



MACR SHARKS PARENT/ATHLETE HANDBOOK



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I. Welcome

WELCOME TO THE MACR SHARKS A YMCA/USA COMPETITIVE SWIM TEAM!

We are delighted that you have joined our competitive youth swim team.

Swimmers will enjoy a happy, healthy, and challenging swim season together. They will build skill, speed, stamina, and sportsmanship as they learn, or build on to, skills already developed in the water.

Parents, we invite all of you to get involved! Your involvement is one of the best ways to ensure that your swimmer(s) has/have a satisfying and successful season. There are many ways to become involved, and you will find your involvement to be both pleasant and enriching!

This handbook will help you to understand much of what goes on during the swim season and where and how to get further information. Please make sure that we have a current, and often checked, e-mail address for you. E-mail distribution is one of our best tools for distributing information to the team as a whole. If you do not have access to e-mail, then please make sure we have a way to get in touch with you so that you stay in the loop of current information being distributed. Don't hesitate!

Please ask us about any issues that have not been covered in this handbook.

Thank you and welcome to the MACR Sharks organization!

The MACR Sharks are a USA Swimming/YMCA year-round competitive swim team offering high quality professional coaching and technique instruction for all ages and abilities. The goal of our team is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability, from novice to international competitor.

All of our coaches, as members of the American Swim Coaches Association, have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States. They provide assurances that the time children spend in swimming will be quality time.

The following is a book of standards for our swimming program. This book outlines our club's basic philosophies, group structures and goals. It also serves as a reference for strokes, racing and time standards. Use this book to record times, favorite races, favorite sets and notes on the season.

The Mission of the MACR Sharks is to provide members an opportunity to realize their potential both in and out of the pool, while displaying the YMCA Core Character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

The MACR Sharks compete in two seasons for USA Swimming, one season for YMCA Swimming, and a summer recreation league. The fall/winter season (USA and YMCA) begins in September and concludes in March. Competitions are short course yards, which are held in a 25-yard pool and all events are measured in yards. The season concludes with championship meets which typically begin in February and end in March.

The spring/summer season begins in late March or early April and concludes in August. Competitions during the spring/summer season include long course meter meets as well as short course yard meets. Long course meets are held in a 50-meter pool and all events are measured in meters. The culmination of the spring/summer season is a series of championship meets which include Regionals, Long Course State Championships, Sectionals, Age Group Zones, Junior Nationals, Nationals and every 4 years Olympic Team Trials.

II. MACR Coaching and Administrative Staff

Head Coach

Donald Pirrie

Email: iowayswimming@gmail.com

Cell Phone: 319.573.9294

Originally from Scotland, Donald has been involved in coaching for over 22 years. As a fellow of the Institute of British Swimming, Donald completed several high level coaching certifications at University of Edinburgh's Morey House School of Education, under the watchful eye and strict guidance of British Hall of Fame & Olympic Swim Coaches Hamilton Smith and Neville Cross. Donald's coaching background includes coaching club athletes, working with grassroots swimmers, and developing regional super teams in Scotland. In the USA Donald has worked with club and college athletes in local programs and with the MACR Sharks for the past 21 years.

Over the years Donald has coached multiple national and international athletes, countless state and regional champions, and many state and regional record holders. Donald coached and directed two national education programs in the United Kingdom specifically targeting the country's most promising swimmers and advancing the skills of the coaches involved with those swimmers. Donald currently serves on the YMCA of the USA national advisory council for competitive swimming and manages the North Central states of IA, MN, NE, ND, SD.

Donald is a USA and YMCA Level 3 certified coach. He is now in his 21st season with the team. As a father to 2 YMCA swimmers he is eager to continue to advance the quality and success of MACR Sharks swimming.

Assistant Coaches

For an up to date list of all assistant coaches with MACR please refer to the coaches tab on the team website.

III. Practice Schedules

Practice groups will be determined after the initial registration in early October for YMCA Team Members. Swimmers joining the team throughout the year will be provided with a swim evaluation at no charge and placed into the appropriate swim group. Swimmers will be grouped together based on both age group and ability level. The practice schedule will be posted to the team web site – www.sharksswimming.org – and updated as necessary throughout the year. Descriptions of each practice group and criteria for both placement and advancement are available at our web site as well as in this document. Placements will be made based on these group criteria descriptions for both our returning swimmers and for new members of the team. If you are new to the team, we ask that you call Paul Brown at the HGN YMCA to schedule a swimming assessment. Initial placements in practice groups will be based on this assessment.

CANCELLATION OF PRACTICES There will be evenings when we do not have practice. Some of these dates are known and some are not (i.e. they will be weather related cancellations). Please refer to our practice schedule posted at the team web site for a list of known holidays and dates when there will be no practices.

Typically these dates are limited to the following, but occasionally there may be additional dates when there will be no practices. Those additional dates will be communicated ASAP via e-mail, text message, word of mouth, and information will be left with the Welcome Center at the HGN YMCA:

- Halloween
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Friday before a large meet (State/Regionals)

As far as the weather related cancellations are concerned, we will adhere to the program cancellation policy of the YMCA. Typically, YMCA programs are cancelled if schools either let out early or are cancelled due to weather related reasons.

There may be instances where we will decide to have practice regardless of a school district's decision to close.

There may also be instances where we decide cancel practices even though schools did not cancel or close early. We will always communicate via e-mail to confirm whether practices will be cancelled on a given day for weather related issues. Please make sure we have an e-mail address for you and your family that you check often enough to make that information useful to you and that you have registered to our team website www.sharksswimming.org

The Welcome Center of the Helen G. Nassif YMCA will also be advised of what our plan is. The Helen G. Nassif YMCA phone number is 366-6421.

IV. Swim Meets and Length of Season

There are always many questions from parents concerning how long the actual season lasts. YMCA Winter Season typically begins Nov 1 through Mar 25. USA Short Course Season from Sept – April. USA Long Course Season from May through July and Summer Rec League during June and July. A swimmer involved in YMCA only Winter Season may see their season end at different times based on qualification. These times are explained below.

First, I will give you some background information about swim meets and requirements to swim in particular swimming meets. All members of the MACR Sharks are expected to compete in a minimum number of meets. This is dictated by both the practice group that the swimmer is placed in, as well as the swim season. There are many local meets for families that would prefer not to travel. For swimmers in advanced groups, the expectation is that they will swim in both YMCA and USA swim leagues and make themselves available for the highest-level Championship Meet for which they qualify. The regular meet portion of the season (both USA and YMCA) will have as many as eight (8) scheduled dual/triangular swim meets. All members of the swim team are eligible to swim in any of the YMCA meets. USA Swimming registered athletes can also compete in the USA Swimming Meets.

These meets will be held on Saturdays and the schedule can be found under the schedules tab at our team web site: www.sharksswimming.org

For a swimmer to be eligible to compete in the YMCA State Championship meet, he/she is required to have swum in at least three of our regular season YMCA dual/triangular meets and have made a qualification time in one or more events. This requirement is made by the State Rules Committee and is not negotiable. Please review YMCA competitive swimming rules which can be found at the Iowa YMCA Competitive Swimming web site: www.iowaymcaswimming.org

The definition of competing in a swim meet is to successfully complete at least one event in that meet. This means that a swimmer does not have to swim in a full slate of events at a swim meet. It also means that if he/she chooses to swim in only one or two events, then one of those events must be successfully completed. Successful completion means having a recorded time on the results for the event swum in.

Regardless of how you interpret rules from the State Committee or YUSA, this important requirement will be met in order for meets to count towards the participation requirement. You cannot scratch an event or be disqualified in an event and have that event count towards the qualification criteria spelled out above. All of our regular season YMCA meets will satisfy the league and YMCA rule requirements of being “closed” competitions.

The YMCA Sectional meet is a ‘last chance’ type meet where every swimmer will have a final chance to qualify for the YMCA State Championship meet. Swimmers with qualification times can choose to swim this meet or to sit out.

An official list of Iowa YMCA swim meet events and state meet qualification times can be found at the MACR Sharks web site: www.sharksswimming.org

The YMCA Regional swim meet is contested in early March, typically the weekend after or two weeks after our State meet. Swimmers may qualify for the Regional meet at any swimming meet, YMCA or other that they swim in. A swimmer must also have swam in at least one “sanctioned” YMCA swimming meet. Sanctioned meets are typically championship meets. The two available sanctioned meets on our schedule are the Sectional meet and the State meet.

Event lists and qualifying times for the Regional meet will be posted to the Iowa YMCA Competitive Swimming web site. Once the official list is available we will also post it to our team web site as well. A final meet that swimmers may qualify for is the YMCA National Short Course Championships. This one is the pinnacle of YMCA swimming and qualification is a worthwhile goal for every swimmer that competes. It is an OPEN age group meet and swimmers need to be at least 12 years old to qualify.

Information concerning this swimming meet can be found at the National YMCA swimming web site:
www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org

OK – I gave you all of that background because, depending on how much competition a swimmer chooses to attend and what meets he/she qualifies for, it will all have a bearing on the length of a participant's season. For swimmers that do not make qualification times the winter season will end in February for them.

A swimmer that qualifies for YMCA State and Regionals, and chooses to compete in State and Regionals, has his/her season conclude after the Regional meet.

Swimmers that qualify for and choose to swim in the National meet have their seasons conclude after the National meet.

I do not have this policy to be prejudiced against those that do not qualify for certain swim meets. I have this policy so that the swimmers that are competing at these various meets get the best possible training for those meets. Training will change at different times during the season and it changes to specifically help swimmers attain the best possible results in competition. This is an all-inclusive program.

All swimmers on the team have the opportunity to compete. If meet fees are a barrier to competition please reach out for information on the USA Swimming Outreach Program. Certain meets that require qualification to compete in include the USA Championship and YMCA Championship meets. I ask that if your swimmer is participating in the YMCA only program and has not qualified to swim in a meet such as State or Regionals, then they do not continue on with practices after the Sectional meet. Hopefully everyone understands this policy and I have not offended anyone by spelling it out.

