

1. About the Dolphin Team

1.1. Mission

The Dolphin swim team is a competitive swim program and encourages youngsters to fulfill their potential as:

- Accomplished athletes
- Caring teammates
- Good community members

1.2. History

The Dolphin team has been in existence for over 50 years and continuously strives to help young athletes achieve their athletic and personal goals. The team is led by an outstanding group of active adult volunteers, which is one of the keys to the team's ongoing success.

1.3. Facility

The Westerly-Pawcatuck YMCA provides for scheduled practice and meet times in a 6-lane, 25 yard pool. The Dolphins also use touchpads, starting system, and pace clocks from Colorado Timing Systems.

1.4. Seasons

1.4.1. Fall / Winter (Sep – Mar)

This is the Short Course season because meets are conducted in 25 yard pools.

1.4.2. Spring / Summer (May - July)

As an additional option we offer a Long Course season for our swimmers. Meets during this season are typically held in 50 meter pools (Olympic swimming standard).

1.5. YMCA Sponsorship

The Westerly-Pawcatuck YMCA leadership and staff provide incredible support to the Dolphins and we are considered a valued program within this YMCA organization. The Aquatic director provides leadership, consultation and support on a daily basis. In addition, aquatic instructor staff are available for optional individual tutoring/lessons. When you attend a Dolphins home meet, it is not unusual to see one (or more) of the senior Y leaders in attendance and cheering us on.

1.6. Certified Coaches (for conditioning groups)

We have an awesome staff of 14 coaches, many whom have a competitive swimming background. Coaches have earned certifications from both the national YMCA as well as USA Swimming. Coaching credentials include Safe Sport, First Aid, CPR, Water Safety, Coaching Foundations, and Stroke Fundamentals. The combined staff has more than 50 years of coaching experience.

1.7. Certified Coaches (for Novice swimmers)

We are very fortunate to have additional instructor help from within our parent group. These instructors supplement the coaching staff to increase the coach-to-swimmer ratio. Each instructor has been through a training process and all novice swimmers follow the same teaching methodology.

1.8. Boosters

There is a Booster leadership team which provides operational governance for the program, including Policies, Finance, and Operations support. The leadership team is comprised of 6 individuals: 4 elected officers, 1 head coach, and 1 YMCA professional.

If you are a parent / guardian of a dolphin swimmer then you are automatically invited to attend / participate in these monthly meetings. Meetings are held regularly (typically 1 per month) and meeting minutes are posted for all to see.

Your active participation in booster meetings will help the Boosters continue to focus on providing a positive experience for each Dolphin competitive swimmer.

1.9. Program Registration

The Dolphin Swim team is a Program offered by the Ocean Community YMCA, and program registration is managed via the team's self-service web site. Instructions will be provided upon request.

All Dolphin swimmers must have an Ocean Community YMCA membership. If you are new to competitive swimming and unsure, we offer a limited time no-charge practice trial. Please contact the Y aquatic director for more details.



2. Join the Dolphin Team



2.1. Why Join a Competitive Swim Team

Swim team is intended for swimmers aged 6+ who would like to develop and enhance their strokes and build endurance at a faster pace than they would in lessons. Competitive swim team allows the opportunity to build stronger:

- Safety skills in the water
- Fitness level
- Friendship thru teamwork
- Self-esteem and self confidence
- Family involvement

2.2. Prerequisite Skills to Join

Swimmers must be able to swim 1 length of the pool without assistance. It is preferred that the child has had some previous swimming instruction

2.3. Alternative Programs

- YMCA group, private swim instruction – excellent program for gaining basic swimming skills
- Pre-Swim Team – an introduction to competitive swim team (strokes and endurance) without the meets. It is excellent for the child thinking of swim team but not yet sure

2.4. Prerequisite Skills to Compete

The YMCA offers opportunity for beginners to compete in a meet. Dolphin coaches consider the following skills as a prerequisite for meet participation.

