

MADISON AREA YMCA MARINERS SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK
2023-2024

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1. INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

The major focus surrounding this program will be encompassed by the YMCA's philosophy of healthy spirit, mind & body. In addition, as laid out by the *Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports*, we will be producing an atmosphere conducive to *Competition and Opportunity for all*. Our goal is to create a program that will be the perfect environment for multiple levels of competitive swimmers—from beginners to swimmers who are nationally ranked. We believe the process of following the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility in all aspects of our swim program will inevitably lead to success not only in swimming but in all areas of their lives. The YMCA National Swimming and Diving motto is "Everybody Swims, Everybody Wins," and we strive to attain that at The Madison Area YMCA.

The Madison Area YMCA Mariners Swim Team (MAY) offers a year-round opportunity for competitive swimming in both YMCA and USA Swimming competitions as well as seasonal instructional clinics for aspiring competitive athletes. The team is comprised of girls and boys from age 6 through high school.

The major objective is to offer the competitive swimmer a fun and challenging program, which will aid them in developing a systematic blueprint to succeed. The Madison Area YMCA coaching staff stresses individual self-improvement as each swimmer's primary goal. Training in stroke techniques, speed and conditioning/endurance are customized by ability and age to help achieve this goal. All swimmers will train all of the competitive strokes with attention to "specialties" as they gain experience and demonstrate success. All swimmers should learn what goals are, how to set them, and how to reach them. All swimmers should get and remain in good physical and mental shape. We are aiming for a year-round program that caters to all levels of competitive swimming. We want all athletes to learn the value of hard work, sportsmanship, respect, how to work with others, and commitment both to themselves and to a group.

Beyond learning and mastering the competitive swimming skills, one of the most important goals of this program is to teach life skills, which include time management, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. A positive environment should be provided at all times.

In addition to working toward each individual's personal success, the program stresses the team concept: each participant is a member of the Madison Area YMCA Mariners Swim Team. Membership on the team carries with it responsibility, loyalty, and dedication to each of the team members. Mutual support during training and competition are valuable assets attributable to the program. Parental support and involvement are highly encouraged and are major incentives for many swimmers at all levels of competitive swimming.

It is the responsibility of parents and swimmers to read the handbook and understand the operations of the program. Many questions should be answered herein. Those that are not may be directed to the coaching staff, Parents Association Board, or YMCA Program Director.

Team Structure

The coaching staff is constantly improving the Mariners Swimming program. It is the swimmers' and parents' responsibility to make the most of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming and in life. MAY Swimming uses a "progressive" age group program designed to develop each child physically, mentally, and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of challenge and commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels at a swimmer's physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. Fun and learning is emphasized at this level. In the later years, more demanding physical and psychological challenges will be introduced to the training program. In this respect, "too much too soon" is more often the cause of failure to achieve maximum potential in senior swimming than in the reverse situation. In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is also important that we

establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible with respect to abilities, commitment levels, and goals. At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental and emotional development.

2. COACHING STAFF

Head Coach Colin Kostyak started his coaching career at the Cromwell Commandos in Morristown. From there, he entered the YMCA Coaching world at the Madison Area YMCA in 2007 for 4 years. After, he moved to the Greater Morristown YMCA where he served as the Aquatic Associate/Assistant Coach where he grew the Sunkissed and National Team. He became the Director of Competitive Aquatics/Head Coach at the West Essex YMCA starting in 2018, and has increased the size of State Qualifiers under his direct supervision.

Colin is currently a member of the American Swim Coaches Association (Level 2), YMCA Swimming certified, and USA Swimming Certified. He is also a founding member of the New Jersey Swim Safe Alliance (NJSSA). In his spare time, he loves to exercise and spend time with his wife, Lauren, son Austin, and daughter Charlotte.

