

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Do swimmers need to tryout?**

The YMCA of Northwest Louisiana / Red River Aquatic Club offers training and practice groups for swimmers of all ages and ability levels. Evaluations will be held in August or by appointment to place swimmers into appropriate groups. Contact Head Coach John Janszen directly at [jjanszen@ymcawla.org](mailto:jjanszen@ymcawla.org) or calling the BHP Billiton YMCA at 318-674-9635.

### **Can swimmers be involved in other sports?**

Many swimmers participate in other activities. Our practices are offered four to six days a week depending on the group to allow swimmers more opportunities to participate. Athletes who are involved in fall sports may choose to begin practices at the end of the fall season.

### **Is there a lot of travel involved?**

Meets/Competition participation is not required but is encouraged. Meets are typically offered 1-2 times per month. Location of competitions range from local to throughout Louisiana and the surrounding area. Multiple meets each season are offered at BHP Billiton YMCA, home of the Red River Aquatic Club, and as close as Ruston, LA just over an hour drive away. Additional meets are offered further south in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, Sulpher, New Orleans and other locations, including most season ending Championship meets.

### **Can a swimmer join anytime?**

Yes, a swimmer can join anytime throughout the year. Contact Head Coach John Janszen directly at [jjanszen@ymcawla.org](mailto:jjanszen@ymcawla.org) or calling the BHP Billiton YMCA at 318-674-9635.

### **Are the coaches certified?**

All RRAC Coaches are USA Swimming Registered and Certified. All coaches are required to pass a USA Swimming background check and complete certifications for CPR, Safety Training, Athlete Protection, and USA Swimming Foundations of Coaching. RRAC Coaches are also members of the American Swim Coaches Association, giving them access to the largest collection of training and educational materials available. Chaperones for team trips are also USA Registered and must pass the USA Swimming background check and complete the Athlete Protection training.

### **What are the benefits of year-round swimming?**

Year-round swimming will improve swimming ability as well as improve other aspects of an athlete's life. Listening, discipline, organization, work-ethic, time management and goal setting skills learned in year-round swim transfer to the classroom and into the real world. Swimmers also learn how to handle both successes and failures, how to show good sportsmanship and how to have confidence in themselves. As swimmers compete, times will improve, and they will see how hard work at practice pays off.

### **Are there any additional cost associated with year-round swimming?**

Swim meets do have entry fees associated with participation. If a swimmer does not enter a specific meet, there is no charge. Entry fees typically include an \$8 LA Swimming Surcharge, a \$5 Facility Surcharge, and an approximately \$4 per event fee. Other possible costs on top of team fees include extra team caps, goggles, equipment, optional additional Team/Meet T-Shirts, optional Social Event expenses, and optional team apparel.

### **Do swimmers have to wear Speedo brand suits or use Speedo brand equipment?**

Speedo is the official Team Sponsor of RRAC. Through our official partnership with Speedo, RRAC members receive 20% off official team apparel, suits, and equipment. The team also

receives significant support, athlete outfitting support, and more. RRAC Swimmers are asked to make every effort to be in Speedo brand suits and to use Speedo brand equipment in both practice and meets. Any currently possessed non-Speedo brand suits and equipment can be used and are not required to be replaced. When it is time to replace suits or equipment, please make every effort to replace them with Speedo brand products. The only specifically required item for RRAC Swimmers is the official team suit for use at swim meets. Details about our Speedo Sponsorship, SwimVille USA (official team provider), and requirements/options can be found on our team website under 'General Information' and are also explained during the online registration process.

### **Do swimmers have to have to buy a team swimsuit?**

The only specifically required item for RRAC Swimmers is the official team suit for use at swim meets. Team suits are not required for practice but every effort should be made to purchase Speedo brand practice suits of your choosing. Our official team suit is a plain black Speedo brand suit. Official team logos and branding is an optional addition to the suit.

### **How to know if your swimmer is ready for a swim meet?**

A swimmer's desire for competition, ability and age will determine if a swimmer is ready for a swim meet. Ask the coach if your swimmer is ready for competition. Swimmers do not have to compete in all four strokes. Younger swimmers or new swimmers may just compete in freestyle and/or backstroke.

