

ORRVILLE YMCA



SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK



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Welcome

Welcome to the Orrville YMCA swim team and the great sport of competitive swimming! We are excited about the upcoming season! In addition, we are glad that you have chosen our team for your swimmer!

Through competitive swimming, many qualities will be developed such as the following: self-confidence, goal setting, responsibility, sportsmanship, character building and self-discipline. Our goal is to build each swimmer's character values through hard work and dedication.

This handbook's purpose is to set forth the expectations and give parents and caregivers a guide for the upcoming season.

YMCA Philosophy

Our Y mission statement is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Our three areas of focus are: youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA's involvement in sports has been one means of teaching Christian ideas, values, and behavior based on this purpose. Sports in the YMCA have never been an end in itself, but rather a vehicle for achieving a much more global purpose, promoting character development through: Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Respect, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.

Values

The Orrville YMCA swim team will help each swimmer develop the following values at all team activities:

- TRUSTWORTHINESS in all their actions by being honest, reliable, and loyal.
- RESPECT for themselves, their teammates, their coaches, and their opponents by treating others the way you would like to be treated.
- Taking RESPONSIBILITY for their actions, and learning the responsibilities they have to the team.
- Showing FAIRNESS to themselves and to others, especially their teammates by playing by the rules, sharing, and being open-minded.
- A CARING attitude for others around them by being kind and compassionate.
- CITIZENSHIP at all YMCA swimming activities.

Team Philosophy

The coaches of the Orrville YMCA swim team will focus on an individual's improvement. A swimmer's achievement is not measured by their finishing place at meets, but by an overall improvement of times, attitude, behavior, goal achievement, and sportsmanship. In joining the Orrville YMCA swim team, each swimmer will be embarking on a journey of self-improvement that will translate into future goals in life.

Team Goals

Have fun! This is probably the most important goal that all swimmers, parents, volunteers, and coaches should have. Swimmers will be challenged at each practice. The words "I can't" will not be a part of their vocabulary but the words "I will try and do my best" will be. Each swimmer will learn to challenge themselves. Goal setting is as much a part of swimming as it is a part of life. Everyone's hard work will pay off with personal and team improvements, and that is the fun part of swimming!

- Every swimmer will learn the correct technique of the four competitive strokes, turns, and starts
- Every swimmer will improve meet performance
- Every swimmer will improve practice performance
- Every swimmer will improve their knowledge of competitive swimming
- Every swimmer will learn goal setting
- Every swimmer will learn sportsmanship
- Every parent will support the team through volunteering
- Swimming has no bench sitters
- Swimming is healthy
- Swimming provides self-discipline
- Swimming teaches the relationship between team and the individual
- Swimming teaches organization

Swim Team Requirements

- Current membership in good standing at the Orrville YMCA.
- Registration on the Swim Team through the Orrville YMCA.
- An Emergency Medical Authorization Form on file with the Orrville YMCA.
- New swimmers must pass minimum swim requirements

Competition Guidelines

- Athletes in all groups will compete in the NEO Y Swim League (winter) and Mid-Ohio Swim League (MOSL) swim league (summer), dual and championship meets and selected intramural and invitational meets.
- Swimmers are expected to attend all dual and championship meets. If a swimmer cannot attend a meet, the coaching staff must be notified as soon as possible.
- Swimmers must participate in a minimum of three dual meets to qualify for the Championship Meets.
- Swimmers need to arrive at all meets on time for warm-ups. Upon arrival, the swimmer must check in with their coach prior to getting into the water. The team will warm-up as a team, not as individuals.
- Determination of relay members will be made by the coaches. Different combinations of relay members may be made throughout the swim season to find the best team.

If Your Child Cannot Attend a Meet

- Fill out a Hey Coach form, and turn it in as soon as possible, but no later than Monday before the meet. Hey Coach Forms will be located in a folder in the family mailboxes at the YMCA.
- Call the head coach, team manager, or the YMCA on the day of the meet when illness or an emergency occurs.

Swimmers Responsibilities

- Attend practice regularly
- Communicate effectively with the coaches
- Show support for your teammates – show good sportsmanship always!
- Show appreciation to your parents
- Behave in a manner to positively represent the YMCA
- Attend and participate in all meets and events in which you have been entered
- Attend the championship meets for which you qualify
- Participate in fund raisers
- Take home information to your parents
- Always show respect for coaches, teammates, YMCA staff, officials, etc.

