BCY TIGERSHARKS SWIM TEAM

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Introduction

YMCA Mission

Here at the YMCA, our mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Financial Assistance is available.

Purpose of Handbook

This handbook provides information on the philosophy of the BCY Swim Team, outlines the requirements and expectations of swimmers and their parents/guardians, and provides general information about the Swim Team Parents' Committee (STPC).

History

The Brandywine YMCA Swim Team, also known as BCY, has a rich history in success. During their 30-plus-year history, the Tigersharks boast one National Champion, five District Records, five State Records, over 100 District Champions, and 80 State Champions!

Philosophy

The YMCA actively supports a comprehensive swimming program as a vehicle for instilling character values, ideas, and behavior that are consistent with YMCA goals. YMCA sports are an avenue for participants to pursue physical activity while learning important life skills. Teaching fundamental skills, encouraging lifetime involvement in physical activity, strengthening the values of fitness, health, and self-respect for others are central themes in the YMCA sports philosophy.

Facility Use

The YMCA provides the swim team with the pool for practices and meets. The swim team is obligated to use the facilities and equipment with care and to respect the rights of others. Please remember the following points:

- Leave the pool deck and locker room neat and clean
- Keep the noise level to a minimum in the locker room
- Be courteous to others using the facility
- Never abuse any part of the facility during practice or meets
- NO CELL PHONES IN LOCKER ROOMS

Notable Aquatic Contacts

Head Swim Coach Seth Dippold

610-380-9622 ext. 2421

sdippold@ymcagbw.org

Aquatics Director Denise Shelton

610-380-9622 ext. 2480

dshelton@ymcagbw.org

Program Information

The BCY Swim Team is a year-round competitive program with both winter and summer seasons.

Team Requirements

Membership

The YMCA of the USA requires that all swimmers be full members in the YMCA branch in which they swim.

Entry Level Requirements

To be eligible for the swim team, swimmers must meet Level requirements below. Coaches will place swimmers in the appropriate level based on level requirements, skill, practice ability, and age.

Academy

A program that has the goal of preparing swimmers and their families to bridge them from non-competitive swimming into competitive swimming. It is also an outlet for those older swimmers that would like to work on their stroke technique and keep in shape over the fall and winter months. Participation in meets is not required, but competitive opportunities will be offered and encouraged for those who would like to try swim meets.

Mini Level

Ages 5 to 10. Swimmers must be able to swim one length of pool front crawl with basic rotary breathing (face in the water) with proper kick, and one length of back crawl with proper kick.

Level 3

Ages 7 to 11. Level 3 is typically for swimmers who have some competitive swimming experience and are interested in continuing to develop proper stroke technique for all four competitive strokes.

Level 2

Ages 9 to 15. Level 2 is designed for the young swimming enthusiast that has competitive swimming experience. These swimmers are interested in refining stroke technique, building endurance in all strokes, and learning basic racing skills.

Level 1

Ages 10 to 18 (10 years old with Head Coach permission only). Level 1 is for swimmers with previous competitive experience. The Level 1 group will focus on refining stroke technique while increasing endurance and speed. Practices will be less focused on direct stroke instruction, and are more intense to prepare swimmers for higher levels of competition. This group will also focus on racing technique and strategy. Attendance will be taken. Level 1 requires a more serious commitment to the sport of swimming. These swimmers are capable of competing at the YMCA District & State meets.

National Team

Participation on the National swim team is by invitation only from the head coach.

Swim Team Seasons

Winter Season

The Winter season may begin for some swimmers with Stroke Clinic. Stroke Clinic concentrates on stroke development and refinement. The winter season begins in early September with practice sessions. League meets are held from October through February with championships, districts and states following through March. There are five levels for swimmers – Mini, Levels 1, 2, 3, and Junior Nationals (Head Coach approval required for this level). BCY also has a National Swim Team; the head coach appoints members of the National Team by his decision only.

Spring Conditioning

The Spring season consists of our Spring Conditioning program. Spring Conditioning is a time to really tweak and fine tune the mechanics of each stroke in a noncompetitive season.

