



**AQUA FORCE**  
SWIM TEAM



**FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA**

**AQUA FORCE**

**SWIM TEAM**

**PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**2022-2023**

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Membership For All helps to ensure that everyone belongs at the YMCA regardless of income level.

**FOX VALLEY FAMILY YMCA | [www.foxvalleymca.org](http://www.foxvalleymca.org) | 630-552-4100**



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## WELCOME

### Welcome to the Fox Valley Family YMCA's Competitive Swimming Program, Aqua Force Swim Team

This handbook will serve as an introduction to the Aqua Force Swim Team. Please take time to read this and refer to it for future reference.

Aqua Force teaches swimmers to reach their potential as they improve their skills and to reach new goals by improving technique and increasing strength & endurance. We provide an outstanding developmental team that also trains skilled swimmers to be highly competitive. Furthermore we build strong character, promote unity among peers and develop leadership skills.

If you have any questions or concerns about the swim team, please contact:

Head Swim Coach: Kim McGraw  
kmcgraw@foxvalleymca.org 630/552-4100 x237

Aquatics Director/Head Age Group Swim Coach: Mike Click  
mclick@foxvalleymca.org 630/552-4100 x237

Practice schedules can be found in the FVFY program guide and online at the Aqua Force Team Unify website, under the "Team Info" tab. Meet schedules are on the home page of the Aqua Force Team Unify website under the "Meets" tab. Team activities and schedule updates are on the home page of the Aqua Force Team Unify website under the "Functions" tab.

WELCOME



## MISSION & VISION

### Fox Valley Family YMCA's Swim Team

The Aqua Force Swim Team embraces the core values of the YMCA: Caring, Honesty, Respect, & Responsibility. Additionally, the team seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment with opportunities for social and emotional development, a physical recreational outlet, and an atmosphere of good sportsmanship, teamwork, & fun for all. We follow Safe Sport Guidelines and have policies and procedures in place to help make sure everyone feels welcome and safe.

FVfy Aqua Force swim team enables every child to gain from his or her experience, regardless of the order of finish. The total swim team experience should be an enjoyable and safe one. The program proceeds in a manner that will enhance and improve one's interest and respect for the sport of swimming.

The team participates in both YMCA and USA Swimming events. All swimmers are required to be Fox Valley Family YMCA members to be on the team and USA Swimming members.

### Aqua Force Swim Team Objectives

- To ensure swimmers grow in confidence and to learn life skills that will benefit them in and out of the water.
- To provide instruction, training, and competition to swimmers of all abilities.
- To learn the value of hard work, commitment, and teamwork.
- To know, and always show, a high level of good sportsmanship and positive attitude.
- To provide a structure for family togetherness and interaction.
- To provide all of the above in a safe environment.

## PRACTICE GROUPS

# PRACTICE GROUPS

### **White (5-12 years)**

Swimmers have some technique basics and can swim a 25 free & 25 back without stopping.

### **Silver (6-12 years)**

Swimmers with most technique basics and can swim 100 Free non-stop, 50 breast, 50 fly and 50 back.

### **Purple (7-12 years)**

Swimmers with proper technique basics and can swim a legal 100 IM and have a 100 free time under 1:30.

### **Black (10-12 years)**

Swimmers with proper technique basics and can swim a legal 200 IM and have a 200 free time under 3:00.

### **Pre Senior (13-21 years)**

Swimmers with most technique basics and can swim 100 Free non-stop, 50 breast, 50 fly and 50 back.

### **Senior (13-21 years)**

Swimmers with proper technique basics and can swim a legal 200 IM and have a 200 free time under 2:50.

### **Senior State (13-21 years)**

A swimmer with 2 times faster than Y State 15 & Over qualifying standards & can swim a legal 400 IM and have a 200 free time under 2:25.

White swimmers do not have any practice or meet expectations.

Silver & Pre Senior swimmers are expected to attend 2 or more practices a week.