The 2021-2022 Coaching Staff includes the following: Kenny Platt, Jack Lawson, Ted Rudel, Evan Kavanaugh, Victor Hui, Tom McNally, Kate Hay, Charlie Hilgendorff, Victor Hui, Colleen Silvestri, Asheley Annulyse, Dave Kessel, and Tom Long.

3. TEAM EVALUATIONS

Evaluations are conducted for all new swimmers interested in joining the Mariners. All returning Mariners are not required to re-evaluate, unless their primary coach determines they have not met all of our team's

expectations. Those athletes who need to re-evaluate out will be notified mid-July. Evaluations are preferably done by joining a Mariners practice or clinic. Evaluations can also take place in small groups or on a one to one basis and can take place at almost any time if space permits. Please email to arrange an appointment.

4. GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Madison Area YMCA participates in the Northern New Jersey YMCA Swim League and in USA Swimming competitions. YMCA swimming is conducted utilizing the current USA Swimming rules unless otherwise designated by the Northern New Jersey YMCA League rules under their constitution.

YMCA and USA age groups are primarily divided as follows:

8 and under	9–10 years old
10 and under	11–12 years old
13–14 years old	15–18 years old
15 and over	Open/Senior

For YMCA meets, the age group the swimmer competes in is determined by the child's age as of December 1st of that season. For USA swimming meets, the swimmer competes in the age group of his/her actual age on the first day of each meet. See Swim Competitions for more information.

Practice for the season begins in September according to detailed practice schedules and calendars that are posted on the website.

5. PRACTICE TRAINING GROUPS

Practices are broken up primarily by age, ability, and level of commitment. Group mobility will occur (both upwards and downwards) over the course of a season and year-over-year as per coaches evaluation of the athlete's commitment level, work ethics, and overall progress.

Note: Swimmers should only attend practice sessions that pertain to their assigned practice group. If an extenuating circumstance arises, please contact Colin Kostyak about attending an alternate practice session. For the most part this is not an option, nor is it recommended.

Progressive Swim Lessons—This is the strictly learn to swim programs at the Madison Area YMCA. Kids who are not yet ready for the Mariners Swim Team will be placed in groups.

Mariners 8&Unders Red Group

This is the entry-level group for the Mariners. This group is for athletes who are ages 8&Under with limited or no experience in the sport but have already mastered at least Freestyle and Backstroke, as well as a working understanding of Breaststroke. The focus of this group is to learn the competitive swimming skills necessary to have a solid foundation in the sport or improve upon the skills already obtained. We encourage the athletes in this group to attend at least two but not more than three practices a week, and strongly encourage spring participation. Summer participation is optional, but talk to your coaches in the spring to determine a plan for continuity. Appropriate competitions are strongly recommended for this group. In order to move up a group you would need to be able to swim 8x50's IM order on 1:45, have at least 50% practice attendance and must qualify for a minimum of Current YMCA Silvers. These athletes should have a cap (if their hair will impede proper head position), goggles, a competitive practice suit and fins.

Mariners 9&10's White Group

This group is primarily designed for athletes ages 9&10, and have already mastered at least Freestyle, Backstroke, and Breaststroke, if not including Butterfly. The focus of this group is to learn the

competitive swimming skills necessary to have a solid foundation in the sport or improve upon the skills already obtained. Additionally the athletes in this group will begin to explore some conditioning elements of the sport. We encourage the athletes in this group to attend at least three but not more than four practices a week, and strongly encourage spring participation. Summer participation is optional, but talk to your coaches in the spring to determine a plan for continuity. These swimmers will be expected to participate in specific local meets, with others optional. In order to move up a group you will be required to be able to swim 20x100's free on 1:50, have at least 60% practice attendance and must have the Silver Cut in the 11/12 age group in at least two strokes. These athletes should have a cap (if their hair will impede proper head position), goggles, a competitive practice suit and fins.