Summer Season

The Summer Swim Team has levels like the winter team – Mini, Levels 1, 2, 3, Jr. Nationals, as well as Nationals. League meets are held in June and July, with championships held at the end of July.

Swimmer Responsibilities

Attendance Policies

Practice

Practice is the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is required to progress through the team levels. The BCY coaching staff will assign swimmers to teams and swim levels based on age, ability, and experience. More than one practice level may share the pool at the same time. Swimmers are to be on time and ready to practice at their time with all their necessary equipment. To get the most out of every practice session, please follow these guidelines:

- Be on deck and ready at least five minutes before practice. Have your goggles and swim cap on.
- Attend the designated number of practices for your level, as follows:

Academy	1 - 2 Practices per week
Mini	2 - 3 Practices per week
Level 3	2 - 4 Practices per week
Level 2*	3 - 4 Practices per week
Level 1*	4 - 5 Practices per week

*Possible Dryland Trainings Opportunities

- Swimmers are not allowed to attend any practice other than their level. Parents/Guardians need to understand that swimming practices and levels are just like other sports, athletes need to come to their level specific practices.
- Swimmers are to stay for the entire practice.
- *****In the event of inclement weather please call the YMCA, check swim team website (www.bcyswimming.org), and look for emails.*****
- Only leave practice and lane with the coach's permission.
- Focus on the practice and follow the coach's instructions.
- Listen when the coach is speaking.
- Ask questions if you do not understand the coach's instructions.
- Come prepared to swim with cap, goggles, water bottles (with names), training equipment, and a positive attitude.
- Show proper behavior in both the pool area and locker rooms.
- Represent the Y well both at our branch and all other facilities.
- The following discipline code has been established to address problems:
    - Step 1. Coach and swimmer will discuss incident.
    - Step 2. Coach will request swimmer to sit out the remainder of practice and swimmer's parents will be notified of the incident.
    - Step 3. Conference among coach, swimmer, and parents to discuss the issue.
    - Step 4. Conference among coach, swimmer, and parents; written course of action and consequences.
    - Step 5. Dismissal from the swim team.

What to Bring to Practice

Please bring an extra suit, goggles, and cap to practice. The YMCA does not have items to loan swimmers. Please clearly label all items with your name as many swimmers have the same equipment.

- Practice suit
- Goggles
- Swim cap
- Towel
- Personal flippers, buoys, kickboards (optional)

- Lock for your locker
- YMCA membership card
- Flip flops or deck shoes
- Water bottles
- Swim bag (for all the above)

Meet Attendance

All swimmers are expected to attend all dual meets. It is important to commit your child to the meet through our TeamUnify website. Remember to be on time (arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time) and ready to swim. In the event a swimmer must miss a meet, please notify the coaching staff in advance by declining the swimmer on TeamUnify at www.bcyswimming.org. Please make sure you are declining them from the correct meet. In the event of a last-minute illness or emergency on the day of the meet, please notify the coaching staff.

Team Suits

There will be new team suits every winter season that will extend into the summer season. It is encouraged that every swimmer gets the new team suit so we looked unified. If there are concerns with this, contact Head Coach Seth Dippold (sdippold@ymcagbw.org) as there may be exceptions to wear just black or previous team suits. Technical suits are only allowed to be worn at Championship meets, USA, and Invitational Meets.

Competitive Events

BCY Age Divisions

Swimming events are organized by age. Winter team age groups are determined by the swimmer's age as of December 1st. Summer team age groups are determined by the swimmer's age as of June 1st.

The age groups are as follows:

- 8 & Under (some meets will be broken down to 6 & Under as well as 8 & Under)
- 9 & 10
- 11 & 12
- 13 & 14
- 15 – 18 / Seniors

Swim Meet Competition

Competitions fall into the following categories: Dual Meets, League Championships, Districts (Winter only), States (Winter only), Nationals, USA Meets, and Invitational Meets. When there are required qualifying times for specific meets, the Head Coach will inform those swimmers, and families that the swimmer has made the times, or that the swimmer is close to making the times.