Purple swimmers are expected to attend 3 or more practices a week and be available for Y State.

Black, Senior & Senior State swimmers are expected to attend 4 or more practices a week and be available for Y State.

If you are going to miss a practice please let your coach know.



## REGISTRATION

### Swimmer Placement

All new swimmers must be evaluated and placed into the appropriate practice group. Returning swimmers will be emailed their appropriate practice group but if they feel like they have improved, they can attend a placement date to be evaluated. Aqua Force coaches are experienced and knowledgeable; please trust the coach's determination for which practice group best fits your swimmer. Injuries and insecurities can develop when swimmers move to more advanced practice groups too soon.

### Mandatory Orientation Meetings

All families must have a parent attend an orientation meeting via Zoom. First year Aqua Force families will attend an hour long meeting and veteran families will attend a 30 minute meeting. Aqua Force is always striving to be the best it can be and will have some changes each year to continue the improvement of the team.

### Membership & Fees

All swimmers must be current members of the Fox Valley Family YMCA. Each family will be required to fill out a registration packet and pay the USA Swimming registration fee (changes annually). Each family is now required by USA Swimming to register and pay directly on the USA Swimming site each year. Registration for USA Swimming opens September 1st. Swimmers should register for USA Swimming prior to our first meet of the season. Also every swimmer must pay a one time \$30 meet fee deposit and have a credit card on file labeled "meet fees".

### Fundraising

Hosting large meets is the best way to raise money for Aqua Force. Instead of selling things to our families and friends, Aqua Force will host meets. Each family is expected to volunteer each session you have a swimmer plus 2 additional sessions at the Fall Classic. This requirement is per swimmer and families with more than 2 swimmers in a session are only responsible for 2 people per session. Families will be expected to pay \$25 per session not fulfilled. We are looking at other ways to fundraise this year, please let us know if you have any ideas.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Private Coaching

FVfy offers private coaching for all swimmers. Private coaching is a great way to improve on some specific skills. Private coaching request forms are available online at [foxvalleymca.org](http://foxvalleymca.org). You must purchase the coaching before the scheduled session. It's best to do private coaching at least a month before the last meets of the season to give the swimmer time to practice their improved technique.

### Team Apparel

Team suits are not mandatory. Information about ordering team suits will be sent out at the beginning of the season.

Every swimmer will get a team cap (latex) and a team shirt. The team shirt will be distributed the day of the team pictures. Occasionally we will provide an opportunity for swimmers to purchase custom silicone caps with their name. Details will be emailed when we place this order.

### Swim Practice Attire & Equipment

Please make sure your child wears a one piece swimsuit, goggles, cap (if hair is longer than eyebrow) and brings a water bottle & towel. Also each swimmer must bring their own gear:

White & Silver: Kick Board, Fins, Pull Buoy in Mesh Bag

Purple & Pre Senior: Kick Board, Fins, Pull Buoy, Paddles in Mesh Bag

Black, Senior, Senior State: Kick Board, Fins, Pull Buoy, Paddles, Snorkel in Mesh Bag

### Aqua Force Dates & Deadlines

Aqua Force Team Unify website will have specific dates and deadlines posted for all swim meets, activities and orders. Regularly check the meets and team functions tabs to see upcoming events and schedule changes. It is also important to read all email communication and newsletters as these also provide event details and deadlines.

### Team Pictures

Team and individual pictures are done for the Fall/Winter season in mid-November. Check Team Unify and email communication for specific information about dates and ordering.



## COMMUNICATION

### No Practice/Canceled Practice

Aqua Force takes off practice for major holidays and has roughly a month off between the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter seasons. When there is bad weather and we do not cancel, all families are to use their own discretion to determine if it would be safe to drive to practice or meets, cancellations will be emailed and posted on Facebook.