Mariners 11&12's Gray Group

This group is primarily designed for athletes who are 11/12 years old who have a solid competitive swimming foundation and background. The focus of this group will be refining competitive swimming skills and developing a strong aerobic base along with developing race technique. We encourage the athletes in this group to attend between three and five practices a week and expect spring and summer participation. These swimmers will be expected to participate in specific local meets with others optional. In order to move up a group you will be required to be able to swim 20x100's free on 1:40, have at least 65% practice attendance and must have Current Silver Cuts in the 13/14 age group in at least two strokes. These athletes should have a cap (if their hair will impede proper head position), goggles, a competitive practice suit, fins, paddles and snorkel.

Mariners 13&14's Silver Group

These groups are designed athletes ages 13/14, who range from having a basic understanding for the sport of swimming, to having a strong competitive swimming foundation and the desire to participate in a highly competitive group. The Bronze group is designed for swimmers

who are not intending to have a high commitment level to the Mariners team. Meets and attendance are not of great interest for this group. The Silver group is designed for swimmers who intend on attending at least 70% of all practices. Competitions, such as Dual Meets, Invitational Meets, and Travel Championship Meets (YMCA Champs, Sun Kissed, YMCA Nationals) are all expected. The focus of this group will not only be able to master competitive swimming skills that will prepare them for the future, but to teach athletes the importance of being committed to the sport in order to help achieve their goals. Bronze and Silver athletes will swim year round with the Mariners and will be expected to attend practice 4 to 5 times a week. This group will have required meets, some of which will involve travel. In order to move up a group you will be required to be able to swim 20 100's free on 1:20, have at least 70% year-round practice attendance and must have Current Silver Cut for the 15&Over Age Group in at least two strokes. These athletes should have a cap (if their hair will impede proper head position), goggles, a competitive practice suit, fins, paddles and snorkel.

Mariners 15&Overs Gold & Platinum Groups

These groups are designed for 15&Over aged athletes who have a very strong competitive swimming foundation and have made a large commitment to the sport. The focus of this group will be training at a level where swimming at regional and national competitions is expected. We expect the athletes in this group to attend five or more practices a week with an expectation of spring and summer participation. This group will have required meets, some of which may involve travel. Placement between the Platinum and Gold group is based on the previous season's attendance, work ethic, dryland participation, and level of communication with the coaches. These athletes should have a cap (if their hair will impede proper head position), goggles, a competitive practice suit, fins, paddles and snorkel.

***Swimmers having a difficult time balancing their lives with the expectations this team demands, should schedule a swimmer, parent, coach meeting as soon as a problem becomes evident.**

6. PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (MPO)

The Mariners Parents' Association (MPO) is an organization comprised of all swimmers' parents, formed to help the coaches and swimmers in their endeavors. The Association also tries to improve conditions for the team and is a resource for many of the team's outside activities: fundraising, social events, meet coordination, etc. Parent meeting dates and times will be posted on the website.

Parents often become closely associated and involved with the team and can assist the team in many ways. A parent should:

- Encourage swimmers to attend appropriate practices and meets, and provide transportation to the workouts and meets as necessary.**
- Encourage their child to work diligently, and assist their younger child to set realistic goals; offer support to the child throughout the season.**
- Let the coaches do the coaching.**
- Take an active part in fundraising projects and consider becoming a certified swim meet official.**
- Assist at dual meets and any other team-hosted competitions: timing, concessions, and help in the setup and breakdown for home meets.**

Whenever the team hosts a meet at the Madison Area Y, timers, officials, computer operators, and general help come from the MPO. There may be a need for preparation and selling of food, marshaling, basic clerical

work, etc. All of this is required work and it is anticipated that each parent gives of his/her time and talent to facilitate the job for everyone!

All parents who have swimmers on the team are members of the Parents' Association. At least one parent is expected to participate on a working committee and/or help at the dual meets.

Official's Certification

A big part of parental involvement comes from those who become certified to be swim officials:

USA Swimming Certification

Qualifies one to officiate at any New Jersey Swimming (USA) meets, various levels of certifications are available, and courses are offered throughout the season.