- Rotary breathing
- Swim 25 yards each of following: Freestyle, Backstroke, Flutter Kick

2.5. Swimmer Equipment requirement

- Swimsuit, Swim Cap, and goggles (best to have a backup set)
- Snorkel, Fins and Paddles (required for swimmers beyond Novice level)

2.6. Program Fee (Fall-Winter)

- Buckley Pool - \$225 for Novice practice group.
- Fuller Pool - \$410 for all Fuller practice groups
- The Program Fee covers ...
 - Full season of practice / instruction and facility costs
 - League membership fees
 - Cost of dual meets and League championship meet
- Fee Notes ...
 - Promotion from Novice will increase fee (prorated by weeks remaining)
 - \$100 discount for HS swim team kids due to conflict in Fall-Winter season
 - \$20 discount for multiple children families. Discount applied to each sibling after the first.
 - Financial assistance is available via the Y Cares Program (please see the Y Aquatics Director for more information on this program).

2.7. Invitational Meet Fees

- Swimmers may optionally choose to compete at various invitational and specialty meets offered by the league (i.e. Freestyle Frenzy, Winter Carnival, Pentathlon etc.). Meet fees for these meets must be paid by the swimmer at the time entries are submitted

2.8. USA Swimming Option

- We are also registered as a USA swim club and the more serious swimmers may choose to add that option for additional competition. We typically like to wait for age 9 (and above) before recommending this option. Membership fee for USA swimming is \$78 per year, and USA meet fees must be paid by the swimmer at the time entries are submitted.



3. Swim Team Practice & Structure

3.1. Setting Goals

All returning swimmers are expected to collaborate with coaches and set outcome goals for themselves. An outcome goal is something that is easy to measure such as learning a skill, setting a personal best time, or qualifying for a championship meet. Please see section 7 for more details.

3.2. Practice Groups

Coaches will evaluate and group swimmers by skill level and age to effectively and efficiently run practice sessions within a 6 lane pool. These grouping will allows the coaches to better differentiate the skills needed in each lane and teach at the correct pace. These grouping also allow greater confidence and increased connections between the swimmers in their lane.

General practice groups include:

- Novice
- Beginner
- Age group (1 & 2)
- Senior

3.3. Practice Times

Practice takes place Monday thru Friday in the late afternoon and into early evening, and technique practice on Sundays. Practice times are broken into 5 daily sessions during the week. Practice duration can be 45 to 90 minutes depending on skill level. The actual practice times and groups will be published at the start of the fall season.

3.4. Practice Frequency

Novice / Beginners should attend 2 to 3 times per week, and seniors should consider 5 to 6 times per week. Age groupers should attend between 3 and 6 based upon their goals and desired level of improvement.

3.5. Age Groupings

All youth swimming in our country is divided by both gender and age grouping. There are 10 distinct groups (5 for each gender) as follows:

- 8 & Under
- 9 & 10
- 11&12
- 13 & 14
- 15 & Over

In youth swimming the age is effective on your birthday.

3.6. Optional – Individual Instruction Sessions (for a fee)

Some developing swimmers require more individual attention than is available at a big practice, and individual instructions can be scheduled with Y instructors. This option should be discussed with swim coach in order to create the proper instruction set.

4. Swim Meets



4.1. Novice Eligibility

Novice swimmers must achieve coach certification to compete in a meet. The Dolphin Novice program is structured to provide the fundamental training for new swimmers to become eligible to participate in swim meets and includes basic competitive skills for Breathing, Body Balance, Sculling, and Rhythm.

4.2. Types of Swim Meets

- 4.2.1. YMCA League – Dual meets
- 4.2.2. YMCA League – Specialty meets
- 4.2.3. Invitational meets (both YMCA and USA)
- 4.2.4. Championship Meets (both YMCA and USA)

4.3. Mandatory Swim Meets

All certified Dolphin swimmers are expected to compete in YMCA league dual meets unless excused by coach. All certified swimmers are required to swim in the YMCA league championship meet in March. All remaining meets are optional including league specialty meets, invitational meets, and USA meets.

4.4. How does a Swim Meet Work?

4.4.1. Meet Announcements

All meets will be advertised on the Dolphin web site. Please ensure that you have credentials to log in.