### Team Website

The Aqua Force Team Unify website is your best resource for information. You will receive an email with your log-in instructions. Be informed by checking emails and the "Meets" and "Functions" tabs regularly. This is where you will find info about swim meets and team activities. Most info and updates are distributed via email. TU is also how you manage your family's team account. In TU, you will sign up for swim meets and volunteering, look up your swimmers times, check balances and more.

### Facebook Group

We post in our Facebook group "Aqua Force Swim Team".

The Aqua Force Facebook group is a good place to ask general questions, Parents and Coaches respond regularly. We encourage posting photos from swim meets and team events.

Please note that Aqua Force has a public Facebook page as well as a private, closed Facebook group. The private group has a picture of a swimmer, the public page has a picture of Aqua Force flags. You will need to submit questions about who your swimmer is to be accepted into the private Facebook group.

### Communicating with Coaches

Aqua Force strives for good communication between coaches and parents. The coaches encourage parents to come directly to them if there are problems or disagreements, rather than simply discussing these issues with other parents.

- Monthly Newsletters will be posted on Team Unify and emailed.
- Meets and events posted on Team Unify.
- Emails will be sent out regularly.
- Check family mailboxes in the hallway file cabinet weekly.
- Talk with coaches in person before or after practices. Please schedule a meeting time if it is a personal matter or will require a longer conversation.
- Emergency text alerts are sent through Team Unify. You must verify the phone number on your TU account.

### Parent Committee Meetings

Parents will meet with a couple coaches to plan activities, organize volunteers, give feedback and help guide the team to be its best via Zoom or in person for the 2022/2023 SC season. All parents are encouraged to attend parent committee meetings. Parent committee meetings will be once or twice a month and will be posted on the TU "Functions" tab.



## PARENT EXPECTATIONS

### Parent/Guardian Expectations

- Support the YMCA's core values – Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility.
- Encourage good sportsmanship and behavior by setting a good example and using positive reinforcement.
- Provide support for all swimmers, coaches, and officials at every practice, meet and event.

### Volunteer

The Aqua Force Swim Team has embraced a requirement for parent volunteering when a swimmer attends home meets and is strongly encouraged for away meets or other team events. Volunteers are needed to assist with timing and other duties at swim meets and team activities. It is easy, once you give it a try.

Officials are needed to run meets and to offer low cost or free meets for athletes. It is a learning process and you do not need a swimming background to become an official. We will get you trained.

All swim team families are expected to provide a volunteer at all home meets and some away meets. Home dual, tri and time trial meets are free when a volunteer is provided for that family, unless USA sanctioned.

You must check in with the volunteer check in table when you volunteer to ensure it has been documented.

### Boundaries

- Address questions or communicate concerns with coaches before or after (not during) practices.
- Do not coach or instruct the team or swimmers at practices and meets or interfere with coaches on deck.
- Please sit in the viewing hallway during practices unless needed on the pool deck.
- Only address questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials directly to a member of our coaching staff. Parents do not address officials directly.

### Parent Committees

Each committee will have one selected chair with additional committee members. There will be a sign up on TU this year. Parents can be in multiple committees but we will limit the total number of committee members and expect members to attend at least half of the meetings.

## SWIM MEET INFORMATION

### Swim Meet Attire/Equipment

Swimmers are required to wear an Aqua Force team cap and swim suit or a one piece swimsuit that has black and purple as the primary colors for swim meets.

Tech suits and caps are an exception. Other caps are allowed for practices as long as it does not have another team's logo. Tech suits are never required and are not unusually recommended except for championship meets.

Shoes are important anytime a swimmer is on deck to protect their feet. Bring warm clothing like a hoodie or jacket with sweatpants or shorts to keep them warm between events and healthy snacks and drinks to keep them hydrated and nourished.

### Swim Meets

Swimmers will be asked to sign up for meets well in advance of the competition date. Sometimes entry deadlines are 4-8 weeks before the meet. Please be sure to pay close attention to entry deadlines and sign up before them. You can email the Head Coach if you miss a deadline but we cannot always get you in a meet after the deadline. Families are to log into the team website, commit to the meet, and leave notes about preferred events or if they cannot attend the entire meet session. Coaches will make the final decisions on events.

