

The Upper Main Line YMCA Swim Team Frequently Asked Questions Handbook



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The UMLY Swim Team

What is the overall philosophy of the competitive swim program at the Upper Main Line YMCA?

The mission of the program has always been to develop "good swimmers and great kids." The lessons learned through competitive swimming will last a lifetime. Over the past few decades, UMLY swimmers have had success at all ages in many different levels of competition. The goal of the program is to give kids a foundation of skills for life and provide them the opportunity to compete and excel based on their talent, skills and level of commitment.

We teach our swimmers to develop a set of priorities that starts with family and school, followed by swimming and other activities. We teach that goals and accomplishments will be achieved based on each individual's set of priorities.

To help kids get to their goals, there are a variety of different training groups that fit nearly every level of competitive swimmer. A coaching staff with a unique blend of skills, passion, and experience leads the program.

Swim Practices

How does my child move from one group to another?

The groups are based on age and ability and movement from one group to the next is based on achievement of test sets and coaches recommendations.

Can my child attend a practice with another practice group due to a conflict?

A swimmer should practice with their own group, unless they are told otherwise by a coach.

Can my child practice with the winter team but not participate in the dual meets?

No. Each swimmer must participate in our dual meet program (Penn-Del League). Our program is large and often times we have a wait list to be part of the team.

For the other seasons of the program, (fall and spring), swimmers are eligible to participate in our practices as there are only a few optional invitational swim meets.

Can my child swim at UMLY if they participate in another sport?

Yes, many of our swimmers participate in other sports. It is best to talk to your child's practice coach about this.

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Does my child need to attend all the practices?

Swimmers are placed in practice a group to ensure the practices are age appropriate. Swimmers are expected to attend as many practices as possible, but we understand swimmers have other commitments. It is best to discuss your practice plans with your child's practice coach.

What equipment do I need to buy for my swimmer?

Swimmers need a bathing suit and goggles. A swim cap is also recommended. A more specific list is available from your group coach.

Do I need to buy a team suit?

Yes, we ask swimmers to purchase the team suit. A team swim cap is also required for athletes who wear swim caps, but they will be provided. Most, if not all, swimming equipment is available at Toad Hollow Swim Shop.

Swim Meets and Competitions

What are the different meets? I see dual meets, USA Swimming meets, YMCA Invitational meets.

While the various types of meets may sound confusing, they are just variations on the same concept of a swim meet. The difference is usually who sponsors the meets. YMCA Swimming and USA Swimming have adopted the same technical rules for competition.

DUAL MEETS – When we refer to dual meets, we mean the meets within the YMCA Penn Del swim league. This is a league of other YMCA competitive swim programs in the region. Each season, there are 3 to 5 dual meets per team (we sponsor 2 boys and 2 girls teams in the Penn Del league). The season runs from mid November through January. The meets are held on a Saturday, some at home, some away. The dual meets culminate with a league championship meet in late January or early February.

USA SWIMMING MEETS – These are meets accredited by USA Swimming. Many of these meets have time standard requirements for entry. USA Swimming meets allow swimmers to swim different events/distances than are offered at Penn Del swim meets. Some are local, some require travel and overnight stay.

YMCA INVITATIONALS – These meets are sponsored by a YMCA competitive swim team. These meets, like USA Swimming meets, allow swimmers to swim different events/distances than are offered at the Penn Del dual meets.

What are the YMCA District, States and National swim meets?

The meet referred to as Districts are the YMCA PA East District Swim meet. This is a swim meet, usually held in March, against other YMCA swim teams from eastern Pennsylvania area. To swim in the meet, swimmers must obtain a qualifying time (listed on swimumly.com) in each event for which they swim at districts. The top 6 individual finalists and top 6 relays from each district advance to the PA State Championships (States). This meet is usually held at the McCoy Natatorium at Penn State University.

YMCA Nationals (Y—Nats) are two swim meets (short course in the spring and long course in the summer) against competitive Y swim teams from around the country. Qualifying times must be met to participate in the meet.

What is the structure for USA Swimming meets? Who goes to which meets and who decides?

USA Swimming establishes time standards, or "Cuts" for some of its major meets. Many meets are open for all swimmers. Swimmers are always striving to make their next cut, this encourages age group swimmers to “step up their swimming” to the next level. This allows swimmers at each age group to see where their times are relative to national standards and set personal goals to achieve the next time cut.