YMCA Certification

Qualifies one to officiate at YMCA dual meets and other Y sanctioned meets; various levels of certifications, courses are offered throughout the season.

The officials' chairperson or a Parents' Executive Board Member can direct interested parents appropriately. Information regarding upcoming officials' clinics will be posted on the Swim Team website.

Fundraising

During the year, the MPO conducts several fundraising events. Such events include a swim marathon (swimathon) and hosting swim meets. **The funds raised are used to help defray some of the costs for the Annual Awards Brunch, athlete recognition programs, athlete year end gifts, championship team gear, out of state travel meet support such as Sunkissed, YMCA Nationals, and ultimately Olympic Trials, social activities, annual maintenance of the timing system, as well as team computers and printers, year-end gifts, non budgeted coaches education, financial support for athletes, etc.** All monies raised during these events benefit the program and the swimmers. 100% participation is strongly encouraged.

MPO Executive Board

The Parents' Executive Board operates according to by-laws established by the Parents' Association. Officers are selected per the by-laws each year to administer the Parents' Association and serve on the steering committees as follows:

President	Treasurer
Vice President	Head Coach/ Program Director
Secretary	Board Liaison

Committee assignments will be solicited by the Executive Board each season. The President and board positions of the Parents Executive Board/Association changes annually and will be posted on the website whenever changes occur. Board members may be contacted with questions pertinent to the function of the board and its many activities.

7. USA SWIMMING REGISTRATION/MEET FEES AND SIGN-UPS

YMCA Membership

All swimmers joining the team and returning to the team are required to pay a yearly membership. This money must be paid at the YMCA Welcome Center. You must withdraw in writing with the front desk 30 days to terminate.

Program Fees

All participants will have team fees payable to the Y and shall be paid to the front desk. This is essentially tuition to the team. Once you register for the team, you will be responsible for all program fees for the season. **If you decide to leave the team you must email us before 12/1 in order to drop from the team for fall/winter.**

MPO Fees

The Mariners Parents Organization will have an annual fee assessed to each swimmer or family. The past few years this fee has been

approximately \$200 per family. This fee is made on Team Unify and will be broken into 4 payments. **This supports the MPO's charter.**

USA Swimming Registration

Included in some swimmer's swim team program fee are funds to cover registration costs to be eligible to compete in USA swimming meets. Each swimmer aged 9 and older will be automatically registered for USA Swimming. For athletes aged 8 and under there will be an optional registration fee which will allow participation in appropriate USA Swimming meets. Once USA Swimming Fees are paid, they are the responsibility of the athlete.

Meet Fees

Meet entries that involve a fee *will be charged to your Team Unify account at the time the entry is processed. Note that you are financially responsible for any fees incurred to enter into a meet. You will be charged for meets (or events) you scratch, which means sign up for and then decide you cannot go.*

Sign-Ups for Meets

For YMCA dual meets athletes will have to sign or decline on the Team Unify site. Invitational meets have many different formats; i.e. the events swam for each of the age groups varies from meet to meet. Please see website for individual meets and sign up procedures. Some meets will allow the athletes to pick events, some will be yes or no.

Meet Entry Procedures

All meet info will be on the website and each meet will have some entry instructions specific to that meet. You should check the website as close to daily as possible because meet information will be posted and sometimes turned over within as little as 36 hours from posting.

Please sign up as quickly as possible after the meet is posted. The entry needs to be sent in soon after we receive notice to avoid the situation that our team is closed out of a meet. **YOU MUST** adhere to the posted deadlines! All meet entries go through the Team Unify site or through Colin Kostyak.

8. SWIM COMPETITIONS

Competition

Competition gives you an opportunity to learn about yourself—not only in terms of physical accomplishment, but perhaps more importantly what you are capable of in terms of will power, goal attainment and self-discipline. Competition is a healthy and necessary aspect of life in order to be productive. It is vitally important to develop the capacity to do better and to not settle for just being average. This type of motivation and desire can be applied as a tool to all aspects of life.

