

BILLINGS YMCA  
SWIM TEAM

THE SEAHAWKS

PARENTS  
HANDBOOK

REVISED SEPTEMBER 2017

The Billings Family YMCA Swim Team is a competitive swimming team with affiliations in Montana Swimming, USA Swimming and the YMCA of the USA Competitive Swim Program. Our mascot is the Seahawk. Our program is designed for kids who are willing to dedicate the time and effort to compete with integrity, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Swimmers compete at local, state-wide, and out of state-of-state sanctioned meets.

When your swimmer becomes a member of the Billings Family YMCA Seahawks, he/she learns the Core Values of honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring while developing sportsmanship and teamwork. Swimming provides physical, emotional and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

The Billings Family YMCA Seahawks Swim Team is coached by Kristen Wyatt. Kristen is a former Seahawk herself. She swam with the Seahawks from the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade until she graduated from Skyview High School where she was also a four year varsity swimmer. She came back to the Seahawks as a parent when her girls became interested in swimming competitively. In the spring of 2016 the opportunity to coach became available and Kristen jumped at the chance to be a bigger part of the Seahawks organization. Kristen is a certified USA Swimming and ASCA (American Swim Coaches Association) coach as well as a certified K-8 educator who taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade prior to starting her family.

If you have any concerns about your swimmer or the swim team, please feel free to contact Coach Kristen by email, phone or during office hours (M,W,F from 4-4:30PM or 7-7:30PM T,TH, 3-3:30 or 7-7:30PM). [kwyatt@billingsymca.org](mailto:kwyatt@billingsymca.org) Office 406-294-1616, Cell 406-794-9090. You may also reach the Aquatics Director, Natasha Tindall at the YMCA, 406-294-1617.

## **PRACTICE:**

Swim team practice is held Monday through Friday, and practices are divided into 3 groups.

- Group 1 Beginner/Intermediate: 12 years and younger as well as those who are new to competitive swimming.
- Group 1.5: Swimmers transitioning to Group 2 and those Group 1 swimmers who are in need of additional challenge and have been invited by the coach.
- Group 2 Intermediate/Advanced is for those approved swimmers 12 and older as well as those Group 1 or 1.5 swimmers who have achieved a BB time in the age group above their own, who have been approved and invited by the coach.
- Practice times are as follows: Group 1 4:30-5:30 pm, Group 1.5 4:30-6:00pm, Group 2 5:30-7:00pm. Group 1.5 and 2 will have dryland strength and conditioning from 5:30-6:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The number of practices your swimmer attends will depend on your swimmer's personal achievement goals for swimming as well as your family schedule. Practices are not mandatory, however, three practices a week is recommended. The more they swim the stronger and faster they will be. If you are going to be gone for a few days or your child is involved in something that will take them away from practice please inform the coach as needed.

Parents are always welcome to remain and observe practices. Practice is a great time to see how your swimmer is growing and progressing, as well as an opportunity to meet other families. Parents are encouraged to allow the swimmers to practice without interruption. It is important for athletes to learn how to communicate with their coach and to have personal responsibility and ownership over their workouts. If you have concerns regarding your swimmers practices, technique, workout etc. please discuss those with the coach after practice or during office hours.

### **SWIM MEETS:**

Each year the coach's goal is to schedule a team swim meet every 4-6 weeks.

The entire swim meet schedule can be found on the Montana Swimming Website [montanaswimming.org](http://montanaswimming.org).

It is important that we compete as a Team. Coach will put together a schedule of meets that we will attend as a team. There may be additional meets available that Coach will not be able to attend, but swimmers may attend independently. Team meets take precedence. If more than one meet is scheduled for the same time, you are expected to attend the Team meet. Special exceptions can be arranged with Coach if necessary.

The swim meet season is divided into what we call short course season (September – March) and long course season (April – July). During the short course season the swim meets are held in a 25 yard pool (length of the YMCA shallow pool). During the long course season the meets are held in a 50 meter pool (length of Rose Park Pool). At these USA sanctioned swim meets swimmers compete to achieve the times needed to compete at the state swim

meets held twice a year around the state or to attend the Pacific Region YMCA Championship Meet, North West Age Group Regionals, Western Zones Championship Meet, and other qualifying meets.

### **USA SWIMMING MEMBERSHIP:**

To compete in a swim meet your swimmer must be a registered member of USA Swimming. This yearly membership supports swimming throughout the United States.

USA Swimming membership is a must for any competitive swimmer or coach.