Dual Meets

Dual swim meets are the basic competitive events. A dual meet is a competitive event between two teams. Winter season dual meets run from November through January. Summer season dual meets run from June through July. Coaches will establish all entries for the dual meets and try to enter all swimmers in the meet. Swimmers are entered in the meet based on their age and will compete against swimmers of their own age. Swimmers are expected to attend a specific number of meets per season to be eligible for that season's Championships (see "League Championships").

Winter Season

Dual meets are held at participating YMCAs on Saturdays during the winter season. Each swimmer is eligible to swim a maximum of two individual events and one relay event. Some swimmers may swim 3 individual events. Some may swim more as an exhibition event, which means they will not be scored. Coaches make all decisions on which events swimmers will swim. Eligibility for post-season competition depends on team and individual performance during the season. The age group a swimmer will compete in during the winter season is determined based on the swimmer's age on December 1.

Swimmers swim as a team and scoring is done on a team basis. Points are tallied by age group. The age group with the greatest number of points wins the age group. The team that wins the meet is the team that wins the most age groups.

Summer Season

Dual meets are held at member team facilities on Wednesday nights or Saturday mornings during the summer season. Each swimmer may swim up to three events–two individual events and one relay event. The age group for the summer dual meet season is determined based on the swimmer's age on June 1.

Swimmers swim as a team and scoring is done on a team basis. Points are tallied by age group. The age group with the greatest number of points wins the age group. The team that wins the meet is the team that wins the most age groups.

Relay Policy

The Head Coach decides all relays, and that decision is final. The decision on who will swim on a relay team is determined based on several factors, including the following:

- Individual times
- Past performance in meets
- Practice attendance
- Dedication, hard work in practices, routinely doing things correctly in practice
- BCY will not give a relay place to a "faster" swimmer who does not give effort, respect fellow swimmers, or misses practice

League Championships

Championships are held at the end of each season—winter and summer—and include the teams that BCY competes against during each respective season.

To be eligible for championships, a swimmer must do the following:

- Attend at least half of the dual meets presented
- Not have a withstanding balance on their account
- Parents of the swimmer MUST have volunteered at a minimum of 2 meets

Winter Championships and Summer Championships

A swimmer must participate in the required number of dual meets during the season to be eligible to compete in championships. Championship information will be distributed to each qualifying swimmer. Parents/children may choose their events and sign up accordingly on TeamUnify. If a parent declares their child, but no events are selected, the coach will pick the events. Each swimmer may swim a maximum of three individual events and one relay or 2 individual events and 2 relays.

Charlie Hartley Silver Championships

Charlie Hartley Silver Champs is held at the end of February and is a championship meet for those who have not made district qualifying time yet, but are close.

- Attend at least half of the dual meets presented
- Not have a withstanding balance on their account
- Parents of the swimmer MUST have volunteered at a minimum of 2 meets
- Swim a qualifying time but not swim a district qualifying time in the current season.

District Championships

The YMCA Eastern Districts are held each March. The YMCA Eastern Districts are divided into sessions based on age groups. Sessions are held in the morning and the afternoon.

To qualify for Districts, a swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Swim a qualifying time in the current season in open, league, dual, or high school competition with three official timers or electronic timing. Qualifying times are posted on the team bulletin board.
- Be a full member of the Brandywine YMCA for a minimum of 90 days prior to the YMCA Eastern Districts
- Represent only the Brandywine YMCA, excluding school swimming, in any open or closed competition during the current season, September 1st through April 30th
- Have represented the BCY Swim Team at three separate meets during the current season
- Parents must have volunteered at least 2 swim meets.

All relays will be determined by the Head Coach.

Swimmers who participate in Districts are required to attend the scheduled practice sessions for Districts. A YMCA Eastern Districts practice schedule and the session dates and times will be given to each qualifying swimmer. The schedule also is posted on the team bulletin board and website.

States (East-Central-West)

The YMCA Pennsylvania State Championship Meet is held after the YMCA Eastern District Meet. The YMCA Pennsylvania State meet is held at Pennsylvania State University in State College, PA, and is divided into sessions based on age groups.

To qualify for States, a swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Meet all the criteria for the District Championships
- Place in the top 6 at the Eastern Districts
- Or the next six fastest swimmers from across the 3 districts (West, Central, and East) shall also be eligible for the State Meet in all events and relays.