Eligible Competitors

In order to be eligible for any meets, swimmers must be Y members in good standing with all fees up to date. Additionally you must be regularly attending practices as per our recommendations and putting forth effort during them. You must be a good teammate and a responsible and respectable member of the team. Coaches will make final decisions concerning what swim meets the team will go to and what swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also will make the final decisions as to what events the athletes will be swimming. There will be some meets that are expected (required for further competition), as well as meets that we recommend certain ages/practice groups attend (ie-Mini Meets for 8&Unders, Qualifying Meets, etc).

For some meets, participation will be determined by the group's primary coach with regards to readiness to compete. For travel meets and high-level championships, the primary coach may make a determination that the athlete is not prepared for the competition if they have not been attending practices regularly, are coming off an injury, or have not displayed an honest effort at training sessions.

Red/Black Meet

Swimmers in all groups are urged to attend the Red/Black Scrimmage (an intra-squad meet/time trial), which is also used to help finalize dual meet

team assignments (check website for more information) If you cannot attend due to an unforeseen circumstance, contact Head Coach Colin Kostyak.

YMCA Dual Meets

We participate in the Northern New Jersey YMCA Dual Meet League (one-on-one meets with other YMCA's in the North Jersey area). Each team competes in approximately three to five of these meets, which take place on Saturday afternoons from October to February. Each swimmer is permitted to swim in a maximum of three events, one of which must be a relay. The coach makes all event and lane assignments and they are at his/her discretion and quite often will change throughout the meet. USA Swimming rules apply to YMCA competitions and age is determined as of 12/1. All swimmers on the team are expected to compete in dual meets.

The Madison Area "Y" will have girls and boys Traveling teams and Home teams. There are several divisions in both the girls' and boys' YMCA league. The dual meet "line-up" (events each swimmer will be competing in) for each team will be available on the Team Unify site up to a day before the meet. The coaching staff tries to get everyone into at least two events at an 8-lane pool and at least one event at a 6-lane pool. Pools with four lanes are typically avoided as a meet location. All races are treated as official and are used to qualify for various competitions. Athletes will be placed on a competitive team based on their swim times, attendance, and overall commitment.

Invitational Meets

These are meets where swimmers compete against other swimmers on an individual basis. Both our YMCA league and United States Swimming (USA Swimming) sanction these meets. USA Swimming, in our part of the country, is governed by our Local Swim Committee (LSC), which is New Jersey Swimming (NJS). Swimmers are required to submit information for these meets by a given date.

YMCA Championship Meets

The NJ State, Silver, Bronze and Mini Meet Championships are competitions held at the end of the dual meet season. All swimmers who

qualify for these meets are expected to attend as they are team scored meets. To attend YMCA National level competition, a swimmer is required compete fully in the YMCA State Championship Meet. Athletes are required to attend their highest-level YMCA championship meet.

USA Swimming Championship Meets

Similar to the YMCA system, NJ Swimming offers an extensive championship season. Those meets that we will be participating in will be posted to our website.

For very elite swimmers, USA Swimming sponsors Sectional Championships (Northeast region), Phillips 66 National Championships, U.S. Open, Olympic Trials, Grand Prix, etc. Time standards for all of these meets will be posted on the team website. Details regarding any of these competitions will be distributed to qualified swimmers.

Eastern Zone Age Group Championships

The Eastern Zone hosts two “Zone” meets a year; one in the spring and one in the summer.

Spring: In the spring, the NJ Zone team is comprised of the top two fastest times achieved at Junior Olympics or NJ Junior/Senior Championships who apply for that competition. Because MAY attends Sunkissed Invitational as a team, spring Zones is not our focus meet.

For a 12 year-old swimmer, it is acceptable to attend the spring Zone meet providing it does not conflict with Sunkissed Invitational. The Zone meet will be swum in addition to—and not instead of—Sunkissed Invitational.