Members receive:

- Six issues of USA Swimming's award-winning Splash Magazine
- Opportunity to qualify for and compete in USA Swimming sanctioned meets- Zones to Olympic Trials!
- New member welcome kit
- Eligibility to participate in local and national swimming camps.
- Ability to track your times and improvement through our extensive times database
- Motivational programs such as Age Group Top 10, Scholastic All-America and more. USA Swimming also has a website that can be very beneficial. The website is [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org). The dues for the 2018-2019 season are approximately \$90 and are the responsibility of the swimmer. There are also Outreach and Flex registration opportunities. (see coach for details)

### **MEET ENTRY FEES:**

When it comes time to register for a swim meet you will receive an email from Coach Kristen. She will include the meet contract and

the entry forms in the email. She will also have hard copies available in the Swim Team cupboard on the pool deck. You will need to complete an entry form and return it to Coach before the entry deadline. If you are unable to attend a swim meet that you have signed up and paid for you will **not** get your entry fee back. Information about warm up times, directions to the pool, etc. will be sent to you the week of the swim meet. This information can also be found at [montanaswimming.org](http://montanaswimming.org) under meets. The YMCA does not provide travel or pay any expenses for swim meets that your swimmer attends.

### **TEAM SUIT AND CAP:**

Coach Kristen will place orders as needed for team suits and caps. For the swim meets that we attend as a team you must wear your team suit and your team cap, **NO EXCEPTIONS**. If you have elected to purchase a tech suit or speed suit for your swimmer instead of a team suit, the suit **must be approved by the coach**, and may be either mostly black or mostly blue to keep with our team colors and theme.

### **TIME STANDARDS:**

Coach Kristen will send a separate email with time standards for short course yards, short course meters and long course meters. Attached will also be information regarding qualifying times for 8 and under swimmers as well as for 13-21 year olds in the 50 yard/meter events. For the state championship meet, a swimmer must achieve at least one BB qualifying time. The rest of their times can be a B time or anything greater. The 8 and under swimmers have their own time standards. The YMCA regional meet will have their own time standards and will be emailed when they are available.

All time standards can also be found on the [mtswimming.com](http://mtswimming.com) and [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org) websites.

## **WHAT TO TAKE TO A SWIM MEET:**

Swim meets are either one or two day meets. Please remember that if the meet is a two day meet you do have the option of just swimming one day. The meets generally start around 7:00 AM and goes into the early afternoon depending on the number of swimmers. Several items are listed below that will help you when deciding what to take to the swim meet.

**Most Important: team swim suit, team swim cap and goggles.** (a back-up pair of goggles would be a good idea)

Towels: 2-3 towels are recommended per swimmer.

Something to sit or lay on: sleeping bag, old blanket, chairs.

Clothing: team t-shirt, sweats, pajamas, or anything warm to put on over swim suit, flip flops or slippers.

Games: electronic games, books, cards, homework, Ipod, or anything to pass the time.

Food: there is usually a snack bar at each swim meet but feel free to pack a cooler. It is best to let your swimmer snack between

their races as we don't want them swimming on a full stomach. A few suggestions are listed below:

Drinks: water (best choice) sport drinks or juice.

Try to refrain from energy drinks as they are NOT appropriate for fluid replacement during exercise. They are full of caffeine and other stimulants.

Snacks: cereal, yogurt, bagels, cup-o-noodles, peanut butter, fruit, carrots, granola bars, pretzels, trail mix, etc.

**Please leave soda pop, candy, or anything with lots of sugar at home!**

Money: to buy a heat sheet (generally about \$5.00).

A highlighter: for the heat sheet and a sharpie to mark the events on your swimmers arms or legs.

Parents and spectators: Remember that it is usually warm in the pool area so dress appropriately.

### **BEFORE THE MEET STARTS:**

Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time begins. The warm up times will be emailed to you by Coach Kristen the week of the meet.

The host team usually designates certain areas where families can locate. It is best if you locate your swimmer and their belongings in the same general area. Your swimmer should get their suit on and report to the coach.

If you choose, you can purchase a heat sheet which lists all swimmers in each event in order of “seed time”. When the team entry is submitted each swimmer’s previous best time in the event is included. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a “no time” or “NT”. A “no time” swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. Highlight your swimmer’s events. Many swimmers write their event numbers, heats, and lane assignments on their bodies so they can easily reference their races. It will look something like this:

E	H	L
2	3	5 50 fly
4	1	3 50 free
8	5	7 100 back

After warm ups please have your swimmer dry off and put something on to stay warm. You can then write their events on their arms or legs.

### **DURING THE MEET:**

It is important for Swimmers to pay attention so they know when it is their turn to swim. There will be an event chart that will show what race is currently being held and an announcer will be letting the audience know what heat is on deck or in the water. Swimmers can easily be distracted by the social aspect of a meet. Focus and attention to the speaker and event board will help to get swimmers to the blocks on time.

Your swimmer should report to the coach before and after their race. Generally, girl's events are odd numbered and boy's events are even numbered unless they are swimming a mixed event. This will all be on the heat sheets.