4.4.2. Sign Up Process

The Dolphin web site provides a sign up process for all meets along with a convenient note section for communication with coaching staff.

4.4.3. Pre-Meet Communication

The coach will issue an email message to all signed-up competitors prior to the meet including information such as event participation, warm up time, meet start time, and meet location. Our web site contains detail directions to all league sites.

4.4.4. Meet

4.4.5. Post-Meet Communication

The coach will issue an email message with results to all participants including scores, times, and place position. The timing of this email depends upon the race director sending out result files to coaches.

4.5. What to Bring to a Swim Meet

Just as in practice, it is recommended that the swimmer brings along towels, flip flops, and extra pair of goggles. Additional sports clothing is necessary for warmth in bullpen and staging area. Parents often bring an extra towel and folding chairs for gym as meets can last up to 4 hours.

5. Dolphin Communication



5.1. Web Site

The Dolphins use a web site hosted by Team Unify – a platform designed specifically for swimming and integration of swim team activities. The Dolphin web site is a center of communication and includes: team information, race results, calendar schedules, meet information and Sign-up. It also contains the database of our members including family contact information and swimmer information required for meet participation.

Coaches and Boosters also use the team unify “email center” computer application to initiate large email broadcasts.

5.2. Your Web Site account

5.2.1. Public and Private

While we maintain a public site, we keep most of our site private including meet information, race results and all of your account information. You will be issued credentials for effective use this site when you join the team.

5.2.2. Your account information

Your account serves as the basis for our automated communication process. Each family account can store 3 email addresses and 2 SMS (text) numbers. Please ensure these are correct so that you receive all of our communication

5.3. Announcements

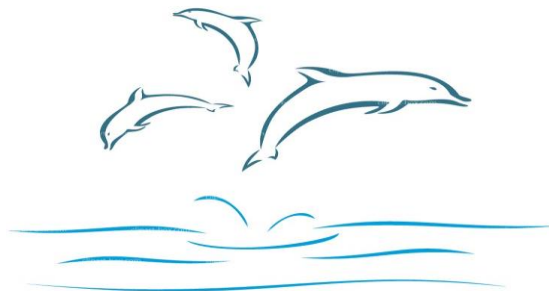
Most announcements originate from either the head coach or an executive of the Booster group and are generated via email.

5.4. Booster Meetings

The Booster president runs close to 10 meetings per year, and our Dolphin families are invited to attend most. If you are interested in knowing more, or having your opinion heard please join us at these meetings. All Booster meetings stay within the announced time limitations in order to respect everyone’s busy schedule.

5.5. Contact the Dolphins

Please note that there is a “Contact Us” feature on the web site. Please feel free to use this feature when you need help, and someone on the distribution list will respond.



6. Volunteer Roles



6.1. Coaches

The Dolphin coaching staff is mostly a volunteer group. Most of our coaches have competitive swimming experience and prior coaching experience. In addition the staff has earned certifications from the YMCA (mandatory), USA Swimming, and American Swim Coaches Association (ASCA). All current coaches have family members on the team, and 4 of our coaches are former Dolphin swimmers.

6.2. Booster Officers

The Dolphin Boosters are led by an elected President, Vice president, secretary and treasurer and serve a 3-year term. All of the Booster leaders have children who are current Dolphin swimmers.

6.3. Parents/Boosters

Like all other swim teams, we could not survive without the incredible volunteer participation of our parent boosters—likely the largest and most active volunteer group in the Y. Some of the roles where parents can contribute include:

- Publicity / Newspaper
- Web site administration
- Concession stand (very important fund raiser)
- Swim-a-thon assistance (another fund raiser)
- Swim meet Officials (act as meet judges, referees, starter)
- Swim meet Volunteers (act as Lane Timers, bullpen crew, meet director and meet announcer)

6.4. Parent-Instructors

We need a large number of teachers for helping Novice swimmers learn critical skills. Our goal is to have a volunteer staff of 8 people (or more) who will work alongside coaches and provide a high ratio of teachers to new swimmers. We have a documented methodology and the coaches will provide training, guidance, and leadership.