### **How do I sign-up my swimmer for a swim meet?**

To sign-up for a swim meet you must log-in to your Team Unify account. Meets are listed under 'Events' on the team website. The event schedule for each day can be found once you select the meet. Make sure to see what events your child can swim on each day before signing up for the meet. You will commit your swimmer for each specific meet by selecting attend. In the notes section list any conflicts (i.e... – Sam can swim Saturday, but NOT on Sunday) or the coaches will assume your swimmer will be competing each day. If you are not sure what events to sign-up for ask the coaches. If you are unable to attend a meet, please log-in and select decline.

### **What is the difference between Short Course (SC) and Long Course (LC)?**

Short Course takes place in a 25 yard or meter pool and Long Course in a 50 meter pool. The abbreviation for Short Course Yards is SCY and Short Course Meters is SCM. Long Course Meters is abbreviated LCM. Short Course season runs from September through March. Long Course begins in late April and ends mid-July.

### **What should I bring to a swim meet?**

- Swim bag with a competition suit, RRAC cap, 2 pairs of goggle, towels, and flip flops.
- Clothes to stay warm
- Healthy snacks, drinks and water
- Entertainment – There will be a lot of down time.
- Portable chairs and/or a blanket
- Sharpie to write events on swimmer's hand
- Highlighter to highlight events on heat sheet

### **How does a swim meet work?**

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time. Warm-up times will be listed on the website.

- Purchase a heat sheet so you can determine events, heat, and lane for your swimmer.
- Find a place to put your swim bags, chairs, etc... The team tries to sit in one place so look for familiar teammates.
- Find your coach and make sure the swimmer gets to the correct warm-up lane. After warm-ups, swimmers can go back to their area and wait for his first event.
- Swimmers can determine their event, heat, and lane and write it on their hand, arm or leg in a permanent marker to help them remember what and when they are swimming.
- Before and after each race the swimmer should go see their coach, so the coach can remind the swimmer of a few things before he/she swims.
- Parents are responsible for sending swimmers to the starting blocks. Parents will need to listen for the event number or watch the scoreboard for the event number. Send the swimmer down prior to the event but not too early.
- At this point parents can enjoy watching their swimmer race.
- After each race, the swimmer should check-in with the coach to discuss the race.
- After the last event, the swimmer should check in with the coach before leaving to make sure they are not on a relay.

### **Why do swimmers write on their hands, arms or legs?**

Swimmers, who are learning how swim meets operate, keep track of their events by writing them on their hand, arm or leg. The information written include Event Type, Event Number, Heat Number and Lane. More experienced swimmers follow a heat sheet. The heat sheet can be printed prior to the meet, purchased at the meet or posted around the pool deck.

### **What is expected of me as a parent?**

Parental support is required to provide a high quality program for swimmers and families. Timers, officials and other jobs must be filled in order to provide an efficient swim meet experience for all at both home and away meets. It is the expectation of RRAC and the YMCA that all families of registered swimmers be available and willing to share in the volunteer responsibilities throughout the year.

### **I have small children. How do I fulfill my volunteer obligations?**

Parents with small children have several options. Some families share the responsibilities of overseeing the children and fulfilling volunteer responsibilities. Some hire a senior swimmer to fulfill the obligation while others hire a baby sitter to stay home with smaller children who are not competing. Some of the volunteer positions can be fulfilled before or after a meet so that you can remain with your children during the event. If you have questions, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **What are the four competitive strokes?**

The four competitive strokes are Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle. Your swimmer will learn the rules for each competitive stroke at practice. However, parents often want to know the rules as well (how to start, how to finish, legal turns, illegal kick or stroke...). The best way to understand this is to ask the coach directly or review swimming websites.

### **What is a Heat and Heat Sheet?**

When all the swimmers have registered, it is likely that there are more swimmers registered for an event than there are lanes in the pool. For this reason, swimmers are grouped into heats. If there are 24 registered swimmers but only 8 lanes, there will be 3 heats. Heats are organized from slowest to fastest entry times. A "NT" stands for No Time and will be seeded in the early heats. In each heat the swimmers with the fastest times will swim in

the center lanes of the pool and the slower swimmers in the outside lanes. Championship meets run a little differently. The heat sheet lists the event, heat, and lane for each of the swimmers competing for each event. Heat sheets can be purchased at the meet by swimmers and spectators.

**When and where do swimmers receive their awards from each meet?**

Each family has a 'Family File' inside the coaches office off the pool deck. Awards are generally available for pickup by mid-week following a meet.