Swimmers should check in with Coach several heats before their race. After the race, please have them report back to the coach for feedback. Your swimmer's time will show on the clock but will also be posted in an area the host team has designated for all results. Occasionally an official will issue a (DQ) disqualification to a swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules that is observed by an official, a disqualification (DQ) will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. A disqualification may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, and performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsman-like conduct. If a DQ is issued, a slip will be given to the coach explaining the reason for the disqualification. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke need to be corrected. They should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in schoolwork-they point out areas that need further practice. Disqualifications are necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, coach, and parent can make a positive situation out of the disqualification. These meets are first and foremost a learning experience.

## **HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR SWIMMER:**

Swimmers benefit most from positive reinforcement. After a race regardless of the result, ask your swimmer how they felt about it. Give them positive feedback and encouragement as needed.

## **APPAREL AND EQUIPMENT:**

**CAPS:** Either a team cap or no cap at all is required to be worn at all swim meets. Coach Kristen will have extra team caps for sale at the meets, the cost per cap is \$10. Any cap may be worn for practice.

**SUITS:** Coach will place orders as needed for the team suit. The team suit should **ONLY** be worn for swim meets to prolong their quality. Any type of suit can be worn at practice.

**GOGGLES:** Goggles are an essential part of your swimmers attire. When purchasing goggles please take them out of the package and make sure they fit your swimmers.

**TEAM CLOTHING:** Periodically Coach Kristen will send out an email placing orders for team T-shirts, hoodies, sweat pants, shorts, etc. These items are optional but fun to wear to meets to support our team.

The team owns a collection of kick boards and pulls buoys for swimmers to use at practice, please do not take these items from the YMCA.

## **COMPETITION**

Competition is about so much more than a specific time cut or placement at a meet. Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records, and other material benefits that come from competition. However, the teamwork, integrity, respect and good sportsmanship they develop through competition will remain with them for a lifetime. Every competition gives our team an opportunity to demonstrate our Core Values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility while showing off all of the hard work that we have put in to practice.

### **SWIMMING TERMINOLOGY:**

**Backstroke Flags:** A set of flags placed 15 feet from the end of the pool. They are used to warn the backstroke swimmers of the turn and finish.

**Dolphin Kick:** The kick used in the butterfly stroke. The feet move up and down together.

**D.Q. (Disqualified):** The swimmer's time is not considered in the competition due to improper stroke technique, false start, etc. This is determined by the judge or referee.

**False Start:** An error in which the swimmer leaves the starting block before the starting signal. If this is done in an individual event the swimmer is D.Q.'d. If done in a relay (the swimmer on the block diving in before his teammate has touched the wall) the relay team will be D.Q.'d.

**Flutter Kick:** The kick used in the freestyle or front crawl stroke and backstroke.

**Heat:** A division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.

**Heat Sheet:** A printed order of swimming events and competitors.

**High Point:** The award given to the boy and girl swimmer in each age group who earns the highest number of individual points during the meet. This is not given at all swim meets.

**I.M.:** ( Individual medley) An event where one swimmer does all four competitive strokes in order. (Butterfly, backstroke, breast stroke, and freestyle).

**Lane Lines:** Specially designed flotation devices used to separate lanes of competition in a meet.

**Lap Counters:** A set of plastic numbers used to let distance swimmers know how far they have swum.

**Leg:** One of four equal parts of a relay race where a different person swims each part.

**NT:** No time. An event that a swimmer has never swam before in competition.

**Prelims and Finals:** In the state meet some age groups will swim prelims and the fastest swimmers in each event and will advance to the finals. 10 and under swimmers do not compete in Finals.

**Scratch:** To withdraw an entry from a race.

**Seeding:** Swimmers are arranged in heats according to their submitted times. NT's will generally swim in the first few heats.

**Split:** A section of a race. Example: a 200 yard race can be divided into four sections (4x50). The split times for each section can be used by the coach to help in proper pacing.

**Timed Finals:** A meet in which all heats are run one right after the other with the fastest times from these swims determining the final places. Races are swum only once.

**Unattached:** A swimmer who competes but does not represent a team. Any athlete who switches to a different swim team must become unattached for 120 days from the last swim meet they swam in before they can become attached to the new team.

**USAS Number:** Number issued by United States Swimming to each individual swimmer. It is made up of the swimmer's name and birthdate. Example: John F. Smith; d.o.b. 6/13/90. The USS# is 061390JOHFSMIT. Each swimmer must have a USS number to be eligible to swim with the team and enter meets.

**Warm Up:** A planned session prior to a race for the swimmer to ready the muscles for a swim.

**Zone Time:** Time required to qualify for the Western Zone Meet held each summer at various locations throughout the west.

We hope that this handbook has been helpful and are glad that you are a part of the Billings YMCA Swim Team, the SEAHAWKS. Please feel free to contact Kristen Wyatt or Natasha Tindall with any further questions.

