



WEST CHESTER AREA YMCA
WCAY MARLINS

WCAY Marlins Swim Team Information



We are a year-round program, running from September through July, with a short break between Winter and Spring. Our annual programming options would total approximately 44 weeks.

The WCAY Marlins are both a YMCA-affiliated club, as well as a USA Swimming-affiliated club. Membership and participation in USA Swimming may be encouraged or required depending on practice group and/or age. In addition to YMCA competitions, the team will participate in the Penn-Del Swim League, the Brandywine Summer League (BSL), and USA Swimming meets. The meet schedule will be posted as far in advance as possible.

The roster will be determined as follows:

1. Returning eligible swimmers are offered roster placement first.
2. Transfer swimmers are offered roster placement next. Those interested in transferring from other teams should email Head Coach Andrew Seaton at aseaton@ymcagbw.org.
3. Finally, the roster will be filled by swimmers from open evaluations. Please reach out to Andrew Seaton at aseaton@ymcagbw.org regarding evaluation details.

Registration/Payment

Team Registration Fees and Deposits: Due at the time of registration and paid via SportsEngine. This is [STEP ONE](#) in officially reserving your place on the WCAY Marlins swim team. These fees go directly towards directly supporting the team in many ways including but not limited to: caps and t-shirts for athletes, covering banquet and team gift costs for athletes and coaches, team social events, purchasing operational facility, practice, or meet equipment, and more.



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Program Registration Fees: Also due at the time of registration and paid via the YMCA Membership Team at the West Chester YMCA Front Desk or online. This is [STEP TWO](#) in officially reserving your place on the WCAY Marlins swim team. Some discounts may not be able to be applied correctly online, and will require in-person registration.

For the 2025-2026 season, program registration will be split into two phases. One using the current ActiveNet system in the Fall, and a second portion using the new TractionRec system in January 2026. Both registrations will need to be completed in a TIMELY fashion once they are made available. All tuition plans NOT set up by the end of the first week of the season for ActiveNet, or within two weeks from opening of TractionRec may incur a \$100 late fee.

These fees go towards supporting the program as a part of the YMCA; this may include, but is not limited to, facilities and operational expenses, as well as coaching staff compensation.

YMCA membership is required. All swimmers must be approved by the coaching staff and on the registration list before registering through the YMCA. No walk-ups will be accepted at the YMCA Membership Desk. All inquiries should be directed to aseaton@ymcagbw.org.

Families will have the option to pay in full or via regular installments.

The YMCA of Greater Brandywine is a non-profit organization committed to helping all members of our community to grow in mind, body, and spirit. We serve people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and incomes. Our fundraising efforts help us to provide financial assistance and income-based membership to ensure that YMCA memberships and/or programs are available for all individuals and families in our community. [For more information, please follow this link.](#)

Multi-Swimmer Discount

There is a 5% discount/per swimmer for families with two or more participating athletes.