The coaching staff selects which swim meets each age group will attend. This is done at the beginning of season. Parents can choose which of the selected USA Swimming and Y invitational meets their age group swimmers attend and in which events they swim. All

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swimmers are expected to swim in Y dual meets and championship meets.

What are 'warm-ups' before the meets?

Like most sports, it is a good idea to thoroughly warm up before a swim meet. The idea is to warm up the muscles so to help prevent an injury. For the purpose of a meet you will have warmed up enough that you are not making a cold start and are ready to go all out from the start. Warm-ups also allow the swimmers to learn the intricacies of each pool (e.g., back stroke count).

How long are the dual meets?

The dual meets last around 2 hours. Keep in mind all swimmers will need to arrive at the pool prior to the meet to warm-up and must stay until the meet is over.

Will I have swim meets every weekend?

Swimmers will not have a swim meet every weekend. Each swim team will have between 3 and 5 dual meets between early November and late January. Swimmers are expected to swim at all the dual meets.

Additional invitational and USA Swimming meets are scheduled throughout the swim season. Attendance at these meets is not required, it is up to each family to determine, which, if any, of these meets they attend.

For swim meets, can my child pick his or her events?

For the dual meets, league champs and districts, the coach will make the line up. This is to ensure that all swimmers can participate based on the meet line up and what best meets the team and swimmers interest. For some USA Swimming and Y Invitational meets, parents and athletes pick events. For other meets, the coaching staff selects events. Remember that good event selection can encourage development in and out of the pool. Coaches may recommend or change events based on this philosophy. If a swimmer is unsure of what to sign up for, consult with the practice coach what would be the best events to choose.

Parents

Who are the contact people I should call if I am a new parent? (I have a question about my child's training group, meet registration, etc?)

The first point of contact will be your child's practice group coach. He/she will be able to answer questions about your child's training, practice group, USA meet events, etc.

Your child will also have a coach for their YMCA dual meet team (Boys A, Boys B, Girls A, Girls B). Address any comments, questions to this coach regarding attendance at dual meets, etc.

Who is allowed on deck during practice, meets?

For safety reasons only coaches and swimmers are allowed on the deck during practices and meets. Coaches are available to discuss specific issues before or after practice, if prior arrangements are made. Please refrain from approaching coaches at meets, they are focusing on helping all the children at the meet.

How can a parent get involved? To whom should a new parent talk to volunteer?

Because of the numerous volunteering opportunities that exist, there is something for everyone's interest and desire. Timers, place judges, food table people, banquet volunteers, team coordinators, party organizers, timing console operations, and many more are examples of positions that need to be filled. And for those of you who like to organize and manage, consider volunteering as one of our committee chairpersons.

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Our volunteer coordinator is Liz McNaull, she would love to answer any questions you may have about any of the roles or any of the training opportunities. Liz can be reached at gregandlizmcnaull@gmail.com. A list of volunteer roles is available at www.swimumly.com

What are the parent volunteer expectations?

Fortunately at UMLY, we have always been blessed with wonderful parent volunteers who are dedicated to the activities of their children and who selflessly give of themselves to the program. For those of you who are new to UMLY, we depend on the support of 100% of the parents whose children swim in the program. All swim meets are run completely by parent volunteers. For each home dual-meet, over 22 volunteers are needed. Away meets require more than 10 volunteers. And, for special UMLY hosted championship meets such as the UMLY Mini Meet, UMLY Long Distance Championships, and YMCA PA East District Championships many, many more volunteers are required. Additionally, there are many “behind the scenes” activities that occur peripherally on the day of a swim meet where we can use your talents and time.

We require each family to commit to a volunteer role for at least one of the PennDel Dual meets, parents are needed to time at invitationals and USA meets, and all families of swimmers in the district meet are required to volunteer for that meet.

USA Swimming Registration

Do you require all your swimmers to have a USA Swimming registration?

We do not require swimmers to register with USA Swimming. It is, however, expected in some practice groups (Senior 1 & 2, Age Group 1 & 2). If you choose not to register with USA Swimming, your child will still swim in the Penn Del dual meets. Additionally, some YMCA invitational meets do not require USA Swimming registration for participation.