It is not acceptable for a MAY 13/Older to attend spring Zones except in the rare occurrence that Zones falls after Sunkissed Invitational.

Short Course YMCA National qualifiers cannot attend spring Zones except in the rare occurrence that Zones occurs after YMCA Nationals.

Summer: In the summer, the NJ Zone team is comprised of anyone who made the meet qualifying times and applied to be on the team, or in the case that two people do not apply, the two fastest swimmers who do apply will be selected.

In the summer, Long Course Zones should be the focus of every swimmer who did not make YMCA Nationals or beyond. YMCA National qualifiers can attend this meet providing it falls after YMCA Nationals.

Final Finale Meet

The Final Finale meet is a championship style meet for historically for 9&Over swimmers as a last chance meet for swimmers to qualify for meets such as Sunkissed and possibly YMCA Nationals.

In order to participate in this meet you must be of proper age ranges that are offered, must have fully participated in your highest-level YMCA Championship meet, must have made the meet qualifying times (if any), and must be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team's expectations.

Sunkissed Invitational Championship Meet

The Sunkissed Invitational Champs differs from YMCA Nationals in that: they have both Junior (10–13 years old) and Senior (14 years & older) Divisions and it is a USA Swimming (not YMCA) sanctioned meet. The Sunkissed Invitational also have qualifying times which are less stringent than those for YMCA Nationals (cuts to be posted to the website during the season) enabling a larger group of our athletes to attend. For the past few years, this meet has been held in Charlotte, North Carolina in late March to early April. Athletes who qualify for this meet are expected to attend.

In order to participate in this meet you must be ages 10 or older, must have fully participated in your highest-level YMCA Championship meet, must have made the meet qualifying times, maintain a 70% attendance from the first day of practice until the entry deadline for that season, and must be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team's expectations.

One parent from each participating family is expected to attend this meet. Transportation for a swimmer is the responsibility of the parents. Details regarding air and hotel reservations are usually handled early in the season for the group. Information will be distributed and posted throughout the season.

YMCA National Championship Meets

National YMCA Short Course Championship is an open national competition. All contestants must be 12 and older and have achieved the qualifying times, have fully attended YMCA States and be in good standing with the team. This meet is held in late March to mid-April and has for the past several years been in Greensboro, NC and previous to that in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Athletes who qualify for this meet are expected to attend in addition and/or replacement to Sunkissed.

National YMCA Long Course Championships (50 meter pool length) is an open national competition. All contestants must be 12 years of age or older and must have achieved the qualifying times, have fully attended YMCA States and be in good standing with the team. This meet is held in late July into early August and has recently been held at IUPUI in Indianapolis and Georgia Tech Aquatics Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Athletes who qualify for this meet are expected to attend.

Coaches have final determination of meet entries. Athletes must be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team's expectations in order to be entered in any meets. In order to compete in meets representing the Mariners, athletes must be maintaining honest effort, good attitude, and appropriate attendance at practices and meets. All swimmers attending are REQUIRED to have a 70% attendance year round (August 15th until end of Long Course).

Competition Guidelines for Athletes

- 1. All athletes will be placed onto a dual meet team. Swimmers in each group will be expected to compete in a few appropriate competitions.**
- 2. Swimmers are expected to check all websites posted on the meet information prior to leaving for a meet.**
- 3. Arrive on time to the all meets. For invitational and dual meets, arrive at the pool with enough time to get “checked in”, dressed and situated with the team before warm-up is scheduled to begin.**
- 4. It is imperative that all swimmers arrive at the meets 15 minutes prior to the first scheduled warm-up time.**
- 5. Swimmers who are not “checked in” will be scratched from the day’s events if they arrive after the check-in time.**
- 6. Warm-up for all meets as a team. A proper warm-up is crucial to the success of a meet.**
- 7. Arrive at the blocks at least 5 heats before your race.**
- 8. Try your best and swim hard. It’s ok to be nervous! Many swimmers have pre-race apprehension, especially for events they may not have swam before.**
- 9. After your race, immediately see a member of the coaching staff for feedback. Learning what you did well and understanding areas for improvement will help you become a better swimmer.**
- 10. Warm-down after each race, if a pool is available.**
- 11. Relay spots are decided by the coaches.**
- 12. Sit with the team, you are part of it.**
- 13. Support and encourage your teammates before, during, and after their races.**
- 14. Join in team cheers.**
- 15. Wear Madison YMCA Mariners team uniform at all meets. Caps and suits from other teams (high school, USA or YMCA) are not permitted.**
- 16. For dual meets, remain in your team swim suit until the meet is over and you have finished the team cheer. Since relays are**