Swimmers should arrive 20 minutes before warm ups start to allow enough time to get ready. Any changes to warm up times will be emailed a day or two prior to the meet. Warm ups are mandatory.

Invites typically use positive check-in. You will need to find the check-in and highlight your swimmer for all their events. Swimmers should check in with coaches once on the pool deck for all meets.

Swimmers should write down all event information, specifically event number, heat, and lane. This is commonly done on the skin (hand, arm, or leg) with a permanent marker.

Swimmers should pay attention to the progression of the meet and be ready for each event behind the blocks or in the bullpen.

Swimmers and parents should wait in assigned areas. Some meets do not allow swimmers on the bleachers or the parents on the pool deck.

Immediately following each race, swimmers need to see the coaches. It is important the swimmers and coaches can discuss the event, what they did well and how to improve going forward.

If possible, Aqua Force families should sit together at meets to be a great cheering section. Swimmers must be with a parent/guardian at all meets. In the event that a parent cannot travel with a swimmer, that family must find another parent to be responsible for the swimmer if a swimmer is under 18.

## TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

### Swim Meet Structures

Home Time Trials, Dual, or Tri Meets: Great for a swimmer's first meet, recommended for all swimmers.

Away Dual or Tri Meets: Great for a swimmer's second or third meet, recommended for all swimmers.

Closed YMCA Invite Meets: Great for experienced swimmers, recommended for all swimmers.

USA Invite Meets: Great for experienced swimmers, recommended for all swimmers.

Championship Format Meets: Great for veteran swimmers, recommended for all swimmers that qualify. These meets usually have time standards that are required to participate in the meet, which will be posted online and in the pool hallway. Twelve and over swimmers typically have prelims and finals for most events, meaning they could swim in the morning and again in the evening, if they qualify, on the same day for that event(s).

### Championship Swim Meets

- Districts is a championship swim meet at the end of the season that is open to all of our swimmers. Swimmers do not a qualifying time to participate.
- Y State & Y Nationals are championship swim meets for swimmers who make qualifying times. Qualifying times for these meets can be found on Team Unify. Winter Y State does require 3 closed Y meets to be eligible and 2 for swimmers who participate on their HS swim team. Please make these meets a priority and be available to attend.
- Other championship meets (Regionals & Age Group Champs) may be available for our swimmers to attend. Qualifying times must be achieved.

## VOLUNTEERING AT SWIM MEETS

### Good Rookie Swim Team Family Volunteer Roles

Timers: Each lane will have two timers to record each swimmer's time. This job begins with a timer's meeting about 30 minutes prior to the start of the meet. This is easy once you try it.

Marshals: The Marshals see that safe sport and good etiquette is being followed and that parents and swimmers are only in the areas designated for them to be in. They will be stationed at area access points or make rounds through locker rooms and restricted areas.

Concessions: Concessions are sold by parents.

Clean Up: After each meet the timing system, bleachers, chairs, tables, and computer equipment has to be organized and put away. Trash will be cleaned up as well as any other tasks to leave the facility how we found it.

Set Up: Arrive about an hour before warm ups to set up the bleachers, chairs, tables and timing system. We will limit how many new parents volunteer for this role at a time.

### Good Veteran Swim Team Family Volunteer Roles

Welcome Table: You need to be at the meet early and will check in volunteers and sell spirit wear.

Announcer: The announcer is on deck and announces each event in the meet.

Awards: This job involves sorting and labeling ribbons that are being presented to swimmers and ends when the final award has been processed. Aqua Force ribbons get filed in the family folders.

Bullpen: The Bullpen organizes swimmers before each event, usually 10 & under or 8 & under.

Electronic Timing System: This involves running the Colorado timing system, and requires you to be on the deck for the duration of the meet.