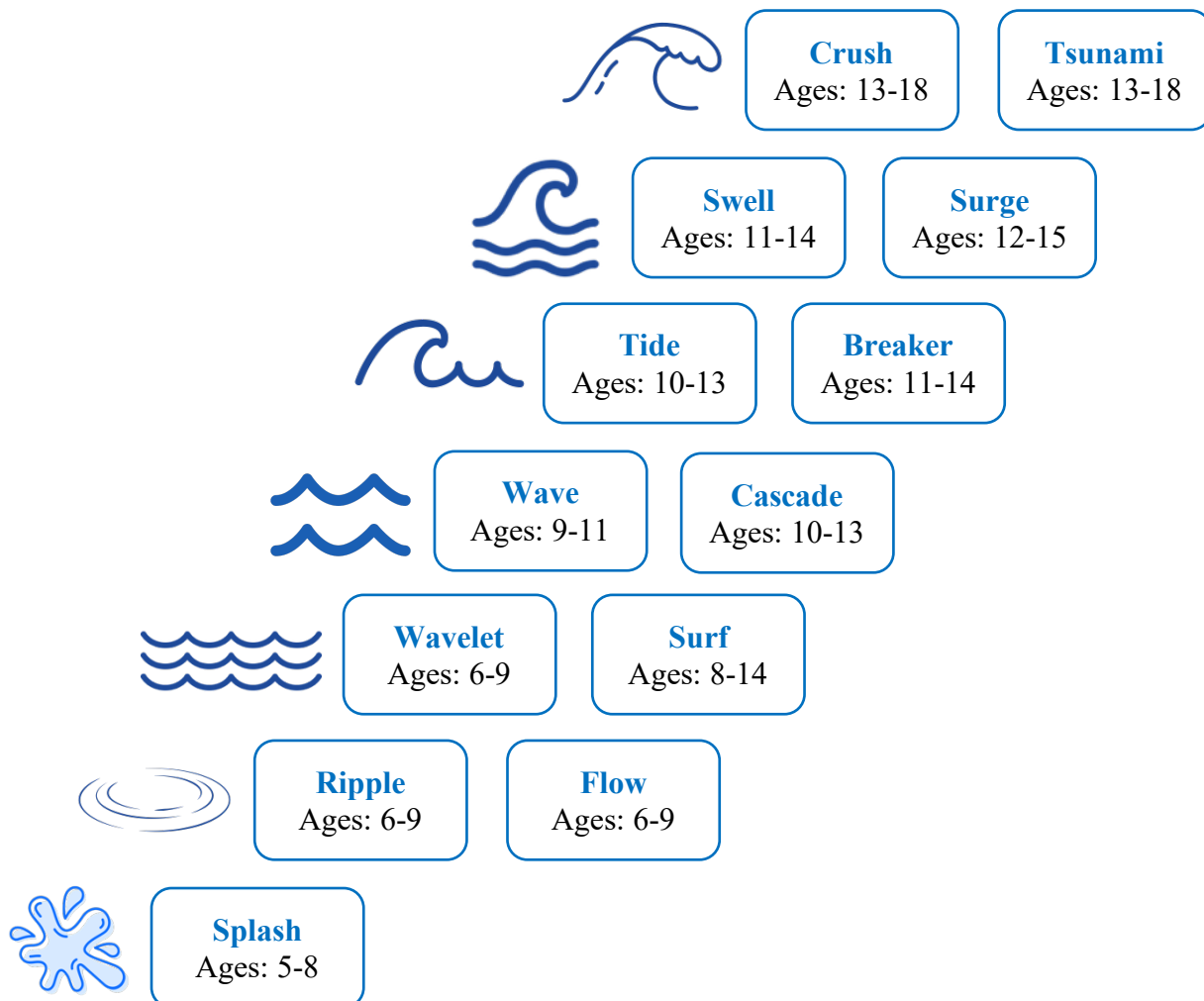
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Practice Group Descriptions

For the 2025-2026 competitive season, WCAY will be instituting a new set of practice groups. A chart is provided below to assist in understanding the new system. There is no correct path; development looks like each athlete climbing the wave to their highest possible point over time. Specified age ranges help create an environment where athletes train with their social peers. Please be aware that practice groups close in age range and skill will have overlap in their pool time and workouts, but not at all times.

Please understand that having the minimum criteria or preferred skills alone DOES NOT GUARANTEE placement due to limited roster space and other relevant factors. The Coaching staff has final and absolute authority to place swimmers in groups as they see fit.





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Splash – Ages 5-8

A structured alternative to swim lessons for athletes looking to get an early start on their swimming career. Swimmers will focus on having fun, developing basic technique, and improving their comfort in and around the water. An area of focus is for swimmers to obtain [YGBW “Green Bands”](#), signaling proficiency in regard to water safety. These athletes may be eligible to participate in a select few YMCA meet opportunities upon meeting specifically defined criteria. This group will practice approximately 3 times per week for 60 minutes.

Minimum Criteria:

- Swim ½ lap of freestyle without stopping
- Swim or kick ½ lap on back without stopping
- Comfortable around water
- Ability to listen, follow directions, and work well with others!

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- *A great attitude about swimming!*



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Ripple & Flow – Ages 6-9

Beginning stages or entry points along the wave for many athletes. Minimum competencies are expected in order to be able to practice effectively. Swimmers will focus on having fun, learning and honing basic techniques, being a part of a team, and getting accustomed to swim practices, swim meets, and racing. Skill development is prominently emphasized, and swimmers are expected to work on refining all four strokes towards legality. These athletes will be eligible and encouraged to begin participating in YMCA meets. These groups will practice approximately 4 times per week for 60 minutes.

Minimum Criteria: Ripple

- Swim 25 yards (1 length) of freestyle with rotary breathing and face submerged without stopping
- Swim 25 yards (1 length) of backstroke
- The swimmer should have some basic understanding of breaststroke
- Ability to listen, follow directions, and work well with others!

Preferred Skills: Flow

- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths) of freestyle (with rotary breathing) without stopping with their face in the water
- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths) of backstroke
- Must be able to attempt a length of breaststroke and butterfly
- Willingness to practice diving into the pool
- Ability to listen, follow directions, and work well with others!

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)



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Wavelet – Ages 6-9

Advancing stage for young athletes along the wave, or an entry point for skilled, but inexperienced swimmers without previous team exposure. Swimmers will focus on having fun, improving technique, fostering teamwork, while getting more familiar and comfortable with practices and meets. Skill development continues to be heavily stressed, with swimmers now expected to be legal in all four strokes and prepared for more advanced drills. These athletes will be eligible and encouraged to participate in YMCA meets. This group will practice approximately 4 times per week for 60 to 90 minutes.