Year-round YMCA/USA Swimmers can continue to practice at their regularly scheduled times as there are various USA Swim Meets held throughout the year that all USA team members will be eligible to compete in. As a YMCA team first and foremost, the expectation is that our USA enrolled athletes will attend a minimum of three YMCA dual meets and one YMCA sanctioned meet. These minimums will ensure that each of our swimmers has eligibility for large meets such as the YMCA National Championships. USA team swimmers will see their season end after their last eligible competition opportunity.

V. Communication

In a program of this size good communication is essential to make things run as smoothly as possible. The team has a number of ways to communicate, and we do utilize all of them.

Swimmer/family folders – Each swimmer or family of swimmers will have a folder. These folders will be in plastic organizer crates and will typically be at every practice session throughout the season. The folder crates will always be out on the pool deck at the Helen G. Nassif YMCA right by the door of the Aquatics Office. The folders will contain written communication (i.e. the swim meet entry sheets and other important items) and also serve as a way to distribute ribbons and other awards swimmers will win during the course of the season. Please make sure your swimmer(s) are checking their folders often for any communications they may contain.

Parent Advisory Committee meetings – These meetings are designed to help keep parents informed and in the loop. We are going to try and hold at least 3 of these meetings during the course of the season. Meeting dates have not been established at this time and will up to the discretion of the Parent Advisory Committee. These dates will be communicated via e-mail as soon as they are available.

Swim team web site – Our team site is at www.sharksswimming.org. There are many items posted to the site over the course of the season including meet schedules, directions to away meets, newsletters packed with useful information, and results of our meets. Please check out the site and, if you have any suggestions to make it even better, then please let us know. Other web sites that include information concerning YMCA competitive swimming are: www.iowaymcaswimming.org and www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org. Websites for USA Swimming are www.isiswim.org and www.usaswimming.org

E-mail – Our favorite way of drowning you with information is the use of e-mail. It is our fastest and most efficient way of getting information out to the masses. Please make sure we have an e-mail address for you and that it is one that you actually check on a regular basis. If you do not have access to e-mail, please try to make arrangements with someone so that you get the information in a timely manner. That someone could be another swim family or by letting the coach know. We will try and work with you to get written communication put in your folder as outlined in #1 above.

Word of mouth – Many times information will be given to the swimmers on deck before practices begin. Please make sure you check with your swimmer(s) for anything the coaches may cover in these pre-practice meetings.

VI. ABOUT THE MACR SHARKS

A. INTRODUCTION

Competitive swimming at the Cedar Rapids YMCA began in the late 1940's. Since then, the team has had a number of evolutions. The current team known as the MACR Sharks was born during the 1990's. In the late 1960's the YMCA team provided the basis for what would later become known as the CRAA swimming club.

In 1970 and 1971 the Cedar Rapids YMCA won National Championships at the YMCA National Swimming Meet. During this era of dominance in competitive swimming, the Cedar Rapids YMCA team became the driving reason for the Iowa YMCA State Alliance to adopt the current practice of not scoring any YMCA swimming meets.

More recently, the MACR Sharks again underwent an evolution, and the Stoney Point Stingrays were created in 2005. Currently, between the two programs, the YMCA has close to 230 swimmers representing the metropolitan area in our winter programs. Both teams also compete in the Cedar Rapids Recreation Department's summer swimming league with close to 150 swimmers participating.

Our latest evolution included the merger of the Stoney Point Stingrays with MACR thus creating a Metro wide YMCA team that encompasses all YMCAs in the Cedar Rapids Metro Area. Additionally in the fall/winter season we have two satellite squads that operate out of the Tipton and Monticello areas.

The MACR Sharks program operates year-round. Swim practices are held at the Helen G. Nassif YMCA pool in Cedar Rapids. As the team expands there may be additional practice opportunities available at our metro branch YMCA. Practice times are established each swim season and are subject to change.

B. YMCA MISSION and MACR SHARKS MISSION STATEMENTS

YMCA Mission:

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

MACR Sharks Mission:

To provide members an opportunity to realize their potential both in and out of the pool, while displaying the YMCA Core Character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

C. GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

As with any program, goals are an important aspect to the success of an organization and its participants. The following goals have been central to this program for many years and continue to be the foundation it is built on.

FUN

The coaching staff wants to make this experience fun for all participants and their families. I recognize that there can be many definitions of fun. The YMCA works hard to make all of its programs “all inclusive”. The swim team is no different. Some swimmers participate for the social aspect of the sport, some for fitness and health reasons, and still others because they are serious about competition. We work hard to achieve a program that speaks to all of these levels. For a coach, the fun of swimming comes from watching all of the swimmers improve throughout the season. Whatever the reasons are for your participation, the #1 goal of this program is to provide enjoyment for all participants. Remember if you’re not having fun, chances are the coaches are not having fun – then where are we?

STROKE TECHNIQUE IMPROVEMENT

While I do not want to downplay the importance of training and yardage swam at workouts, etc, etc – I do want everyone to understand that the coaches believe that yardage and repetition alone will only take a swimmer so far in terms of improvement. The real, long-term improvement comes from perfecting strokes, stroke technique, starts, turns, and finishes. We will, as we have over the years, work on technique drills throughout the season. The payoff for all of this technique work will come at Sectionals, State, Regionals, and Nationals. A solid technique base will also reap benefits throughout your swimmer’s career.

GOAL SETTING

Swimming is one of the sports that lends itself exceptionally well to goal setting and attainment. Since long term improvement requires dedication, perseverance, and hard work; learning to set attainable goals, as well as updating those goals, is an important component of the process. The coaches are available to help each swimmer set and work towards specific goals. We are here to help you in whatever manner that we can. All you need to do is ask.

QUALIFICATION FOR USA/YMCA NATIONALS

The National Swimming meet is one of the pinnacles of the competitive swimming program. The goal for our program is to help as many swimmers as possible qualify for the National meet each and every season. We believe we have the program necessary to achieve this goal. All we need are swimmers that are as equally dedicated to attaining this achievement and we can all make it happen together.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide for the development of an age-group/senior program that stresses stroke instruction (swimming mechanics), skill development, physical conditioning, and a love for the sport.
- To develop a training program with distinct levels of instruction, performance standards, training plans, and qualifying criteria for each level from the novice to the international swimmer.
- To provide consultation and communication between swimmers, parents, and coach.
- To accommodate different swimmer commitments with respect to attendance at practices and meets.
- To promote dedication to the Team Philosophy and to teamwork among swimmers, parents and coaches.
- To help swimmers understand and demonstrate the core values of the YMCA

D. COACHES RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

While we want our swimmers to have fun, there are some rules and expectations that we must ask every swimmer to adhere to. Please review the practice groups descriptions for requirements concerning attendance. We expect swimmers to show up for practice on time and prepared to swim. If practice is scheduled to begin at 8:00 p.m., then be on deck and ready to get in the water by 7:50 p.m. Late arrivals do nothing except disrupt practice and cause confusion for everyone. Please do not wander out on deck, wait for practice to begin, and then start fiddling with swim caps, suits, goggles, water bottles etc.

We also ask that all swimmers swim for the entire practice. I know that may sound a little strange, but when the going gets tough, we tend to see swimmers excuse themselves to go to the restroom or stop in the middle of sets to stretch, rest or for some other reason. Injuries are one thing, but disappearing because the set is a little too difficult and then reappearing sometime later during the practice is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Now, I would like to expand on some of the topics touched on above.

Practice - While we do not set a number of practices that we expect each swimmer to attend, we need to be clear that swimming is a fitness sport that requires commitment in order to see real improvements. With the season plan that the coaches have been working on, it is very important that swimmers stick to the recommendations for practice attendance outlined in each of the practice group descriptions. Mid-season practices will be particularly rigorous. We hope that by increasing our yardage and maintaining our emphasis on technique work, our team will perform better than ever during the championship meet season.

Punctuality – Every year we have noticed an increase in the number of people showing up late for practices and then being unprepared to start the practice in a timely fashion. We cannot emphasize enough what a disruption this causes for that practice session. We understand that occasionally life gets in the way and sometime even trains. It is the constant late arrivals that we would like to eliminate. Please make every effort to have your swimmers at the practice location early so they have a chance to get ready and be prepared to get into the water when practice begins and not 5, 10, and we have seen as late as 30 minutes after the session begins. We have a limited amount of time for each and every practice session and need to make the most of the time that we have been allotted.

Swimming the entire workout – Over the years the coaches have noticed that “when the going gets tough” some swimmers tend to, in general, wilt. From frequent visits to the bathroom, to stopping to stretch, to needing a drink of water-the excuses can seem endless. Each swimmer needs to decide for himself or for herself what they hope to attain from their participation. One analogy for training is to look at coming to practice as going to the bank. Each time you practice you are, in effect, making a deposit into your training bank. These deposits will all add up so that you will be able to make the big cash out that will be necessary at the end of the season. If you cheat yourself on the deposit end, then the amount you will be able to cash out with will be diminished. It is our hope that if we e-mail parents concerning swimmers training habits (or lack thereof) that you will discuss the matter with your swimmer(s) and there will be a change of attitude and effort level.

Expectations Regarding Behavior

Of equal importance for every member of the MACR Sharks organization is behavior at practice, swim meets, and anywhere that the Sharks organization may choose to congregate.

The YMCA is founded on the four core character values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. We expect and require everyone associated with this organization to conduct their behavior in accordance with these character values. While swimming is an excellent forum for personal growth and development, it is also a team activity. No member of the organization is above any other member of the organization, and everyone will treat everyone else with the respect we wish to be shown.

The MACR Sharks has a Bully Prevention Policy which will be enforced if needed. As a YMCA we feel strongly that the main core values of this organization will drive appropriate behavior from all participants.