7. Dolphin Swimmer Responsibilities



7.1. Practice Attendance

We do not have rules for mandatory practice, but we do offer the following guidance to help athletes with their progress, conditioning, and self-esteem. Please consider the following guiding points to swimmer development:

- Attend 3 to 6 practices per week – as you age increase frequency
- Develop a habit when you attend and stick with it
- Progress in the sport of swimming requires time in the water

7.2. Swim Meet Attendance

We expect that all our swimmers attend all YMCA dual meets unless excused by Coach or ineligible (typically 4 away and 4 home meets). Team members are also expected to swim the league championship meet in March. All other meets are optional and available as you wish.

7.3. Being a Good Teammate

Swimmers spend a lot of time working together to improve, and it is important to the coaching staff that we have a positive social environment (and we will give your best to foster that feeling). We ask all Dolphins to:

- Bring a positive attitude to practice
- Respect your teammates
- Listen to coaches
- Maintain a sense of humor

7.4. Setting Goals

Just as in all other forms of athletic competition it is very difficult to continue to improve with setting and achieving goals. All returning Dolphin swimmers are responsible for establishing one or more athletic goals, and actively striving to attain each. It is important that goals are established with the help of a coach, and supported by the swimmer's choice of practice schedule attendance. This process is most effective when the swimmer keeps a weekly log of progress, skills learned, and areas which require more attention.

7.5. Communication

Effective communication between coach and athlete is a fundamental building block for team athletic success. We expect each swimmer (and supporting family) to notify the coaching staff when conflicts arise which interfere with swimmer carrying out their responsibilities (listed herein), or having difficulty athletic performance. Examples of conflicts which should be clearly conveyed include:

- Sickness or injury
- Family events and commitments
- School activities
- Need for more skill instruction

This is a very large team, so please do not assume that the coaches always know what is going on outside the pool – likely not.

7.6. Swim-a-thon participation

All Dolphin swimmers are expected to participate in our annual swim-a-thon. This event allows us to raise money to fund initiatives (ex. equipment) which benefit all Dolphin athletes as well as for our high school senior scholarship program.



8. Athlete Awards and Recognition



8.1. Race time Awards (Medals and Ribbons)

Swimmers have the opportunity to win awards for their race time performance at swim meets. Ribbons are typically awarded for top 3 places at dual meets, and medals are awarded for top 10 places at championship meets. There are also many invitational meets and the awards (type and quantity) are determined by the race director. Almost all of our Dolphin swimmers will earn some performance during the swim season.

8.2. Record Breakers (Plaque)

We track and update Dolphin team records (by age group), and have been doing so since the 1970's. We celebrate and publicize every swimmer who lowers an existing record time, and we place their name on the record in the Fuller Pool.

8.3. Pace Setters (Plaque)

Coaches select you for this award because your presence at practice has a positive impact, and other swimmers benefit from what you do. Specifically you demonstrate excellence in one or more of the following ways:

- You are a responsible lane leader
- You set a good practice pace
- You have a strong desire to improve technique
- Your social presence makes the lane run smoother
- You communicated effectively (listening and speaking)

8.4. Age Group Excellence (Plaque)

Coaches select 3 swimmers from each age group/gender for this award (gold, silver, bronze) based upon your contribution as a good teammate. Specifically you demonstrate all of the following traits:

- You treat all with respect and thoughtfulness
- Your competitive drive is infectious
- You win with humility
- You lose with dignity
- You demonstrate curiosity and drive to improve
- Your sense of humor relieves practice stress

8.5. Awesome Attendance (Wall Plaque)

Coaches take attendance at every practice and wish to recognize all swimmers who attend season practice at least 60% of the available practice time.

8.6. Permanent Wall Plaques

In early 2016 it was decided that swimmers who earned an award in any of 4 categories (8.2 to 8.5) will have their name inscribed on a permanent wall plaque. These plaques will be visible to members, visitors, and future generations.