Preferred Skills:

- Swim 100 yards (4 lengths) of freestyle (with rotary breathing) without stopping with their face in the water
- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths) of backstroke
- Swim at least 25 yards of legal technique breaststroke and butterfly
- Must be able to dive off at least the side of the pool
- Understand and demonstrate legal turns and finishes
- Be able to focus for moderate periods of time, understand and implement feedback, and demonstrate good sportsmanship

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)



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Surf – Ages 8-14

A potential entry point onto the team for athletes getting a later start in the sport of swimming or a developmental group for athletes – possibly without structured swim team experience – who need to build technical and endurance capabilities before advancing along the wave. Minimum competencies are expected to be able to practice effectively. Swimmers will focus on having fun, developing technique, improving endurance, understanding what it means to be part of a swim team, learning swimming vocabulary and “lingo”, and build comfortability around competing in meets. These athletes will be eligible and encouraged to begin participating in YMCA meets. This group will generally practice 3 to 4 times per week for between 60 and 90 minutes.

Minimum Criteria:

- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths) of freestyle (with rotary breathing) without stopping with their face in the water
- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths) of backstroke
- Must be able to attempt a length of breaststroke and butterfly
- Ability to listen, follow directions, and work well with others!
- Must be able to attempt a dive off the side of the pool
- Must be able to attempt basic variations of flip and touch turns

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)



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Wave – Ages 9-11

Stage along the wave for athletes to start the shift towards not just growing technical capabilities, but also endurance capacity. Minimum competencies are expected to be able to practice effectively. Swimmers will focus on having fun, developing technique, growing stamina, fostering cooperative teamwork, and increasing efficiency and speed. New drills and terminology will be introduced. These athletes will be required to participate in YMCA meets and potentially compete in some appropriate USA Swimming meets. This group will practice approximately 4 times per week for between 60 and 90 minutes. Opportunities for dryland training may be introduced at this stage.

Minimum Criteria:

- Swim 100 yards of freestyle with rotary breathing in good form
- Swim 50 yards of backstroke in good form, as well as 25 yards of legal technique butterfly and breaststroke, and the 100 individual medley
- Must be able to dive off the side of the pool, and preferably the blocks
- Must be able to do all basic variations of flip & touch turns, as well as legal race finishes
- Be able to focus for moderate periods of time, understand and implement feedback, and demonstrate good sportsmanship
- In addition to the above requirements 9-11 year olds must meet the following time criteria: [9-12 Performance Standards](#)

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)



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Cascade & Tide – Ages 10-13

Stages along the wave where athletes will continue to focus on having fun, building technique, and improving endurance, while workouts become longer and more challenging. Sets focused on aerobic training will be introduced. Athletes will be encouraged to compete in new events, start thinking about and setting personal goals, while also potentially experience long course training and racing. Athletes will be taught to take ownership and accountability for their own swimming, as maturity growth is expected heading into higher levels of the development wave. These athletes will be required to participate in YMCA meets and may be expected to compete in appropriate USA Swimming meets. These groups will practice approximately 4 to 5 times per week for between 60 and 90 minutes. Opportunities for dryland training will exist at these stages.

Preferred Skills: **Cascade**

- Swim 200 yards of freestyle with rotary breathing in good form
- Swim 100 yards of backstroke and 50 yards of breaststroke and butterfly in good form
- Demonstrate proper racing starts, turns, and finishes
- Be able to focus for prolonged periods of time, understand and implement feedback, and demonstrate good sportsmanship
- In addition to the above requirements 10-12 year olds must meet the following time criteria: [9-12 Performance Standards](#)

Additional Preferred Skills & Expectations: **Tide**

- USA Swimming Membership is required
- Athlete is self-motivated to be competitive within the sport of swimming
- Able to complete a legal 200 individual medley
- Can read pace clocks and understand intervals, follow instructions without constant supervision, demonstrates capacity to handle challenging training without stopping
- Completion of [IM Xtreme](#) (IMX) in SCY, as well as IM Xtreme score of 1200+

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)
- Snorkel -- [Speedo](#), [Finis](#), [Sporti](#)



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Breaker & Swell – Ages 11-14

Stages along the wave where athletes will continue to foster enjoyment of swimming, further develop technique and improve stamina, while engaging in practices that advance in length and difficulty. Aerobic training will become more prominent to prepare athletes for success at higher levels of the sport. Athletes will take on new events, continue learning about goal setting, and also may participate in regular long course training and racing (Spring/Summer). These athletes will be required to participate in YMCA meets and may be expected to compete in appropriate USA Swimming meets. These groups will practice approximately 4 to 5 times per week for between 60 and 120 minutes. Regular dryland training sessions will be offered at these stages.