The Head Coach will determine who will swim on the relay teams at States.

Some families choose to stay overnight at a hotel while attending States. The BCY Swim Team does not take responsibility for swimmers during this overnight meet.

Each child must have adult supervision when not swimming.

Nationals

The YMCA holds a Short Course (25 yards) National Meet in April and a Long Course (50 meters) National Meet in late July of each year. These meets consist of swimmers from around the United States that have made a national qualifying time. BCY qualifies swimmers for both events annually.

To qualify for the YMCA Short Course National meet, the swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Swim a YMCA Short Course National qualifying time between March 1st through the entry submission date
- Provide a proof of time for any qualifying time made at a High School or USA Swimming meet. The proof of time must have a meet official's signature. Proof of time is an official copy of the meet, signed by one of the officials at the meet. The name and time must be clearly visible. Swimmers who make National cuts are responsible for getting their proof of times to the Head Coach.
- Compete in at least three dual meets during the current season
- Compete in at least one nationally sanctioned meet (YMCA Eastern Districts or YMCA Pennsylvania States)
- Be a full annual member of the Brandywine YMCA for a minimum of ninety-days (90) prior to the National meet
- Represent only the Brandywine YMCA, excluding High School swimming, in any open or closed competition during the current season, September 1st through April 30th
- Be at least twelve (12) years of age

To qualify for the YMCA Long Course National meet, the swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Swim YMCA Long Course National qualifying time between September 1st and the meet entry submission date

- Provide a proof of time for any qualifying time made at a High School or USA Swimming meet. The proof of time must have a meet official's signature. Proof of time is an official copy of the meet, signed by one of the officials at the meet. The name and time must be clearly visible. Swimmers who make National cuts are responsible for getting their proof of times to the Head Coach.
- Be a full annual member of the Brandywine YMCA by May 1st
- Represent only the Brandywine YMCA in any open competition during the current season, May 1st to August 31st
- Represent BCY in at least three swim meets including YMCA Eastern Districts or YMCA Pennsylvania States from September 1s to the entry submission date
- Participate in at least two long course meets during the current summer season
- Be at least twelve (12) years of age

Invitational Meets

Participation is optional. Non-refundable entry fees must be paid by each swimmer.

Invitational meets are hosted throughout the year. Information on these meets is posted on the website www.bcyswimming.org. A fee is required for each event entered and will be billed through TeamUnify. Watch for information on the invitational meets. Swimmers usually can choose the events they want to swim at an invitational meet, while the coaches determine the relay teams. ***Swimmers may not attend ANY invitational meet without a BCY coach.***

USA Swimming

Non-refundable entry fees must be paid by each swimmer.

The Brandywine YMCA Swim Team offers USA Swimming membership for swimmers ages 11 and up, and is by Head Coach invitation only. The one-year membership entitles swimmers to additional USA Swimming competition and experience. Our coaches will determine which USA meets swimmers will attend and YMCA meets take priority over USA meets. Coaching staff can recommend a new or younger swimmer to hold off registering until their next winter season.

USA Swimming requirements state that BCY swimmers must be current members of USA Swimming. If you currently are a member of USA Swimming but you represent another swim team, you must transfer your USA Swimming membership to BCY before you can attend any USA Swim meets with BCY. ***Swimmers may not attend ANY USA meet without a BCY coach.***

USA, Invitational, District, States, and National Meets

Swimmers will be released to coaches, and should sit on deck with their team while parents are on bleachers. Parents are not allowed on deck for these meets, Head Referees can and will stop the meet until parents leave the deck.

Swimmers may bring food, drinks, and games to keep them occupied. Some of these meets can run for many hours.

For more information, please visit these websites:

- www.usaswimmming.org
- www.maswim.org

****Please remember: BCY has due dates for meet entries, regardless of what the online packet says. The registration deadline to get your swimmer(s) into these meets is BCY's deadline, not the actual events deadline. No exceptions will be made to this policy.**

Parent Responsibilities

The YMCA embraces four core values: caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. As members of the BCY Swim Team, children athletes and their parents are expected to model these values. Some ways the children are expected to do this is by showing support to their teammates and competitors, respecting their coaches and the decisions they make, coming ready to practice with all necessary equipment, staying until the end of each meet, and having a positive attitude. In turn, the parents are also expected to model the core values by having their child at practice on time, respecting the coaches' decisions, volunteering at swim meets, staying until the end of each meet, positively supporting their child, and showing respect to the children and parents on the BCY Swim Team and our competitors.