What to Bring to Practice

- Practice suit
- Swim Cap
- Goggles
- Water Bottle (with water, no sports drinks)
- Positive attitude

Practice Guidelines

Emphasis is placed progressively on mastering the four competitive strokes and related techniques, increasing practice distance and intensity, instilling good practice habits and team involvement, building leadership skills and self-confidence.

Practice attendance is a major contributing factor to the outcome of a swimmer's progress. Swimmers are expected to be on time at as many practices as possible. Swimmers must be at a minimum of two practices per week to compete in the next meet.

Swimmers are placed into lanes with swimmers of similar abilities.

Lane assignment will be made in order to place swimmers in groups with others who are of similar age, commitment, stroke and endurance ability, and goals. Assignment to the lanes is done by the coaching staff.

Before Entering the Pool

- Follow all Orrville YMCA pool rules
- No cell phones are allowed on the pool deck
- No jewelry (watches, rings, earrings, etc.) during practice or meets. Leave them at home.
- All swimmers must take a shower before entering the pool.
- Use lavatory, prior to entering the pool.
- Good behavior at all times, especially in the locker rooms (the locker rooms are a privilege, not a right). Always remember – Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.
- Swimmers should not leave the pool area without the coaches permission

Pool Etiquette

- Practices will start and end on time. Swimmers who are over 10 minutes late will be required to wait and/or perform a modified warm-up.
- No hanging on the lane markers.
- Do not throw kickboards, pull buoys, or other equipment
- The deck should be clear of kickboards, pull buoys, fins, etc. Use it, yours to put away!
- Starting blocks are to be used only when directed by a coach
- Every start, turn, and finish should be used as an opportunity to improve your skill

Etiquette for Coaching Staff

- If a swimmer needs to leave early, is ill, or has an injury, etc. you are required to let a coach know before practice starts!
- When the coach asks for your attention, give it.
- If there is a problem with another swimmer, please alert a coach immediately.
- Swimmers misbehaving may be excused from practice. If a swimmer is excused from practice, the coach will have the swimmer sit on a bench inside the pool area until practice is over. Parents will be notified.
- Swimmers should listen for announcements during practice, and report those announcements to their parents.
- When using the starting blocks, get onto the block only when a coach gives the "OK".

Etiquette for Fellow Swimmers and Other Facilities

- No degrading, abusive, or profane language will be tolerated.
- Support your teammates, do not belittle or degrade them.
- Allow other swimmers to practice without distraction.

Swimmers are expected to remember that we are guests at all facilities we travel to. Treat the Orrville YMCA and any other facility where you swim with respect.

Parents

Parents are the backbone of any organization. They drive the swimmers to practices and meets; they work at home meets and are a constant source of encouragement and support at away meets. Your responsibilities as the parents are as essential a role to the team as the coaches and the swimmers.

Parents Responsibilities: Volunteer, Volunteer, and Volunteer!!!!

Various volunteer opportunities are available to parents, including fundraising and several areas necessary to run meets. Training for all positions will be provided through the YMCA. Certification training is also available for those parents interested in becoming stroke, turn and finish judges. This training will be made available to all parents and will also be arranged by the YMCA staff. Watch your e-mail and the Swim Team bulletin board for updates.

1. Have fun
2. Support the team through volunteer time
3. Encourage swimmers to attend all practices and meets
4. Be supportive and loving towards your swimmers at all times while encouraging them to do their best!
5. Let the coaches coach.
6. Keep communication with the coaches open and positive

Parent – Swimmer – Coach Relationship

To have a successful program there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress each swimmer makes depends on this triangular relationship. Consider this and read this section carefully, so that your swimmers can get the most out of their experience with our team.

Parent's guidelines: You have accomplished much to raise your child. You have created the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a person loses some of his ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children. The following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective.

- Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to various methods of presenting skills. Since the slower learner takes more time to master some skills, swimmers, parents and coaches must be a little more patient. Swimmers with lower learning skills have just as much potential as other swimmers on the team.
- Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmers career. Plateaus can be both in competition and at practices. A plateau signifies the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently ready to put all of the skills together in order to produce improvement. It is important that swimmers and parents understand that plateaus occur in work and all fields of physical learning.

The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement, and go on to achieve greater performance and approach their personal potential.