We will not condone misbehavior and will deal with each individual occurrence as we become aware of them. Over the years there have been very few instances of serious misbehavior. We hope to maintain that trend but will do whatever is necessary to maintain a healthy and happy environment for everyone associated with this organization.

Please remember that we are all representatives of not only ourselves and our families, but also of the MACR Sharks and the YMCA. Obey the rules in other facilities we may be guests at.

Emulate the four core values and everyone will have a productive and successful season.

E. ADVICE FOR PARENTS

The MACR Sharks coaching staff encourages parents to watch training sessions from time to time. It is probably not the best idea to watch practices every evening, but then again it is also not the best idea to never attend practice sessions. We understand the realities of life, economy, and carpooling and that some parents may be present at every practice that their child(ren) attend. However, you do not need to watch every minute of every practice. Here are some important guidelines to keep in mind when observing practice sessions.

Young swimmer's want the approval of their parents more than anything. If they know you are watching, then it is only natural that some of their attention during practice will be directed toward you. However, for the swimmers to learn as much as possible during their training sessions, it is imperative that the coaches have every swimmer's undivided attention during practice. We ask that you do not communicate with your child during practice sessions and compete with the coaches for his/her attention.

We insist that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. If you need to communicate with a coach, please do so before or after practice (if they are not coaching another group) or communicate with them by phone or e-mail. We appreciate your cooperation in this important matter.

The coaches have spent and will spend a considerable amount of time planning weekly training sessions for each of the groups. Each training set or instructional drill has a purpose and one practice and/or practice set often builds on another throughout the week and the course of the season. If you have not attended all of the training sessions, you may not understand the purpose of what the swimmers are doing on any given day.

Please do not try to coach your child based on what you see (or think you do not see) him/her do. Many times when teaching stroke skills, coaches ask swimmers to do things that may not look correct or might actually be illegal according to competitive rules. Rest assured that the drills and skills we will be teaching and executing will all work to make your child a better swimmer. Please, if you are observing practice sessions, let the coaches, coach. Your cooperation and support in this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact the head coach.

F. EQUIPMENT AND SWIMMING SUITS

A competition and/or training suit is the first and most important piece of equipment that every swimmer needs to have. Please do not try to use regular swimming trunks or suits (bikinis included) for either practicing or competing in meets. For boys a speedo/brief or jammer is required, for girls a one-piece suit is required. The MACR Sharks do have a team suit. Please purchase a team competition suit for regular season meets. For competition a general rule of thumb is smaller/tighter is better. Boys will race better in a speedo/brief type suit and girls in an open back one-piece suit. Non 'tech' knee skins and jammers are ok for practice but will limit performance in competition. Championship Tech Suits come with their own set of rules including which age groups are legally allowed to wear them. As a team we do not want swimmers in tech suits for non-championship level meets. Please consult with a coach prior to purchasing a tech suit for your swimmer. Tech Suits do not need to conform to the team colors and should only be worn for large scale championship meets. Information and order forms for team suits, as well as a host of other apparel and equipment is available on our website www.sharksswimming.org.

We strongly recommend that every swimmer also have a pair of competition type swimming goggles. There are plenty of goggle manufacturers out there so finding a pair should not be a problem. Please do not buy the cheap kind that you can get at the drug store. Those are generally for recreation use and will not work well for your swimmer. Younger swimmers do much better with one piece type goggles – less parts, mean less confusion and equate to much more productive practices and meets. Also make sure that you purchase goggles that will fit your swimmer's face. They do come in adult and childrens' sizes. Lastly, please come to practice with your goggles ready to be worn. Adjust the nose pieces and straps at home before you come to practice. The coaches do not have time to adjust goggles and coach at the same time. It's kind of like walking and chewing gum at the same time – just not possible for some of us more challenged individuals.

The remaining pieces of equipment that every swimmer should have can be found on the equipment list that is posted to the team web site. We won't use every piece of equipment at every practice, but we will use them throughout the season. MACR are sponsored by Arena which means we do get Arena gear at a lower price than available publicly. Every effort should be made to purchase Arena over other brands whenever possible.

Please adhere to the suggested type of equipment. The MACR Sharks have a Team Store listed on our Tem Website as well as a team store at Swim Outlet. www.swimoutlet.com/macrsharks This link will show you our tried and tested favorite items that we know work well for swimmers of all ages.

VII. Policies

A. CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

Communication is the best way to reduce conflicts within any club. The best way to communicate with your child's coach is to meet with them after practice. Coaches usually have time after practice to answer questions or provide information. Emailing a coach is also a good way to open communication.

Please keep in mind that the coaches have the best interests of your child at heart. Also, keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a practice group.

The following procedures regarding problems, questions, or complaints should be followed by MACR SHARKS families.

- If a parent has a concern about their swimmer, they should speak with the coach outside of practice time.
- If there is a conflict between a parent and the coach, the parent should air their concern with the Head Coach.
- If still dissatisfied, the parent should air their concern with the Business Manager who will make every effort to resolve the situation.
- Any member can ask the President or Business Manager of the club to organize a parent meeting, if the issue has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the member.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about a coach's performance or policies, encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach and follow the conflict resolution guidelines listed above.

B. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Occasionally, swim practice may be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions. The MACR Sharks will send out a mass email to announce the cancellation of any practice. On Cedar Rapids School District Weather Related Early Dismissal Days, MACR Sharks may not have practice. If Cedar Rapids schools close in the AM, an email announcement will be issued by the MACR Sharks prior to 2:00 pm either confirming that practices will be cancelled or will be run as regularly scheduled. Do not call any of the YMCA pools to ask if practice is cancelled.

C. LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Swimmers should be picked up promptly after all practices. The pool staff are on-site at all times, but our coaches provide only supervision for our swimmers on deck and in the pool. Swimmers are welcome to wait in unsupervised member area downstairs if parental consent is on file acknowledging that there will be no supervision of children in this waiting area. Swimmers are expected to be on their best behavior, to be kind to other kids, and to quietly enjoy facility provided.

D. VOLUNTEERING AT MEETS

Home Invitational swim meets are run completely by MACR Sharks parents. There are numerous jobs to be filled at meets and working at the meet is a great way to stay busy between your child's events. It also gets parents involved in the achievements of all team members and builds relationships with other parents in the swimming community. Working the meet sets a positive example of participation for the swimmers. A full list of the jobs available can be found on our website www.sharksswimming.org

E. FUNDRAISING

Fundraising will be done as needed through income gained from meet concessions and swim team apparel sales. Additional fundraising efforts may be initiated as needed to help pay for upgrades to equipment used by the swimmers.

Additional policies can be found on the Parent/Athlete Info Tab of our website www.sharksswimming.org

F. CODE OF CONDUCT

The following code of conduct will be enforced for all MACR Sharks Swimmers. Please read carefully and sign to acknowledge that you will abide by the MACR Sharks Code of Conduct.

- I. The following provisions pertain to practices, meets, meetings and social activities where swimmers represent MACR Sharks
 - A. Swimmers shall exhibit good sportsmanship, in and out of the pool.
 - B. Swimmers shall follow rules during practices, meets, and team events.
 - C. While attending meets, swimmers shall abide by the curfews and instructions given to them by coaches, officials, and parents.
 - D. Swimmers shall show respect for all property.
 - E. Swimmers shall behave in a responsible manner and are prohibited from possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, or banned substances.
 - F. Swimmers shall be required to wear team swim suit and team cap at all swim meets.

- II. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct will result in any or all of the following disciplinary actions.
 - A. A swimmer may not be allowed to participate in any or all practices, meets, social activities, or meeting.
 - B. A swimmer may be sent home from a meet at the expense of the swimmer and/or their family.
 - C. A swimmer and/or their family will be responsible for any damage caused by the swimmer.
 - D. A swimmer may be suspended from membership in USA Swimming.

- III. The President is responsible for reviewing a written summary of alleged violations of the Code of Conduct, as well as any disciplinary actions that have been and/or may be taken.

I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for MACR Sharks' swimmers. I understand that if I violate any of the provisions outlined in part I above that I will subject to the disciplinary actions outlined in part II above.

Signature of Swimmer: _____ Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____

Name of Swimmer: _____ Name of Parent: _____ Date: _____
(Please Print) (Please Print)

G. PERMISSION AND RELEASE FORM

I hereby give my permission for _____ to accompany the MACR Sharks' team to all activities in 20___. I further waive all claims for injury, accident, or liability of any kind for the above-named swimmer, and in case of an accident or injury in any way resulting directly or indirectly from participation in such program, hold harmless from any liability therefore the MACR Sharks, its officers, coaches, chaperones, managers or any other person or persons in any way connected or associated with the program.

Furthermore, in case of emergency medical attention, which may be required, I authorize the adult coaches, chaperones, and or other adults traveling in an official capacity with the team to act for me according to their best judgment and ability.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

H. MEDICAL INFORMATION

List any medications and dosage the swimmer is now taking:

Pre-existing conditions (asthma, epilepsy, etc.):

Allergies (including medications):

Other pertinent information the coach should know about:

Home Physician's name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Parent(s) Names: _____ Phone Number: _____

Parent(s) Names: _____ Phone Number: _____

Emergency Contact 1: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact 2: _____ Phone: _____

VIII. Team Structure & Fee Structure

SWIMMING FEES

There are various fees associated with swimming on the MACR Sharks Swim Team. Practice fees are charged monthly along with YMCA Membership fees. These will be automatically drafted from your account on the 10th of each month. Other fees include USA Membership Fees and a one-time season fee per swimmer.

MONTHLY PRACTICE FEES

JR White Group:	\$50.00/Month	Blue Junior 1 Group:	\$50.00/Month
Blue Junior 2 Group:	\$55.00/Month	Blue Senior Group:	\$60.00/Month
Black Junior 1 Group:	\$70.00/Month	Black Junior 2 Group:	\$70.00/Month
Black Senior Group:	\$80.00/Month	Gold (Invite Only)	\$110.00/Month

USA SWIMMING MEMBERSHIP FEES

USA Swimming Membership is a fee due to USA Swimming on an annual or seasonal basis. All swimmers in Black/Gold Level Practice groups must be full USA Swimming Members. Swimmers in our White/Blue practice groups have the option of purchasing a USA Swimming Membership.

