for their swimmer.

Please also note that there is an entry fee, called a Splash Fee, for every meet. Plus there is a fee for every event a child swims in. These fees are listed in each Meet's information sheet on the website and vary from meet to meet. Fees will automatically be billed to your YDC account based on what meets and events you sign up for.

What if we sign up for a Meet but on the day of the Meet, something suddenly happens (like a sick child) and we can't make it?

It happens and is understandable. But please call someone. Call parents of a teammate to have them tell the coaches as soon as they arrive for warm-ups. Or call the coaches. This way the coaches can rearrange relays so those who are there can still compete. You can also send an email to Shane Ryan and he will relay the message to the other coaches.

How old is my swimmer?

Of course you know how old your child is, but what you may not know is how old your child is considered to be by swimming rules. The YDC team follows two sets of rules: USA Swimming and YMCA Swimming.

For the majority of the season, the team follows USA Swimming Rules even if it is a Y hosted meet. Under USA rules, a swimmer is considered to be whatever age the child actually is on the first day of the meet. So, if there's a Saturday/Sunday meet and your child is 10-years-old on Saturday but turns 11 on Sunday, he will swim as a 10-year-old both days of that meet. But, at the next meet, he will be bumped up to the 11/12 age group.

YMCA rules are a little different. They consider a swimmer to be whatever age he or she is on December 1 to be their age for the full season. After all, your 6th grader stays a 6th grader all year no matter when his birthday is, right?

So here's how it works. Since YDC follows USA rules, your swimmer will, for most of the season, compete in whatever age group matches his or her actual age. However, after USA State, which marks the end of the USA Season at the end of February, the YMCA season goes a little longer. There are the Fox Cities Last Chance meet, Y Silver State and finally the Y State meet. For these final "Y Only" meets, YDC follows YMCA rules so your swimmer will be considered to be whatever age he or she was on December 1. So, say there's a child who is 10 at the beginning of the season but turns 11 in December, January or February. That child will swim as a 10-year-old at the beginning of the season, then move up to the 11/12 age group after his or her birthday per USA rules, but then will go back down to competing as a 10-year-old for the season-ending Y meets (after the USA season is done) because she was still 10 on December 1.

The YDC computerized meet sign-up automatically adjusts depending on the meet and child's age so you don't have to worry about that.

Can we leave a Meet when our swimmer is done or should we stay for the entire Meet?

It's great to stay and cheer on teammates, but most families leave once their swimmer is done, unless, of course, the adults are doing a volunteer shift in which case they must stay until the end of the meet. If your swimmer has won ribbons or medals and you have to leave before those results are known, the team will take all unclaimed ribbons back to the Y and a volunteer will sort them into family folders that can be found in the hall on the way to the locker rooms. It might take a week or so before all ribbons are sorted and in the folders.

What are the best things to eat and drink at a swim meet?

Head coach Shane Ryan gives this advice: It is important to stay hydrated during a meet. Good beverages to bring to a meet include sports drinks such as Gatorade, Powerade, Vitamin Water, etc. However swimmers do not need to drink Gatorade all day long. One or two 20oz bottles a session or day is plenty and they should drink water in between. Swimmers should not drink caffeinated beverages one day before a swim meet or during or after competition if they are at a two-day meet.

Swimmers should bring healthy snacks including: bagels with cream cheese or peanut butter and jelly, granola bars, power bars, yogurt, string cheese, fruit, trail mix, raisins, carrots and celery, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (which is probably one of the best and most complete meals you can eat) and any other things that you think are healthy. If you have questions about what you should eat please ask your coach.

What are the most important things for a swimmer to remember at a swim meet?

Always remember to pack your suit, team cap (or two) and two pairs of goggles just in case one breaks or leaks. It is also important to bring towels to dry off and stay warm between events. Also bring your team warm-up, sweatshirt and sweat pants and a team t-shirt if you have them. Wearing YDC gear promotes team spirit and helps all of the swimmers, from three different practice locations, recognize who is on their team! If there are awards presented at a meet on a podium, swimmers must wear a team t-shirt or their warm-ups. And finally:

***ALWAYS SHOW GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP
DO YOUR BEST
HAVE FUN!***