- Ten and under swimmers are the most inconsistent swimmers which can be frustrating for swimmers, parents, and coaches. Times at meets will often go up and down as they try to put together all of the elements of each stroke.
- Slow development of a competitive drive at an early age is normal, and perhaps more desirable than forced development of a competitive spirit. It is also important for young swimmers to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. It's the small disappointments they learn to handle as youngsters that prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.
- The coach's job is to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about them. Make sure your swimmers know that you will love them just as much when they disqualify, as you do when they get first place.
- Parents' attitudes and models often indicate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place, while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your swimmers to practice and meets, fund raising projects, meetings, etc. do not look at these functions as chores.
- Criticizing the coach in front of the swimmers undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer – coach relationship. Children model their parents' behavior.
- No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of a coach, and handled by the coach.
- Be sure that youngsters swim because they want to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.
- Avoid playing your child against their nearest competitors, thereby creating vendettas within the team and the swimming community.
- The communication between the coach and swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice and at meets. It is imperative that the coach have the swimmers full attention at practices. For this reason parents are asked not to be on the pool deck during practices.

Remember, particularly with young swimmers, the attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child.

In swimming, as in life, nobody can win or succeed all of the time. There will always be some disappointments. Every child can gain something from every experience whether or not he/she ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time.

What to bring to a Meet

- Suit, cap, goggle and extra towels (sweats, many pools are cold, even in the summer)
- Healthy snacks – cards, book, or quiet game – lock for locker room
- Please make sure that all personal possessions are labeled with swimmer's name.
- Swimmers are required to stay on the pool deck or designated area with the team at all times unless excused by the coach.
- Full water bottle
- Most meets have a concession stand (optional).
- A Sharpie to write down meet events.

Meet Entries

- The coaches are responsible for each swimmer's individual assignments at all meets.
- Swimmers are expected to swim all events in which they have been entered. No changes will be made after meet entries are posted.
- Swimmers will not be assigned to events which they are not physically ready to do. (Each swimmer will be challenged!!)
- Coaches are also responsible for assigning swimmers to relays. Relays will be determined based on past times. As the saying goes, times do not lie.

If Your Child Cannot Attend a Meet

- Fill out a Hey Coach form, and turn it in as soon as possible, but no later than Monday before the meet. Hey Coach Forms will be located in a folder in the family mailboxes at the YMCA.
- Call the head coach, team manager, or the YMCA on the day of the meet when illness or an emergency occurs.

Other Swim Meet Information

- Arrive at least half an hour before warm-up starts
- Swimmers should check in with their coach when they arrive at the pool
- Swimmers should remain in the designated areas
- Swimmers must warm up with the team
- If you leave before the meet is over, please let a coach know.
- Swimmers should always be aware of the event which is "in the water"
- Questions regarding an official's call or conduct of the meet should be referred to a coach. Coaches will then pursue the matter through proper channels.
- Transportation to and from meets is the responsibility of the swimmer and his/her family.
- Swimmers must see their coach immediately after they swim for critique and advice for next race
- Swimmer should rest and stay warm between events

Parents Help at Home Meets

Parent volunteers run the home meets. We need 100% participation from all parents to make everything run smoothly. For each home meet, we need volunteers to time, score, officiate, and run the concession stand.

Parents are expected to volunteer at a minimum of 3 meets. Please volunteer to help your swimmers and our team. The following positions will need to be filled at home meets:

- **Officials**
- **Timers**
- **Scorers**
- **Concessions**
- **Parent Coordinators**

Helpful Information

Rest & Nutrition

All swimmers should get at least eight hours of sleep every night. Swimmers should be fully hydrated before practice. Hydration before, during and after practice is the key. Swimmers should drink 2 quarts of water per day. Avoid drinks with caffeine. Make sure swimmers replace carbohydrates within 30 minutes of practice. The night before a meet, make sure all swimmers have a meal with protein and carbohydrates. The morning of a meet, have a healthy breakfast, like bananas, toast and juice. Avoid high sugar foods!

Remember, eat junk, and swim like junk!

Carbohydrates are found in:

- Grains
- Fruits
- Vegetables

Healthy snacks:

- Fruit
- Yogurt
- Bagels, Muffins, Crackers
- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- juice

Glossary

The Language of Swimming – The following are some of the most common and important terms that go along with competitive swimming:

Anchor – The final swimmer in a relay and the point in the stroke pattern where the hand feels the most resistance and begins effective propulsive movement.

Bell Lap – The part of a freestyle distance race (400 meters or longer) when the swimmer has 2 lengths plus 5 yards to go. The starter fires a gun shot over the lane of the lead swimmer when swimmer is at the backstroke flags.

Bullpen – a staging area on or near the pool deck reserved as a gathering place for (usually young) swimmers before their swim event. By lining up children in the bullpen area according to heat and lane assignments, volunteer parents help minimize confusion and stress as the kids' transition to the starting blocks.