USA Swimming Year Round Membership Fee: \$82.00/Annually

USA Swimming Seasonal Membership Fee: \$40.00/valid for 150 days

USA Swimming also provides an outreach program for families that may not be able to afford the cost of USA membership and/or meet fees. If you qualify for free/reduced school meals then you may also qualify for the USA Outreach Program. Please reach out to me for details about this program.

YMCA Member Fees are required for each participating swimmer. YMCA membership provides access to local YMCA facilities and YMCA facilities around the country.

YMCA Membership Fee: \$21.50/Month OR \$390/Annually

SEASON FEE

The MACR Sharks compete in two seasons. Our Fall USA Swim Season runs from Sept-Mar and our Summer Long Course Season from April-Aug. Season fees help cover the cost of coach travel to/from meets.

Season Fee for 1st Swimmer in family: \$40.00/Season Additional Swimmer: \$20.00/season

SWIM MEET FEES

USA Swim Meets generally charge a per event amount to compete. Meet Fees average from \$5.00 - \$10.00 per event depending on the type of meet. Iowa Swimming Inc. (ISI) charge a \$5 'splash fee' per swimmer to cover league administrative costs. Meet fees will be listed on the meet sign up page to notify parents of cost prior to sign up. Meet fees are often due well in advance of a meet and are non-refundable if you end up not swimming in the meet. Please be sure to pay your meet fees prior to or immediately after the meet.

B. TRAINING GROUPS AND STANDARDS

JUNIOR WHITE TRAINING GROUP (Ages 6-10)

This is an entry-level developmental group where the focus is placed on ensuring that athletes are having fun, forming strong team bonds, developing strong fundamental skills in all four competitive strokes, building a great kicking foundation, and learning the basics of strong racing skills.

Evaluation Guidelines

Only swimmers ages 6-9 will be evaluated for the White group.

Requirements to enter White Group

Swimmers must be able to complete each of the following:

- Swim 25 yards of continuous freestyle demonstrating a basic concept of rotary breathing and good balance in the water
- Swim 25 yards of continuous backstroke demonstrating good balance in the water
- Swim 25 yards of breaststroke or Butterfly
- Perform 50 yards of strong flutter kick with or without a kickboard

Practice Attendance

For regular improvement, swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend a minimum of 2 - 3 practices per week.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are encouraged to attend at least 3 meets throughout the season.

Goals of the White group

By the time swimmers move out of the White group they should be able to complete all of the following:

- Understand and demonstrate the YMCA's 4 core character values
- Demonstrate courteous behavior towards coaches and other swimmers
- Demonstrate a strong technical understanding of all four competitive strokes and turns
- Demonstrate a strong technical understanding of forward and backward racing starts
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of legal turns in all 4 competitive strokes and I.M.
- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 5 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate an ability to read the pace clock and understand basic intervals
- Achieve a legal time in the following events in either a YMCA or USA Swimming competition – 50 freestyle, 50 backstroke, 25 or 50 breaststroke, 25 or 50 butterfly, 100 individual medley

Swimmers ages 11 and older that have not successfully demonstrated all of the goals of the White group should enroll in either the YMCA Development Program, Stroke Clinic, or Swim Lesson program.

BLUE JUNIOR 1 TRAINING GROUP (Ages 8-11)

This is a competitive training group aimed at developing advanced technical skills and a strong aerobic foundation. Skills will be taught with an emphasis on fun and teamwork in order to continue to ensure that all athletes develop a long-term love for the sport. The training emphasis of this group is centered on continuing to develop strong technical skills in all four strokes, starts, turns and underwater work, as well as developing a strong aerobic base through gradually increasing the volume and intensity of both kicking and swimming work throughout the season.

Evaluation Guidelines

Only swimmers ages 8-11 will be evaluated for the Blue Jr.1 group. Swimmers who will turn 8 within 2 months of the evaluation date may be evaluated at the discretion of the coaching staff.

Requirements to enter the Blue Jr.1 Group

To be considered for placement into Blue Jr.1, swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals of the White Group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 5 x 50 Free with flip-turns on 1:20 (SCY)
- 4 x 50 Choice Kick on 1:40 (SCY)
- 6 x 25 on :45 (SCY) – 2 Butterfly, 2 Backstroke, 2 Breaststroke
- Swimmers moving up from the White Group must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 50 Freestyle, 50 Backstroke, 25 or 50 Butterfly, 25 or 50 Breaststroke, and 100 Individual Medley
- Swimmers new to the team who are placed in the Blue Jr1 Group must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 50 Freestyle, 50 Backstroke, 25 or 50 Butterfly, 25 or 50 Breaststroke, and 100 Individual Medley

Practice Attendance

For regular improvement, swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend 3 - 4 practices per week.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are expected to participate in at least 3 meets during the season, as well as the highest level championship meet they are qualified for at the end of each season.

Goals of the Blue Jr.1 Group

By the time swimmers move out of the Blue Jr.1 group they should be able to complete all of the following:

- Achieve an Iowa State Qualifying time standard in at least 2 different strokes
- Demonstrate a mastery of the track start and backstroke start
- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 7 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Achieve a legal time in the following events in either a YMCA or USA Swimming competition – 100 Freestyle, 100 Backstroke, 50 or 100 Breaststroke, 50 Butterfly, 100 Individual Medley, 200 Freestyle
- Demonstrate courteous behavior towards coaches and other swimmers
- Demonstrate consistent practice attendance (3 out of 4 practices per week)

BLACK JUNIOR 1 TRAINING GROUP (Ages 9-11)

The emphasis of the Black Jr.1 group will be on increasing aerobic capacity through increased kicking and swimming volume and intensity, continuing to enhance stroke mechanics and underwater kicking ability, and mastering concepts related to race strategies, proper nutrition, goal setting, and mental preparation. Skills will be taught with an emphasis on fun and teamwork in order to continue to ensure that all athletes develop a long-term love for the sport. Swimmers will participate in a dryland program to help develop core body strength, basic strength in the shoulders and legs, and overall body control and coordination.

Evaluation Guidelines

Only swimmers ages 9-11 will be evaluated for the Black Jr.1 group.

Requirements to Enter Black Jr.1

To be considered for placement into the Black Jr.1 group swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals of the White/Blue Jr.1 Group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 6 x 50 Free with flip-turns on 1:10 (SCY)
- 4 x 100 IM on 2:20 (SCY)
- 6 x 50 Choice Kick on 1:25 (SCY)
- Swimmers must have achieved an Iowa YMCA State Qualifying time standard in at least two different strokes.
- Swimmers new to the team must have achieved a 9-10 YMCA State or 9-10 USA BB Qualifying time standard in at least two different strokes.
- Achieve a legal time in the following events in either a YMCA or USA Swimming competition – 100 Freestyle, 100 Backstroke, 50 or 100 Breaststroke, 50 Butterfly, 100 Individual Medley, 200 Freestyle

Practice Attendance

Swimmers in the Black Jr.1 group are strongly encouraged to attend 4 out of 5 practices offered per week. Athletes who fail to make at least 2 practices per week, evaluated over each month, will be moved to the group that best matches their ability level.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are expected to participate in at least 3 meets including relays. Swimmers are also expected to attend the highest-level championship meet they qualify for at the end of the season.

Goals of the Black Jr.1 Group

- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 7 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to train and compete in all strokes and distances
- Demonstrate a proven ability to maintain a positive attitude and focus during workout and has an understanding of how their actions affect their teammates
- Demonstrate respect for all members of the coaching staff
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of goal setting skills
- Understand and demonstrate the YMCA's 4 core character values
- Swimmers must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 50 or 100 Butterfly, 100 Backstroke, 50 or 100 Breaststroke, 100 Freestyle, 100 Individual Medley, and 200 Freestyle

BLUE JUNIOR 2 TRAINING GROUP (Ages 11-13)

This is a competitive training group aimed at developing advanced technical skills and a strong aerobic foundation. Skills will be taught with an emphasis on fun and teamwork in order to continue to ensure that all athletes develop a long-term love for the sport. The training emphasis of this group is centered on continuing to develop strong technical skills in all four strokes, starts, turns and underwater work, as well as developing a strong aerobic base through gradually increasing the volume and intensity of both kicking and swimming work throughout the season.

Evaluation Guidelines

Only swimmers ages 11-13 will be evaluated for the Blue Jr.2 group

Requirements to Enter the Blue Jr2 Group

To be considered for placement into Blue Jr.2, swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals of the Blue/Black Jr1 Group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 8 x 50 Free with flip-turns on 1:20 (SCY)
- 6 x 50 Choice Kick on 1:30 (SCY)
- 4 x 100 IM's on 2:20 (SCY)
- Swimmers moving up from the Blue/Black Jr.1 Group must have achieved a legal time in the following events in either a YMCA or USA Swimming competition – 100 Freestyle, 100 Backstroke, 50 or 100 Breaststroke, 50 Butterfly, 100 Individual Medley, 200 Freestyle
- Swimmers new to the team who are placed in the Blue Jr.2 Group must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 100 Freestyle, 100 Backstroke, 50 or 100 Breaststroke, 50 Butterfly, 100 Individual Medley, 200 Freestyle– within 3 months of joining the program.

Practice Attendance

For regular improvement, swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend 4 - 5 practices per week.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are expected to participate in at least 3 meets during the season, as well as the highest level championship meet they are qualified for at the end of each season.