at the end of the meets and are subject to change, do not leave as you may be called upon to swim. For invitational meets, stay at the meet until you have received clearance from the coach to leave.

- 17. Phones/tablets or other electronics will not be permitted on deck during a swim meet.**

For all meets, parents are not allowed on the deck or in the swimming section. The only exception is parents who are timing or officiating. This is a standard regulation for all swim meets, and breaking this regulation can lead to removal of the swimmer and parent from the meet and/or fines.

9. RELAYS

For Dual, Invitational and Championship swimming meets, if enough swimmers in an age group attend the meet the coaches will put together relays when preparing the entry for each meet. It is very important to check with the coach at any meet to establish whether a swimmer has been assigned to a relay. In all meets, relays are set by the coaching staff

Please note that, it takes four (4) swimmers to make a relay and if one swimmer does not swim, the remaining three lose out! Unless an acceptable excuse is given to the coach, the “no show” swimmer may be assessed the entire fee for the relay.

10. TRANSPORTATION

For most meets (except for some championships where air transportation is required or encouraged) it is the parents' responsibility for travel arrangements and to see that swimmers are at the meet on time and ready for warm-ups at least 15 minutes prior to the first scheduled warm-up time. Arrangements should be made with another parent if there is a conflict of schedules.

A complete packet of directions to all pools will be posted to the website before the competitive season begins.

Coaches CANNOT transport athletes at any time for any reason, except where we are using a YMCA vehicle or a vehicle that is owned or has been rented and insured in the name of the YMCA.

11. BEHAVIOR AT PRACTICE SESSIONS/SWIM MEETS

It is very important that the swimmer be early to practice and meets to allow for stretching/preparation and warm-up. Athletes who are on a specific stretching regiment need to arrive with a time to still be early for warm-up. Swimmers are expected to stay in the pool area during the entire practice, and they must not visit with parents during the sessions.

Swimmers are expected to check in with a coach when arriving and before leaving a practice or meet. Swimmers are expected to see a coach before and after races at meets. Swimmers are expected to warm-up and warm-down properly as a team in both practices and meets and when available before and after races. Swimmers are expected to compete in all events they are entered in at meets: this includes bonus, consolation heats, and final heats of trial-final events.

- Parents are welcome to observe practices from the observation area providing there is no interaction between the athlete and the parent as well as no interference. If you have a concern with this please contact Head Coach Colin.**
- Parents are not to come on the pool deck while practice is in progress unless invited by a coach. "Coaching" by parents from the observation area will not be tolerated.**

During practice sessions it is expected that swimmers pay attention and listen carefully to directions. No physical or verbal abuse or profanity directed at anyone will be tolerated. The coaches are in essence teachers and should be treated with respect. The coach's major objective is to teach; thus, the swimmers should be able to learn in a suitable

environment. A swimmer who misbehaves may be dismissed from that practice.

At swim meets and at practice each swimmer is a representative of the Madison YMCA. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Behavioral violations at the Y, during practice or at meets may result in suspension or expulsion from the team. All swimmers will be asked to read and sign a code of conduct (to be distributed separately) witnessed and signed by a parent or guardian.