Preferred Skills, Expectations, & Requirements: Breaker

- Swim 300 yards of freestyle with rotary breathing in good form
- Swim 75 yards of legal backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly
- Must demonstrate proper racing starts and all basic variations of legal flip and touch turns
- USA Swimming Membership is encouraged
- In addition to the above requirements 11-12 year olds must meet the following time criteria: [9-12 Performance Standards](#)

Additional Preferred Skills, Expectations, & Requirements: Swell

- USA Swimming Membership is required
- Swim 100 yards of all strokes legally and consistently, as well as the 200 IM
- Athlete is self-motivated to be highly competitive within the sport of swimming
- Demonstrate a commitment to training through regular attendance
- Able to complete specific training standards, e.g. 10x 100s Freestyle @ 1:45
- Completion of [IM Xtreme](#) (IMX) in SCY & LCM, as well an IM Xtreme score of 1200+ for 11-12s or 1600+ for 13-14s

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)
- Snorkel -- [Speedo](#), [Finis](#), [Sporti](#)
- Appropriately Sized Paddles – Recommended: [Strokemaker](#), [Sporti](#), [Speedo](#)
- Pull Buoy – [Speedo](#), [Sporti](#)



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Surge – Ages 12-15

A stage in the wave designed for athletes who have demonstrated a desire to be highly competitive within the sport of swimming. While sport specialization is not required, practice attendance expectations are introduced. This group focuses primarily on aerobic training, while also engaging in advanced technique refinement and anaerobic training. Athletes are introduced to higher level training methodologies to prepare them for the final stages of the age group development wave. Resilience, grit, and growth mindset are developed in a psychologically safe manner through practice challenges and competing in all events. These athletes will be required to participate in YMCA meets and are expected to compete in USA Swimming meets. This group will practice approximately 5 to 6 times per week for between 60 and 120 minutes. Regular dryland training will be expected at this stage.

Preferred Skills, Expectations, & Requirements:

- USA Swimming Membership is required
- Demonstrate a commitment to training through minimum 75% attendance
- Athlete is self-motivated to be highly competitive within the sport of swimming and can articulate (SMART) goals regarding their development
- Swim 500 yards of competitive-level freestyle and 100 yards at a competitive-level of all strokes and the 200 individual medley
- Able to complete specific training standards, e.g. 10x 100s Freestyle @ 1:30 and 10x 100s Kick @ 2:00
- Completion of [IM Xtreme](#) (IMX) in SCY & LCM, as well as IM Xtreme score of 1500+

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)
- Snorkel -- [Speedo](#), [Finis](#), [Sporti](#)
- Appropriately Sized Paddles – Recommended: [Strokemaker](#), [Sporti](#), [Speedo](#)
- Pull Buoy – [Speedo](#), [Sporti](#)



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Crush & Tsunami – Ages 13-18

The highest stages along the development wave for athletes at the age group level of swimming. Significant attention is given to aerobic and anaerobic training, which in combination with advanced technical mastery, fosters power, efficiency, and speed. Physically and mentally challenging workouts help cultivate resilience, grit, and growth mindset in a safe and age-appropriate manner. In-water and out of the pool preparation for continuing athletics at the collegiate level is available, if so desired. These athletes will be required to participate in YMCA meets and are expected to compete in USA Swimming meets. These groups will practice approximately 5-6 times per week for between 60 and 120 minutes with regular dryland training.

Preferred Skills, Expectations, & Requirements: Crush

- USA Swimming Membership is required
- Display YMCA Core Values through team leadership at dual meets and other events
- Demonstrate a commitment to training through minimum 75% attendance
- Swim 500 yards of competitive-level freestyle and 200 yards at a competitive-level for all strokes and the individual medley
- Able to complete specific training standards, e.g. 10x 100s Freestyle @ 1:30 and 10x 100s Kick @ 2:00
- Minimum of 3+ Charlie Hartley Cuts, preferably 3+ YMCA District Cuts
- Completion of [IM Xtreme](#) (IMX) in SCY & LCM

Additional Preferred Skills, Expectations, & Requirements: Tsunami

- Must participate in YMCA volunteer opportunities throughout the year
- Able to complete more advanced specific training relevant test sets, e.g. 10x 100s Freestyle @ 1:20 and 10x 100s Kick @ 1:50
- YMCA National Cut(s)/within 3% of YMCA National Cut, or IM Xtreme score of 2000+

Expected Gear:

- Well-fitting Swimsuit
- Goggles
- Towel
- Water Bottle
- Kickboard
- Long-bladed Fins – Examples include: [Speedo](#), [TYR](#), [Sporti](#)
- [Mesh Equipment Bag](#)
- Snorkel -- [Speedo](#), [Finis](#), [Sporti](#)
- Appropriately Sized Paddles – Recommended: [Strokemaker](#), [Sporti](#), [Speedo](#)
- Pull Buoy – [Speedo](#), [Sporti](#)