Goals of the Blue Jr.2 Group

By the time swimmers move out of the Blue Jr.2 group they should be able to complete all of the following:

- Achieve an Iowa State Qualifying time standard in at least 2 different strokes
- Demonstrate a mastery of the track start and backstroke start
- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 7 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Achieve a legal time in the following events in either a YMCA or USA Swimming competition – 100 Freestyle, 100 Backstroke, 100 Breaststroke, 100 Butterfly, 200 Individual Medley.
- Demonstrate courteous behavior towards coaches and other swimmers
- Demonstrate consistent practice attendance (3 or more practices per week)

BLACK JUNIOR 2 TRAINING GROUP (Ages 11-13)

This is a competitive training group designed to prepare swimmers for state and regional levels of competition. The emphasis of the Black Jr2 group is on mastering the following skills necessary to be successful competitive swimmers – training etiquette, advanced stroke mechanics, training and race strategies, goal setting, proper nutrition, mental preparation, and the ability to handle increasing training workloads. Swimmers will participate in a dryland program to help develop core body strength, basic strength in the shoulders and legs, and overall body control and coordination.

Requirements to Enter the Black Jr.2 Group

To be considered for placement into the black Jr.2 group swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals Blue Jr1/2 or Black Jr.1 group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 6 x 100 Free on 1:35 (SCY)
- 6 x 100 IM on 2:00 (SCY)
- 8 x 50 Choice Kick on 1:10 (SCY)
- Swimmers entering the Black Jr.2 group from either the Blue Jr.1/2 or Black Jr.1 groups must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 100 Butterfly, 100 Backstroke, 100 Breaststroke, 100 Freestyle, 200 Individual Medley, and 500 Freestyle.
- New swimmers placed into the Black Jr.2 group must achieve a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events within 3 months of joining the program – 100 Butterfly, 100 Backstroke, 100 Breaststroke, 100 Freestyle, 200 Individual Medley, and 500 Freestyle

Practice Attendance

For regular improvement, swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend 4-5 offered per week. Athletes who fail to make 3 practices per week, evaluated over each month, may be moved to the group that best matches their ability level.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend at least 3 meets including relays during season, in addition to the highest-level YMCA championship meet they qualify for.

Goals of the Black Jr.2 Group

- Achieve an Iowa YMCA State Qualifying time standard in at least 2 different strokes, and one YMCA Regional Qualifying time standard.
- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 10 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to train and compete in all strokes and distances
- Demonstrate a proven ability to maintain a positive attitude and focus during workout and has an understanding of how their actions affect their teammates
- Demonstrate respect for all members of the coaching staff
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of goal setting skills
- Understand and demonstrate the YMCA's 4 core character values
- Swimmers must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 200 Freestyle, 200 Backstroke, Breaststroke or Butterfly, 100 Butterfly, 100 Breaststroke, 200 Individual Medley, and 500 Freestyle

BLUE SENIOR TRAINING GROUP (Ages 13-21)

The emphasis of the Blue Sr. group will be on increasing aerobic capacity through increased kicking and swimming volume and intensity, continuing to enhance stroke mechanics and underwater kicking ability, and mastering concepts related to race strategies, proper nutrition, goal setting, and mental preparation. Skills will be taught with an emphasis on fun and teamwork in order to continue to ensure that all athletes develop a long-term love for the sport.

Requirements to Enter the Blue Sr. Group

To be considered for placement into the Blue Sr. group, swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals of the Black Jr.2 or Blue Jr.2 Group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 6 x 100 Free on 1:45 (SCY)
- 6 x 100 IM on 2:10 (SCY)
- 8 x 50 Choice Kick on 1:10 (SCY)
- Swimmers entering the Blue Sr. group from either the Blue Jr.2 or Black Jr.2 groups must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 100 Butterfly, 100 Backstroke, 100 Breaststroke, 100 Freestyle, 200 Individual Medley, and 500 Freestyle.
- New swimmers placed into the Blue Sr. group must achieve a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events within 3 months of joining the program – 100 Butterfly, 100 Backstroke, 100 Breaststroke, 100 Freestyle, 200 Individual Medley, and 500 Freestyle.

Practice Attendance

Swimmers are encouraged to attend a minimum of 4 practices per week.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are expected to attend at least 3 meets during the season and the highest-level championship meet that the swimmer qualifies for.

Goals of the Blue Sr. Group

The primary goal of the Blue Sr. group is to develop a very strong aerobic foundation and to prepare swimmers physically, mentally and emotionally to move into our Black Sr. and Gold group. When swimmers move out of the Blue Sr. group they should be able to complete the following:

- Achieve an Iowa YMCA State Qualifying time standard in at least two different strokes
- Demonstrate the highest possible commitment to practice attendance (4 per week)
- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 10 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to train in all strokes and distances at the highest level possible
- Demonstrate a commitment to the team and behavior outside of the pool that will lead to the highest possible performance
- Demonstrate a high level of respect for all members of the coaching staff
- Demonstrate the YMCA's 4 core values and show willingness to work together as a team in reaching for the highest level of individual and team performance possible

BLACK SENIOR TRAINING GROUP (Ages 13-21)

This is a highly competitive training group designed to prepare swimmers for state and regional levels of competition. The emphasis will be on increased aerobic conditioning, skill development, and the physical, mental and emotional preparation required for eventual placement in the Gold group. This group will focus on issues such as advanced stroke mechanics, perfecting race strategies, proper nutrition, individual goal setting and developing an understanding of the importance of proper mental preparation. Training will include a specifically designed dry-land conditioning program.

Requirements to Enter the Black Sr. Group

To be considered for placement into the Black Sr. group, swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals of the Black Jr.2 or Blue Sr. Group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 8 x 100 Free on 1:25 (SCY)
- 4 x 300 Free on 4:00 (SCY)
- 6 x 200 IM on 3:20 (SCY)
- 8 x 100 Choice Kick on 2:00 (SCY)
- Swimmers must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 200 Butterfly, 200 Backstroke, 200 Breaststroke, 200 Freestyle, 400 Individual Medley, 500 Freestyle.

Practice Attendance

Swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend a minimum of 4 practices per week. Athletes who fail to make 3 practices per week, evaluated over each month, will be moved to either the Black Jr.2 or Blue Sr. group depending on their age.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are expected to attend at least 3 meets including relays during the season and the highest-level championship meet that the swimmer qualifies for. Focus meets for this group during the season are the State, Regional and Zone Swim Meets.

Goals of the Black Sr. Group

The primary goal of the Black Sr. group is to develop a very strong aerobic foundation and to prepare swimmers physically, mentally and emotionally to move into our Gold group. When swimmers move out of the Black Sr. group they should be able to complete all of the following:

- Achieve YMCA State Qualifying time standards in 3 individual events and 2 YMCA Regional Qualifying time standards in two different strokes.
- Demonstrate the highest possible commitment to practice attendance (5 per week)
- Demonstrate consistency in going at least 10 yards of underwater kick in a streamline body position off of all starts and turns
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Demonstrate a commitment to attending all meets prescribed by the coaching staff
- Demonstrate a commitment to attending all dry land sessions offered
- Demonstrate a commitment to balance academics with swimming, striving for excellence in both
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to train in all strokes and distances at the highest level possible
- Demonstrate a commitment to the team and behavior outside of the pool that will lead to the highest possible performance
- Demonstrate a high level of respect for all members of the coaching staff
- Demonstrate the YMCA's 4 core values and show willingness to work together as a team in reaching for the highest level of individual and team performance possible
- Demonstrate the mental skills necessary to succeed at a national level of competition

GOLD TRAINING GROUP (Ages 13-21)

This is a high-performance training group designed to prepare swimmers for regional and national levels of competition. The emphasis will be on increased aerobic conditioning, as well as the physical, mental and emotional preparation required for high level competition. This group will focus on issues such as advanced stroke mechanics, training of specific energy systems, perfecting race strategies, proper nutrition, individual goal setting, team goal setting, and developing and understanding of the importance of proper mental preparation for high performance. Training will include a specifically designed dryland strength and conditioning program.

Requirements to Enter Gold Group

Swimmers will enter the Gold group only upon invitation from the coach. To be considered for placement into the Gold group swimmers must first be able to complete the Goals of the Black Sr. Group. In addition, swimmers must be able to complete each of the following training sets and performance criteria:

- 10 x 100 Free on 1:10 (SCY)
- 4 x 400 Free on 5:00 (SCY)
- 8 x 200 IM on 3:00 (SCY)
- 10 x 100 Choice Kick on 1:50 (SCY)
- Swimmers must have achieved 2 YMCA Regional or Zones Qualifying time standards for different strokes
- Swimmers must have achieved a legal time in either YMCA or USA Swimming competition in the following events – 200 Butterfly, 200 Backstroke, 200 Breaststroke, 200 Freestyle, 400 Individual Medley, 500 Freestyle.

Practice Attendance

Swimmers are required to attend a minimum of 5 practices per week. Attendance of morning practices will be at the discretion of the Gold group coach, and morning workouts will not serve as a substitute to afternoon and Saturday morning workouts in fulfilling an athlete's attendance requirement. Athletes who fail to meet this requirement, evaluated over each month, will be moved to the Black Sr. group.

Meet Attendance

Swimmers are expected to attend all meets prescribed by the Gold group coach including the highest-level YMCA championship meet that the swimmer qualifies for. Focus meets for this group during the season are YMCA Regionals and Short-Course YMCA Nationals.