Practice

Parents should not be on the pool deck or talk to their children, or the coach during practice. During practice, parents may watch from the bleachers (not wooden benches), use the seating available in the snack room (Lounge), or enjoy our gym and the many fitness classes that run during practice times. Please keep the following in mind as you watch your child develop:

- Children 11 years or younger must have a parent accompany them into the building and to the pool area where coaches will take responsibility. During practice, parents are not required to stay in the pool area but are required to stay in the building. At the end of practice, parents need to be in the pool area to take responsibility of their child.
- Each child learns at a different rate and responds differently to instruction. Some swimmers take longer to learn and this requires more patience on the part of the parents.
- It is not unusual for a swimmer to turn in slower times as they begin the process of mastering proper stroke technique. Good initial habits become the foundation for future success. Growth spurts greatly affect strokes, but get resolved quickly.
- Swimmers under the age of 10 can be inconsistent swimmers. Please be patient and allow these young swimmers to learn to love the sport.
- Encourage your child to swim because he or she wants to. Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.
- The Brandywine YMCA Swim Team is comprised of many swimmers. The coaches must balance what is best for each with the needs of the team. Remember that coaches have the best interests of each swimmer at heart.

Administrative

- All forms need to be completed, signed, and handed in prior to your swimmer(s) first practice
- Parents must keep their TeamUnify account up-to-date at www.bcyswimming.org. This includes current email addresses, phone numbers, and swimmer information (such as t-shirt size).

- Familiarize yourself with “The 10 Commandments of a Swim Team Parent” and the “Parent Code of Conduct” (handouts provided by Head Coach Seth Dippold). Parents are expected to support all swimmers, Coaching Staff, and Program. We are a YMCA, not a private club.

Volunteering

Like other youth sports programs, volunteers are needed to run a successful meet. While swimming is a team sport, each child is also competing individually to improve their own times from meet to meet. This means that there are many volunteers needed to both keep track of the times for each swimmer, as well as to ensure that each swimmer is using proper technique in their strokes.

To make it all possible, many parents are needed to volunteer in a variety of different positions that will help us make the meets run smoothly. For home meets, BCY is required to provide a minimum of the following volunteers to run the meet:

- 7 to 13 timers
- 3 Level 1 officials to be stroke and turn judges
- 2 Level 2 officials for referee and starter
- 1 Administrative Official
- 1 Colorado Console Operator
- 1 Meet Manager Operator

In addition to the minimum required positions for the meet to run, there are several other supporting roles that we need at each home meet to support the team and make things run smoothly:

- 2 people for concession setup
- 2+ people to run concession sales
- Volunteer coordinator to ensure all our volunteers are in place for the day of the meet
- 2 people for meet setup and breakdown

It is expected that every family volunteer at a minimum of 2 meets per season, and may be assigned a responsibility. We will keep track of each family’s volunteer roles. One of the requirements for the children athletes to participate in championships is the parent’s volunteer participation.

Parents are also asked to donate food and drinks to the snack bar for each home meet.

Several volunteer positions require certification before a person can volunteer for that position. Training for these positions will be provided, and paid for by the YMCA. Listings for these trainings can be found on www.penndelswim.org.

Volunteer signups for each meet will be on our website www.bcyswimming.org.

STPC (Swim Team Parents' Committee)

The success of the swim team and the swim season depends on parents. BCY established a STPC to help organize parent volunteers. The STPC enables the swim team to function by organizing parent support at each swim event.

The YMCA Aquatic Director sanctions the STPC annually. All parents and coaches are members of the STPC. The STPC is an Advisory Committee; final decisions are made by the Head Coach and Aquatic Director. To represent the team, parental views, and ideas, volunteerism is needed.