Runners: Runners collect the timer sheets from each lane and give them to the computer scoring table. Runners will also collect DQ slips from the officials and give them to the AO, take results from the table and post them in the hallway for parents and swimmers to see, hand out water and do misc. tasks. Athletic shoes are recommended.

Hospitality: At our larger meets volunteers staff the coaches and officials hospitality room. This includes serving, cleaning up, and possibly picking up food.

Officials: Our officials are responsible for running the meet. We are always looking for new officials and you do not need any prior swim knowledge, as you will learn it all in the officials' training.

## **POLICIES**

### **Team Character Contract**

All parents and swimmers are required to read the Aqua Force Swim Team Character contract: USA Swimming Code of Conduct for Athletes and Coaches, Safe Sport & Anti Bullying policy and sign in the registration packet that you agree to its policies.

### **USA Swimming Safe Sport/MAAPP**

All parents are required to read the Fox Valley Family YMCA Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy, MAAPP, and sign in the registration packet that you agree to its policies.

### **Fox Valley Family YMCA Policies**

Children under 12 years old must be accompanied by an adult or a person at least 16 years of age or with a coach while swimming. They will not be able to swim before or after practices unless the adult is on the pool deck with them and they have reserved the lap lane.

Unattended children must be in Kid Zone.

Do not use the pool door to viewing hallway except in emergencies or when the pool is being used for meets or special events.

### **Policy Violations**

If an incident occurs where a swimmer or parent conducts himself/herself in such a manner which jeopardizes their safety or the safety of others, the following steps will be taken:

- **Warning:** Depending on the nature of the incident, the swimmer may be given up to 3 warnings within one day. If the behavior persists, a violation will occur.
- **First Violation:** The swimmer may be removed from a portion of the practice/meet/event and a coach will address the issue directly with the swimmer. Parents will be notified.
- **Second Violation:** The swimmer may be suspended from the team for a portion of the season. A coach will address and document the issue directly with the swimmer. Parents will be notified.
- **Third Violation:** The swimmer will be dismissed from the team until given permission to rejoin.

A swimmer/parent who acts in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner or interferes with the competition at a swim meet may be disqualified or cause their swimmer or our team to be disqualified by the officials.

## TRAINING PROGRESSION

### Senior State, Senior & Black Attendance

Our top practice groups will have an attendance requirement of 4 practices a week. Each day at a swim meet will count toward a practice. Swimmers that go two weeks without meeting the attendance requirement may have to swim in the previous practice group, Purple or Senior, meeting 3 practices a week till they are ready to move back up.

### Training Cycles & Progression

Aqua Force uses training cycles to develop technique and increase the strength and endurance of the swimmers. Typically every 4th week will be a technique review and physical recovery week. These recovery weeks are lined up with bigger meets to promote time drops. Taking days off scheduled practices to rest for meets is not necessary. The recovery weeks will provide extra rest for meets as needed.

Swimmers who have 80% or higher attendance for two consecutive training cycles often get personal best times in most of their events at their next big meet. Friday night and weekend practices are an important part of training and should be attended regularly for those who are training to attend Y State, Y Nationals or any other large qualifying meet.

### Dryland Training

Consistent dryland training will develop increased mobility and stability, reducing long term risk of injury. As swimmers progress to more advanced dryland workouts they will develop strength and speed to increase their power. These are important components of developing competitive swimmers who stay healthy and become highly competitive. The weight room is available for all swim team members who are age 13 and over. Dryland for ages 12 and under to be announced at a later date.

### Nutrition

A healthy well rounded diet is an essential part of the development of all growing kids & adolescents but even more important for developing athletes. 3 nourishing meals with high protein breakfasts, high carb lunches, well-rounded dinners and 2-3 healthy snacks each day will help provide them with the proper balance of nutrition. Please make sure that your swimmer has eaten enough prior to coming to practice and meets. Swimmers should also bring a snack with them in their swim bag should they need it during practice or meets.