Bulkhead – a barrier wall fitted near the middle of a long course pool (or any pool longer than 25 yards) to convert one side into to a short course. Serves as a cat-walk for stroke & turn officials.

Circle Swim – When there are more than two swimmers in a lane during practice, swimmers swim up on the right hand side, staying close to the lane line, and return on the other side ensuring that there is 5 seconds apart between the swimmer in front. This eliminates the risk of swimmers crashing into each other.

Clinic – A scheduled meeting for the purpose of instruction. (i.e.) Official's clinic, Coaches clinic.

Cool-down – A slower, longer swim as an essential injury prevention technique, used by the swimmer after a race to rid the body of excess lactic acid.

Course – Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. (i.e.) Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.

Cut – A qualifying time for a competitive event.

DQ – disqualification.

Drill – broken stroke to work on a specific aspect of the stroke; SWIM SLOWLY.

Dry land – The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

False start– leaving the block early.

Flutter Kick – The alternating kick used in backstroke and front crawl, usually 6 kicks per cycle.

Heat – A division of an event used to cut the number of participants, when a single race to determine the winner would mean too many swimmers competing at the same time.

Heat Sheets – the pre-meet printed listings of swimmers’ heat and lane assignments and seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the coaches submit swimmers times many weeks before the meet. Heat sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seeding’s prior to the race plus swimmers can tell the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.

High Elbow – Refers to the recovery phase of the front crawl, where keeping a high elbow encourages better balance and body roll. Also refers to the pull stage of the stroke, where the elbow remains in a higher position over the hand, giving the sensation of reaching over a barrel when pulling through the water.

Illegal – Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification.

Individual Medley (IM)– A combination of the four competitive swimming strokes swum in the following order; Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle (usually front crawl).

Interval – A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.

Lap- two (2) lengths of the pool, 1 length equals 25 yards, 1 lap equals 50 yards.

Lap Counter– The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers "only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

Lead-off – The swimmer to execute the first leg of the relay.

Leg – The part of a relay event swam by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.

Length – A completed lap either up or down the pool. This may be a distance of 25y or 50m depending upon the size of the pool.

Medley– a race in which all four strokes are performed.

Negative Split – When the second half of the race is swum faster than the first half.

Pace – The speed that corresponds with a race distance, e.g. 1:20 (1 minute 20 seconds) per 100y.

Qualifying Time (QT) – A specified time that must be achieved for the swimmer to enter a competitive event.

Relay – a race with teams consisting of four swimmers, each of whom swims a different leg.

Scratch – To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

Seed - To assign a swimmer to a heat or lane according to their qualifying time.

Split - A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, which is timed. (I.e.) A swimmer's first 50 yard time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 yard race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances.

Split Times - The times taken for each individual section of a race.

Start Position - The position taken by the swimmer at the beginning of the race. The swimmer is required to have at least one foot at the front of the starting block and remain motionless until the start signal sounds. The most common position has the swimmer bent over, knees bent and feet shoulder width apart. Some swimmers prefer a track start with one foot forward and one foot back.

Starter - the official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

Starting Blocks - the starting platforms located behind each lane. Pools normally have blocks installed at the deeper end of the pool, and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable. Most have bars near the base on the water side that swimmers use during backstroke starts.

Stations - Separate portions of a dry land or weight circuit.

Taper - Reducing the intensity of training just before a race so that the swimmer may be fresh and in peak condition for the event.

Touchpad - an electronically stimulated pad that hangs on the end of the pool.

Turnover - The number of times a swimmer completes one cycle of a stroke during a race.

Yardage - The distance a swimmer races or swims during the totality of their practice.

Swimming Event

Eight-and-under:

- 25-yard freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly
- 100-yard relay medley (25 yards of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle, in that order)
- 100-yard freestyle relay

9-10 year olds:

- 50-yard freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly
- 100-yard IM, and sometimes the 200-yard IM
- 200-yard freestyle
- 200-yard freestyle or medley relay

11-12 year olds:

- 50-yard freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly
- 100-yard IM, 200-yard IM
- 200-yard freestyle

13 and over:

- 50-yard freestyle
- 100-yard freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly
- 200-yard IM
- 200-yard freestyle, 500-yard freestyle

Orrville YMCA Swim Team Swimmer's Agreement

I, _____ have read the Orrville YMCA swim team handbook. By signing, I agree to abide by the handbook.

I understand that violations of this handbook may jeopardize my team status and/or my participation in swim meets.

Swimmer Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date: _____