- The STPC will have at least a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Past Chair
- All Positions shall be 2-year terms except for the Past Chair, this role will serve a 1-year term
- No member can spend more than 6 years in total in leadership on the committee
- STPC board members must meet annually a minimum of 4 times

Roles and Responsibilities of the STPC

- Running dual meets
- Securing meet officials and getting parents trained to officiate
- Operation of the concession stand
- Fundraising for National team
- Spirit wear (approval from marketing is required to assure brand compliance)
- Cap and t-shirts for Districts and National meets
- Annual Campaign leadership and participation
- Banquet planning and support
- Fundraising for special items or capital projects
- Support at invitational events, leagues, Districts, States and Nationals
- Booking hotels and coordinating logistics at travel meets

If you have limited time to help, you may be interested in volunteering in a position that does not involve attending the monthly meetings but will still keep you very involved in the team.

Please note that these positions are in addition to the volunteering all parents must do at the individual dual meets.

Communication

There are many dates and events for swimmers and their families to remember. These dates and events are communicated as follows:

- The swim team website www.bcyswimming.org
- Email
- Bulletin boards on the pool deck
- STPC Board Members

- Swim Team Facebook Page (BCY Tiger Sharks Swim Team)
- Coaches

Swim Team Website

The swim team website, www.bcyswimming.org and the YMCA website www.ymcagbw.org, are available to all families and include updates and schedules.

Bulletin Board

Meet schedules and results, a social calendar and informational handouts are posted on the Swim Team Bulletin Board located on the pool deck. Please do not remove any items posted on the bulletin board.

Email

All families need to ensure that they have a current email address on file in their TeamUnify account. Email is used for updates, weather-related cancellations, and reminders about practices, meets, and social events. If you have trouble accessing or updating your email address listed on your TeamUnify account, please email Head Coach Seth Dippold at sdippold@ymcagbw.org for assistance.

STPC

All parents are members of STPC and are invited to attend all STPC meetings.

Coaches

Please do not have conferences with the coaches during practice times. If you have a question for the coach, you can email Head Coach Seth Dippold at sdippold@ymcagbw.org.

Fundraising

Team Fund Raising

All funds raised on behalf of Brandywine YMCA and/or its programs or program participants are the property of the YMCA. With the coaches' input and the Aquatic Director's approval, the STPC will identify swim team needs and raise funds for that purchase only. Purchases made by the STPC are the property of the Brandywine YMCA.

TeamUnify

- TeamUnify will be used to communicate all event and team information. Parents will need to sign their swimmers up for each meet on the TeamUnify website.
- If a parent does not receive a notification asking them to join TeamUnify or receive TeamUnify emails, they must contact Head Coach Seth Dippold as soon as possible
- The Y will not "front" money for meets and other expenses that are to be paid by parents in advance. All payments must be paid via TeamUnify.

- Parents must have automatic payment information set-up on TeamUnify two weeks after registration. If parents do not have an account by the first meet, their child may not swim in the meet.
- Parent account balances on TeamUnify will be reviewed monthly by Aquatics Director and Branch Business Manger to make sure balances are paid
- Access TeamUnify at www.bcyswimming.org

Video Feedback

- Due to the importance of feedback, especially timely feedback, we will be implementing videotaping during certain parts of practice. We want to be able to show kids how to improve and the best way is to allow them to visually see what they are doing.
- The videos taken at practice will be used at that practice. We will use the videos to point out the great things they are doing, while also showing the areas of opportunity. The videos will not be posted anywhere and will remain on the tape. Once a week each tape will be deleted.
- Even though this may be a rare event, it is important for everyone to know ahead of time. If there is problem or a concern with videotaping your child swimming to be able to give them feedback, please contact Head Coach Seth Dippold. We will mark down your child's name to make sure that they are not filmed.
- Remember, if there is a concern, contact Head Coach Seth Dippold. If you do not contact the coach, we will continue with the practice as is.

BCY Coaching Staff

Head Coach

Seth Dippold
sdippold@ymcagbw.org
610-380-9622 ext 2421

Assistant Coaches

Jenni Leigh Krebs

Laine Chidester

Parent Handbook Acceptance

By signing below, I certify that I have read, understand, and agree to the conditions set forth in the Parent's Handbook.

_____

Name (please print)

_____

Signature

_____

Date