Goals of the Gold Group

- The primary goal of the Gold group is to develop a very strong aerobic foundation and to prepare swimmers physically, mentally and emotionally to transition into collegiate swimming. Within Gold group swimmers should be able to complete all of the following:
- Achieve at least 1 YMCA Short-Course National Championship qualifying standards
- Demonstrate the highest possible commitment to practice attendance (8 per week)
- Demonstrate a proven ability to listen to coaches, learn and make continuous effort to improve in all areas of technical, training and racing skills
- Demonstrate a commitment to attending all meets prescribed by the coaching staff
- Demonstrate a commitment to attending all dry land sessions offered
- Demonstrate a commitment to balance academics with swimming, striving for excellence in both
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to train in all strokes and distances at the highest level possible
- Demonstrate a commitment to the team and behavior outside of the pool that will lead to the highest possible performance
- Demonstrate a high level of respect for all members of the coaching staff
- Demonstrate the YMCA's 4 core values and show willingness to work together as a team in reaching for the highest level of individual and team performance possible
- Demonstrate the mental skills necessary to succeed at a national level of competition

C. TEAM EQUIPMENT NEEDS FOR EACH GROUP

There are various pieces of equipment required for each group. Swim equipment should be brought to practice each and every time your swimmer attends. We may not use all of the equipment each time but it is important to have it available. Additionally, a proper competitive type swim suit should be worn to each practice (Boys – speedo/jammer, Girls – one piece suit) Board shorts/bikini's are not considered suitable swimwear for a competitive swimmer and should not be worn.

WHITE GROUP

Practice: Fins, Snorkel, Practice Suit, Swim Cap (optional), Goggles

Meets: Competition Suit, Team T-Shirt, Team Swim Cap

BLUE LEVEL GROUPS

Practice: Equipment Bag, Kickboard, Fins, Snorkel, Practice Suit, Swim Cap (optional), Goggles

Meets: Competition Suit, Team T-Shirt, Team Swim Cap

BLACK LEVEL GROUPS

Practice: Equipment Bag, Kickboard, Short & Long Fins, Snorkel, Paddles, Team Suit, Team Swim Cap, Goggles

Meets: Competition Suit, Team T-Shirt, Team Swim Cap

GOLD LEVEL GROUPS

Practice: Equipment Bag, Kickboard, Short & Long Fins, Snorkel, Paddles, Team Suit, Team Swim Cap, Goggles

Meets: Competition Suit, Team T-Shirt, Team Swim Cap, Team Warmups, Team Backpack

For white/blue level groups a suitable practice suit includes a brief/jammer for boys and drop back suit for girls
For black/gold level groups swimmers should be practicing and competing in a brief suit and open back suit.

IX. Leagues

The MACR Sharks have program offerings in two different leagues. Depending on your practice group your swimmer may be involved in both leagues or in just one. The leagues that we participate in are YMCA Competitive Swimming and USA Swimming. Each league provides good competition and sportsmanship and MACR Coaches are trained and certified to coach swimmers in both leagues.

A. YMCA Competitive Swimming – What is YMCA Swimming

YMCA Competitive Swimming in Iowa consists of 30 teams from across the state. The winter YMCA Season begins in October and concludes in March. Throughout the YMCA Season there are opportunities to compete in up to seven dual/tri swim meets. The Sectional Championship Swim Meet in February serves as a qualifier for the YMCA State Championship Swim Meet in March. Additionally, a Regional Championship Meet is held in March. The Regional Meet location is shared between teams in the North Central Region (IA, MN, ND, SD, NE) Swimmer's can qualify for the YMCA Regional Meet at any YMCA, USA, High School etc. swim meet within a time period as set by the league. The National Championship Meet (YMCA Nationals) is held twice per year (Short Course Yards in April and Long Course Meters in July) Questions about YMCA in the North Central region can be answered by the Regional Representative for YUSA, Donald Pirrie at the following address:

Iowa YMCA Competitive Swimming
1614 West Mount Vernon Road
Mount Vernon, IA 52314
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YMCA Swimming is governed by YUSA and following a set of rules called 'The Rules that Govern' This document along with additional YMCA Swimming Information can be found on the YMCA National Site:

<https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?tabid=0&team=yusa>

The first YMCA in the USA was founded in Boston, MA in 1851. The first YMCA Swimming pool was built in Brooklyn Central YMCA in 1885. By the year end it was reported that there were 17 YMCA pools in existence. By 1900 this number had risen to 100. Early YMCA pools had no system of filtration or chlorination and were considered a health menace by the medical profession. By 1923 the number of pools had risen to well over 293 and the first YMCA National Championships were held on May 19 with 9 associations and 80 participants. In 1975 the National YMCA Swimming & Diving Championships were held in the Swimming Hall of Fame Pool in Ft. Lauderdale and became the World's Largest Swimming Championships with over 1500 participants. Today there are approx. 450 YMCA Competitive Swim Teams in the USA serving tens of thousands of participants.

B. USA Swimming – What is USA Swimming

USA Swimming Headquarters provides a variety of services and programs for its membership. Among the many services are publications, educational programs, fund-raising activities, sports medicine programs, resources and general information about swimming related activities. USA Swimming staff is available to assist you in answering questions or providing additional information about USA Swimming.

BACKGROUND

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming was conceived in 1978 with the passage of the Amateur Sports Act, which specified that all Olympic sports would be administered independently. Prior to this act, USA Swimming was the Competitive Swimming Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. USA Swimming Headquarters office was established in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1981 and is located at the Olympic Training Center.

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

USA SWIMMING MISSION STATEMENT

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. We administer competitive swimming in accordance with the Amateur Sports Act. We provide programs and services for our members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. We value these members of the swimming community, and the staff and volunteers who serve them. We are committed to excellence and the improvement of our sport.

HOW IS USA SWIMMING ORGANIZED?

INTERNATIONAL - The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through United States Aquatic Sports (USAS), made up of the four aquatic sports - swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

NATIONAL - USA Swimming is a Group A member of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and has voting representation in the USOC House of Delegates.

ZONE - We are divided into four separate zones - central, eastern, southern and western. Each zone elects two representatives to the national Board of Directors.

LOCAL - Within the United States, there are fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs). Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws under which it operates. A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of the LSC.

HOW USA SWIMMING OPERATES

USA Swimming is a non-profit organization made up of very dedicated volunteers and support staff. Interested volunteers donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from the national Board of Directors to the local swimming clubs. There are over 30 standing committees. Staff liaisons, along with these committees, create, implement and evaluate USA Swimming programs. The House of Delegates meets annually to determine the rules and regulations for the following year.

Between yearly meetings of the House of Delegates, an elected USA Swimming Board of Directors is charged with the responsibility of making decisions for USA Swimming. A support staff at Headquarters in Colorado Springs implements the policies and provides service to members.

C. Iowa Swimming, Inc

USA Swimming is divided into 59 Local Swimming Committees (LSC's), which administer USA Swimming activities in smaller geographical areas. Iowa Swimming Inc. is the LSC that serves as the governing body of USA Swimming for the State of Iowa, with the exception of the extreme western portion of the state.

Iowa Swimming, Inc. consists of group members (swim clubs), registered annually with ISI and USA Swimming and is governed by a House of Delegates made up of representatives of each Group Member (swim club) in the LSC and a Board of Directors and officers elected by the House of Delegates.

The House of Delegates meets twice each year. Each swim club is represented at each meeting. In addition to serving as the local governing body for USA Swimming, ISI sanctions competitions, registers swimmers and clubs, trains and certifies officials, conducts championship meets, provides swimmer recognition and travel funds, publishes a newsletter, maintains records, and generally promotes, encourages and supports competitive swimming at all levels in the state. Most directors, officers, delegates, club officials and meet officials serve Iowa Swimming, Inc. and USA Swimming on a volunteer basis, and all persons interested in competitive swimming are encouraged to join their efforts in maintaining a strong program for swimmers in the state of Iowa.

The objective and primary purpose of ISI is the education, instruction, and training of individuals to develop and improve their capabilities in the sport of swimming. ISI promotes swimming for the benefit of swimmers of all ages and abilities, in accordance with the standards, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of FINA, USA Swimming, and ISI, and its Articles of Incorporation. Its website is www.isiswim.com

X. Swimming 101

THE BASICS

SKILLS

The five competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and individual medley.

COMPETITION

Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances, depending on the age group and classification. Each swimmer will have a limit to the number of events/meets that they can swim.

In **freestyle** events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up and down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

The **breaststroke**, which is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

Some consider the **butterfly** to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. (The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.)

The **individual medley**, commonly referred to as the **I.M.**, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

In the **medley relay**, all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.

The **freestyle relay** events consist of four freestylers, each swimming one-quarter of the total distance of the event.

STARTS

In the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the starting horn is sounded to start the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early or gotten an unfair advantage, the guilty swimmer may be disqualified after the race for a false start. Under USA Swimming rules, one false start disqualifies the swimmer.

OFFICIALS

Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

RULES

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

THE COURSE

Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or 25 meters), or long course (50 meters). The international standard (as used in the Olympics) is 50 meters. World records are accomplished in 25 and 50 meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yard, 25 meter and 50 meter pools.

TEAMS

USA Swimming is made up of approximately 2,800 teams from all over the country. Of these clubs, nearly half have 80 swimmers or less, and a handful of teams have over 500 swimmers. A team may be comprised of any number of swimmers, parents and coaches. In Iowa there are approx.. 30 USA Swim Teams and 32 YMCA Swim Teams. Participants compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the first day of the meet. Traditionally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Many local meets feature 8 and under, single age groups, or senior events. Team practice groups are usually determined by age and/or ability.

B. SWIMMING RULES

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these 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, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsmanlike conduct. DQs are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

FREESTYLE: Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.

BACKSTROKE: Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.

BREASTSTROKE: An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

BUTTERFLY: Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

STARTS: The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not-it does not matter), they will be disqualified. This is not like the Olympics where they are allowed two false starts.

TURNS AND FINISHES

1. Freestyle: feet have to touch the wall
2. Backstroke: At the finish a swimmer must finish on his/her back. A swimmer may not roll over and grab the wall until they have first touched it.
3. Breaststroke and Butterfly:
 - A. Swimmers have to touch with both hands at the same time.
 - B. A swimmer may not freestyle kick off the wall in either breaststroke or butterfly.
 - C. When swimming butterfly, both arms must move at the same time.

For specific language on any technical rules consult the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book. Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee. The rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for the disqualification. If your child is disqualified in an event, be supportive rather than critical. For beginning Swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. 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.

XI. Swim Meets

A. LEVELS OF SWIM MEETS

DUAL MEETS (USA/YMCA)

The MACR Sharks may compete with one other team in a dual meet. These meets help promote team unity, but usually limit the number of events a swimmer may enter.

DEVELOPMENTAL MEETS (USA/SUMMER LEAGUE)

These meets generally do not have any qualification time standards. Most of the time these meets offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter from 3-5 events per day.

QUALIFICATION MEETS (USA)

These meets have some type of qualification time standard(s) that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet.

SECTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (YMCA)

The Sectional Championship Meet is the Qualifier meet for the YMCA State Championships. Swimmers must achieve the State Q Time at the Sectional Meet to advance to the YMCA State Championships.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS (YMCA)

Held in March, the State Championship meet is the end of season meet for most YMCA Swimmers. Swimmers can compete in up to 3 individual events (through qualification) and two relays. Teams are divided into divisions by size and teams compete against other teams within their division.

LSC CHAMPIONSHIPS (USA)

At the end of each short course (winter) and long course (summer) season, an LSC Championship meet is sanctioned by Iowa Swimming, the governing body of swimming in our LSC. Iowa Swimming sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets.

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (YMCA)

The Regional Championship meet is open to teams within a certain region. In our case, this is the North Central Region with teams from IA, MN, ND, SD, NE in attendance. Qualification times for this meet can be achieved at any YMCA, USA, High School etc. swim meet. Swimmers can compete in up to 7 individual events.

ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS (USA)

After the state championships are held in the summer, a swimmer may qualify to participate in the Central Zone Championships by swimming a national "AAA" time. This is an all-star meet where swimmers compete as a member of the Iowa Swimming Zone team competing against other states from the west.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (YMCA)

One of the highest levels of achievement MACR Sharks swimmers strive for is the participation in the YMCA National Championships. Held in April swimmers must meet qualification standards to compete. Qualification times can be obtained at any YMCA or USA Approved Swim Meet.

SPEEDO/USS JUNIOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (USA)

One of the highest levels of achievement MACR Sharks swimmers strive for is the participation in the Junior National Championships. United States Swimming sponsors a United States Junior National meet each season. MACR Sharks swimmers meeting qualifying time standards for this meet travel to different locations throughout the United States to compete against the best 18-Under swimmers in the nation.

PHILLIPS 66/USS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS (SENIOR NATIONALS) (USA)

Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, the highest level of competition for our senior swimmers is the USS National Championships. As with the Junior Nationals, MACR Sharks swimmers meeting the national qualifying time standards travel to various cities throughout the U.S. to compete against America's best swimmers. Swimmers can qualify for national teams that represent the U.S. in international competition by their performances at Senior Nationals.

B. ABOUT SWIM MEETS

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach.

C. BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins.
This time will be listed in the meet information emailed out to all MACR Sharks swimmers and also in the team newsletter.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
3. Once "checked in", write each event-number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.
4. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.
5. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
6. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
7. According to USS rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or

the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

8. Heat Sheets. A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for one to two dollars per day or \$5/\$6 per program. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. 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.

D. MEET STARTS

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to their lane. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle. Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even numbered. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event depending on size of the meet.
3. The swimmer swims their race.
4. After each swim:
 - A. He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
 - B. He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will ask him/her their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.
 - C. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - a. Positive comments or praise
 - b. Suggestions for improvement
 - c. Positive comments
5. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - A. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
 - B. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.
 - C. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
 - D. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again.
6. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there. (The coaches speak from experience on this issue).

E. DEALING WITH DISAPPOINTING SWIMS

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey, that is not like you. You're usually a top swimmer." Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. You never talk about the negative things.

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?"

Immediately start talking about the positive things.

F. WHAT TO TAKE TO A SWIM MEET

1. Most important: Swim Suit, MACR Swim Cap and goggles.
2. Towels - Realize your swimmer will be there a while, so pack at least two.
3. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
4. Team sweats or warm ups. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
5. Team T-shirt
6. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
7. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but the lines are long and most of the time they only sell junk food.

Suggestions for items to bring:

Drinks: Hi-C, Fruit juice, Gatorade; Snacks: Granola bars, Fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, jello cubes, sandwiches

G. THE TEAM DRESS CODE FOR SWIM MEETS

MACR Sharks swimmers are expected to compete in a MACR Sharks Team Competition Suit and Swim Cap. Only MACR Swim Caps will be allowed in competition. **This is not optional**

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other MACR Sharks' parent for help or information!

Special Parent's Note: The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! At some of the meets, the parents are allowed to sit with the swimmers at the blanket area (those are most of the meets not held at a natatorium). If you don't think that a gym floor is comfortable, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.

H. CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS

A top goal of our team is to qualify as many swimmers as possible for the Championship meet(s). Whether attendance is REQUIRED or OPTIONAL, the Championship meet is a special experience and extremely important in the athletes development. As our season progresses, all of the swimmers get excited and motivated to "go for a Division cut". Unfortunately, some of the swimmers do not have the consistent practice habits nor the USS meet experience to make the cut, yet, through an extremely psyched swim and a lot of desire, they do the time. Because they don't have the practices and meet experience, the swimmer will probably not repeat the time at the Championship meet. They really don't belong there. As an Age Group swimmer, our swimmers learn they swim faster at the Championship meet than at any other time during the season. They are prepared for this; they are taught this; we practice this. If a young swimmer goes to the Championship meet and is not properly prepared, the experience is negative and can affect other championships later in his/her swimming career. We, as coaches, believe that the honor of competing in a Championship meet is earned through consistent practice habits and competitive experience at USS swim meets. There's a big difference between "wanting" to go to the championships and "deserving" to be at the championships. Talent plays a supporting role to commitment. To insure that all of our swimmers are properly prepared for their championships:

1. Meet attendance and participation throughout the entire season is important. USS meets offer the experience necessary for the championships.
2. Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains with.
"Consistency" is the key word.

The State Championship is not the ultimate goal. It is a seasonal goal that should lead to Zones, Junior & Senior Nationals, and beyond. Making the "cut off time" is simply a requirement to attend the meet. The goal is to be as prepared as possible and perform to the best of one's ability at the meet. Sometimes swimmers get the "end" and the "means" mixed up.

Swimmers are special people and deserve to have positive experiences as rewards for their dedication and commitment. Let's make sure that parents, swimmers, and coaches, are laying the foundation for the best possible experience at the Championship meet.

XII. Prelims and Finals

Meet Format: In a preliminaries and finals meet format, the object of the preliminary swim is to qualify for the evening finals session. If a swimmer places among the top 8 (in an 8 lane pool) after his/her morning swim they then qualify to swim in the Championship finals in the evening session. Some meets also swim a Consolation final. If a swimmer places from 9th - 16th place from preliminaries, he/she qualifies to participate in the Consolation finals in the evening session. In the evening finals session, the Consolation heat is swam first followed immediately by the Championship heat. During the prelims, the results are usually posted within ½ hour of the conclusion of the event. If a swimmer does not wish to swim in a final swim he or she may "scratch" the event and not be penalized. This must take place within a half hour of the posting of the preliminary results. Therefore, within approximately 1 hour of the end of an event, a swimmer should know if they have made finals. A swimmer should never leave the meet without making sure if they are a finalist or an alternate. United States Swimming rules dictate that if a swimmer makes a finals event and fails to show up they are barred from participating in the remainder of the meet (individual events and relays). Alternates (the 17th & 18th place swimmers) should check with his/her coach about attending finals.

XIII. Circle Seeding

Used only in the prelims of Championship meets with events that have "prelims & finals". This affects only the top 24 seeded swimmers (8 lane pool) which compete in the last 3 heats. All other heats are regular seeding. Circle seeding goes like this:

The fastest seeded swimmer will be in the last heat in lane 4. The second fastest swimmer will be in the second to last heat lane 4. The third fastest swimmer will be in the third to last heat lane 4. The fourth fastest swimmer will be in the last heat lane 5 and so on. For an event with 60 swimmers, the seeding would look like this:

#=swimmers seed in prelims

The finals are seeded like a regular meet as are any events that are swam as timed finals such as relays, distance freestyles and other events most often held on Friday evening as a timed finals session.

XIV. Awards and Placings

The swimmers who participate in the championship finals receive awards as listed in the meet information. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals often do not receive awards, but do score points for the team.

One very important thing:

Once a swimmer has made the championship final, the worst they can place is 8th, regardless of how slow they may swim in finals. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals may place no better than 9th (the winner of the heat) regardless how fast they swim. It has been known to happen that the winner of the consolation finals swims a time that would have placed him/her 2nd or 3rd in the championship finals, but the highest he/she can score is 9th. That is why it is important to swim very fast in the morning prelims session to

make the championship finals. If a swimmer is disqualified in finals, they do not score points or get awards, however, a non-finals swimmer cannot be moved up to score. The place simply is not awarded. Alternates occasionally get to swim and can score the same as any other swimmer.

XV. Receiving Awards in Public

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to be prompt and to cooperate fully with dignity and respect at the presentations. A club uniform is to be worn when accepting the award. It is also customary for MACR Sharks swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a "thank you". Good sportsmanship is essential. If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team.

XVI. Out of Town Meets

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer's career while advancing through the age group ranks. The MACR Sharks has established the following policies for the safety of the swimmer and peace-of-mind of parents:

1. Parents are to be responsible for arranging transportation and lodging to away meets, with the exception of Nationals and those competitions so designated. Oftentimes, a certain hotel will be designated as "team headquarters."
2. Parents are encouraged to attend out-of-town meets with their swimmers and to chaperone other youngsters. These trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike. They also are a rare opportunity to participate in a special way in each young swimmer's career.
3. A coach has too many responsibilities to the entire team to accept responsibility for an individual swimmer. Therefore, do not ask a coach to provide transportation.
4. Any swimmer riding in a car is responsible to the parent/driver for his/her behavior and is expected to adhere to the MACR Sharks "Honor Code" at all times.
5. A medical release and emergency telephone number should be given to the parent/driver with whom your swimmer is riding in case emergency medical treatment is required.
6. An appropriate contribution is expected from each passenger in a car to the driver/owner to help defray gasoline and related expenses.

XIX. Nutrition for Swimming *(Reprinted from "Training Agenda", a USS Sports Medicine and Science Series)*

Everything you do influences your performance, but your food choices have the most effect due to the long term and short-term benefits. A proper diet, including proper selection of foods, will help your training and performance while also achieving a healthy lifestyle once you stop competing.

To help ensure a balanced diet, remember that there are no magical nutrition remedies. So forget the fads and eat a variety of wholesome foods from the four food groups--milk, meat, fruits & vegetables, and grains. Foods in these groups provide protein, fat carbohydrate, fiber and all the necessary vitamins and minerals. Your ideal diet should include the following percentage of calories:

Carbohydrate 50-60%

Fat 20-30%

Protein 14-18%

This nutrition series is designed to help you better understand good nutrition and to provide guidelines for ideal food choices. Within sports, there are four major periods that nutrition will impact:

A. DURING TRAINING

Training represents the period in which athletes spend most of their time. Therefore, this category represents the most critical period. During this time, a diet high in carbohydrates is important. This is important since it is not uncommon for athletes training 4-6 hours a day to burn 2500 to 4000 calories a day. The best way to replenish these calories is with a high carbohydrate diet. By being conscious of this and by taking high carbohydrate foods or drink in the first 30 minutes following a workout, you can minimize depletion of energy stores.

B. PRE-EVENT NUTRITION

The major purpose of the pre-event diet is to ensure sufficient energy and fluid for the athlete. Two to three days before competition, a high carbohydrate diet with plenty of fluids should be emphasized. The pre-event meal should include a light, high carbohydrate meal three to four hours before the event.

C. NUTRITION DURING COMPETITION

Provided that good nutrition practices were followed during training, middle distance and sprint events will not be limited by nutrition-related factors. During a three to four day competition, make sure you consume plenty of fluids and each meal should include high carbohydrate, low fat selections.

D. NUTRITION AFTER COMPETITION

High intensity work will deplete the muscle's energy supplies. Therefore, carbohydrates play an important role after competition to make sure energy stores are maintained.

E. FOOD CHOICES

The best food choices include a well balanced, mixed diet with choices from each of the four food groups. You can get all the nutrients you need by selecting a variety of foods in the recommended serving size from each food group.

(Insert Doc – Motivational Times Top 16)

XX. Goal Setting

Training Logbook

Date _____

THIS WEEK'S GOALS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Strategies for attaining goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Obstacles that might prevent me from achieving goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Self-evaluation:

XXI. Parent Roles

A. 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS

by Rose Snyder, Managing Director Coaching Division, USOC Former Director of Club Services, USA Swimming (adapted from Ed Clendaniel's 10 Commandments for Little League Parents)

I. Thou shalt not impose thy ambitions on thy child.

Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push him based on what you think he should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his personal best and benefit from the process of competitive swimming.

II. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.

There is only one question to ask your child after a practice or a competition - "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

III. Thou shalt not coach thy child.

You are involved in one of the few youth sports programs that offer professional coaching. Do not undermine the professional coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to provide love and support. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. Never pay your child for a performance. This will only serve to confuse your child concerning the reasons to strive for excellence and weaken the swimmer/coach bond.

IV. Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.

You should be encouraging and never criticize your child or the coach. Both of them know when mistakes have been made. Remember "yelling at" is not the same as "cheering for".

V. Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.

New experiences can be stressful situations. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event or meet if your child was not ready. Remember your job is to love and support your child through all of the swimming experience.

VI. Thou shalt not criticize the officials.

Please don't criticize those who are doing the best they can in purely voluntary positions.

VII. Honor thy child's coach.

The bond between coach and swimmer is special. It contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child.

VIII. Thou shalt be loyal and supportive of thy team

It is not wise for parents to take swimmers and to jump from team to team. The water isn't necessarily bluer in another team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team find that it can be a difficult emotional experience. Often swimmers who do switch teams don't do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

IX. Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.

Most successful swimmers have learned to focus on the process and not the outcome. Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal

and I lost. Does this make me a failure? No, in fact I am very proud of that swim." What a tremendous outlook to carry on through life.

X. Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.

There are 250,000 athletes in USA Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about .0002%.

B. PARENT AND ATHLETE

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes including self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to treat success and failure as two sides of the same coin, while becoming healthy and physically fit. As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, by coming to swimming meets and volunteering for your club at swim meets, or by participating in fundraising, etc.

Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive role models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates.

Remember that you are teaching your child at all times.

Be Enthusiastic and Supportive!

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. Let them know that first they are the child you love, and second, a swimmer. Tell them you will love them whether they swim well or not, and ask only that they give their best effort. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your child develop a positive self-image.

Positive Parenting Tips

1. Your child needs your emotional, physical, and financial support. Be liberal in providing this support.
2. Support but do not push your child.
3. Understand development - long-term development as an athlete, and growth and development as it impacts performance.
4. Be realistic in terms of expectations; factor in age and skill level; be aware of your child's perception of your expectations.
5. Emphasize performance and effort, not just outcome. The athlete only has control over his/her performance. Define and measure success as giving maximal effort and as personal improvement.
6. Keep winning in perspective.
7. Do not bribe.
8. Give plenty of encouraging and rewarding statements. Criticize sparingly.
9. View swimming as an arena in which to teach your child about commitment, hard work, and coping with adversity.
10. Work to form an effective Coach-Athlete-Parent Triangle.

C. PARENT AND COACH

The best way to help your child achieve goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one, remember that this is a learning experience. You and your child should learn to treat success and failure as learning experiences and not life changing situations. Encourage your child's efforts and point out the positive things. The coach is the one you have assigned to judge a swimmer's performance and technique. Your role is to provide love and support regardless of outcome.

D. PARENT AND CLUB

Parental involvement is crucial to every club. Regardless of the organizational model of the club, parents play key support roles. In parent owned clubs, parents are needed in leadership roles as board members and committee leaders. Regardless of structure, clubs are looking for volunteers to help with swim meets, coordinate social events and organize fundraising. Volunteering to help your club is a great way to get involved, meet other parents and be a positive role model for your child. Contact the coach or an involved parent to find out more about what you can do and how you can be a positive force in your club.

xxii. Glossary of Terms

Age Group Swimming

Program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are: 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18. Local events may also include 8 and under.

Block

The starting platform.

Bulkhead

A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-yard courses.

Circle Swimming

Performed by staying to the correct side of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable maximum use of pool space.

Coach

a person who trains and teaches athletes in the sport of swimming and is accredited by USA/YMCA Swimming.

Code of Conduct

An agreement signed by a swimmer prior to travel or participation stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

Cut

Slang term for qualifying time. It is a time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

Distance

Term used to refer to events 400 meters/500 yards and longer.

DQ or Disqualification

Occurs when an official observes a rule violation by the swimmer. A disqualified swimmer cannot receive awards or use the result as an official time.

Drill

An exercise involving isolation of a portion or part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

Dry Land Training

Training done out of the water. Aids and enhances swimming performance. Usually includes stretching, weight training, and/or calisthenics.

Entry Form

Form on which a swimmer enrolls in a competition. Usually includes USA Swimming number, age, sex, event number, and seed time.

False Start

Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the starting signal. In USA Swimming, one false start will generally result in disqualification.

Final

The championship heat of an event in which the top swimmers from the preliminaries compete.

Finish

The final phase of the race: the touch at the end of the race.

Flags

Pennants strung across the pool 5 yards or meters from the end of the pool. They enable backstrokers to execute a turn more efficiently by counting their strokes from the flags to the wall.

Goal

A specific time achievement a swimmer sets and strives for. Can be short or long-term.

Gutter

The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and recirculates through the filtration system.

I.M.

Short for Individual Medley, an event in which one swimmer swims equal distances of each stroke in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.

Lap Counter

A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a race 500 yards or longer. Also, it is the person who stands at the opposite end from the start and uses the plastic display number to count laps for the swimmer.

Long Course

A 50-meter pool. USA Swimming conducts most summer swimming in long course.

Meet

Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, swimmers test themselves against the clock to mark improvement.

Middle Distance

Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters to 500 yards/400 meters in length.

National Age Group Top 16 Reportable Times

Time standards set for both short and long course based on previous year's achievements. Times meeting these standards are compiled to make a national list of the fastest age group swimmers each year.

Negative Split

Swimming the second half of the race faster than the first half.

Official

A USA Swimming certified judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who observes for infractions of USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

Pace Clock

Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice. May also be digital.

Preliminaries (Prelims)

Races in which swimmers compete to qualify for the finals in the events.

Q+ Meet

Meets in which you need a qualifying time for at least one event in order to enter the meet.

Q time

Slang for qualifying time; a time standard necessary to enter a particular meet or event.

Relay

An event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Scratch

To withdraw from an event in a competition. There may be time limits for scratching from an event without penalty.

Senior Swimming

The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition in National Swimming Championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a pool of talented athletes for Internal Competition. There are no age restrictions on Senior Competition.

Short Course

A pool 25 yards or meters long. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short course yards.

Split

A swimmer's intermediate time within a race. Splits are registered every 50 yards or meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is on pace. Under certain conditions, splits may be used as official times. In a relay, the time for one of the four individuals.

Streamline

The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight as it can be.

Taper

The final preparation phase of a season. Prior to major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer will ease yardage and allow the body to recover. Often during taper, swimmers will shave his/her entire body to reduce resistance, aid in the dissipation of lactic acid, and heighten sensation in the water.

Time Trial

A time-only swim, which is not part of a regular meet event.

Touch Pad

A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and automatically sent to the timing system.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming, Inc. The national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.

Warm Up

Low intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.