Discipline Policy

Athletes who require disciplinary action be will dealt with individually according to the infraction. Disciplinary action will include but not limited to time-outs, dismissal for practice/meets, parental notice/meetings, suspension, and ultimately could to dismissal from the team. Extreme disciplinary problems may include interaction with vice president and or CEO of the Madison Area YMCA.

Swim Caps must be worn in the pool by all swimmers with hair that can reach their eyes, or if it is getting in the way of their swimming/breathing.

Showers must be taken before entering the pool, according to New Jersey State Code. The shower should be brief and the swimmer must remember to turn off the shower.

Also swimmers are asked to use the bathroom before and after practice to avoid disruption during practice. There should be no fooling around or yelling in the locker rooms.

The YMCA is not responsible for personal belongings. It is recommended that valuables be left at home or with a parent; however, valuables may be locked in a locker. Please do not give valuables to the coaches. Swimmers are encouraged to bring a lock for their locker each day or to bring their swim bags out onto the deck while swimming.

No gum or food is allowed in the pool area during practice. Swimmers are encouraged to bring water bottles to practice labeled with their name. For health purposes, please do not share water bottles! Athletes are asked to keep pool area clean—discard empty containers, restack borrowed kick boards, etc.

Damage to facilities we use by athletes on the team will not be tolerated and whenever possible we will hold the family financially responsible.

No swimmer is to enter the water unless both a coach and a lifeguard are in attendance. Never jump in the water when there is any danger to you or to another swimmer. Feet-first entry at all times is enforced except when instructed otherwise.

Parents, please NO SMOKING in or near the building.

12. COMMUNICATION

The team [**WEBSITE \(team unify\)**](#) will be the lifeblood of our communications. We will be able to post, email, text and app notify (OnDeck) through this tool.

Please feel free to schedule an appointment with anyone on the coaching staff with questions and/or concerns. You may also contact the coaches by phone or email throughout the season. In addition, you are encouraged to contact Colin Kostyak via email at [**wkostyak@madisonymca.org**](mailto:wkostyak@madisonymca.org) call Colin at 973-822-9622 ext. 2231.

Please avoid trying to meet with the coaches during, just prior or just after practices or meets.

NOTE: Quite often we receive e-mails that are sent when we are on the way to or already at meets. Please use your best judgment in communicating with us at the last minute and realize that if the coaching staff is at a 2- or 3-day meet we will not be checking e-mails or YMCA

Phone messages from the first day. Make sure you get an emergency message to someone else who is attending the meet.

13. WEATHER/VACATIONS/ILLNESS

Practice and YMCA dual meets will be held unless notified by at least one of the following; e-mail, text or website. Please check your e-mail, the website, and your mobile phone before venturing out in a blizzard. Y meets have been cancelled because of inclement weather or other emergency situations. USA and Invitational meets are very rarely cancelled (unless a state of emergency is called or the host facility closes) but there is usually facility closing information phone numbers and meet host team website info on the meet page of our website. If we find out about a cancellation ahead of time, we will do our best to get the info out, but if the staff is already at the meet it may be impossible. In inclement weather, use your best judgment and please try to contact us as best you can.

Please inform your coach by an email or phone message if you will be missing practice or meets for any reason if the absence is to be longer than three days. Please do this as soon as you are aware of the dates even if you have already mentioned it to us in passing or on deck. We will not remember. Be sure to contact the coaches if a swimmer's illness will preclude him/her from competing in a meet.

It is important to avoid sending any information verbally through other swimmers or parents to avoid confusion or miscommunication. All should communicate directly as indicated above.

14. GOALS

Goal setting is an extremely effective motivational training tool. At the beginning of the season, each swimmer will be asked to set three goals that he/she could realistically accomplish during the season and discuss them with their coach. Goals will be tracked by the coaching staff throughout the season.

15. SOCIALS

From time to time, social gatherings and special events are offered by the Parents' Association to encourage team bonding between athletes and families. Please check the website for information about gatherings. If you have any ideas for appropriate outings in a social setting or would be willing to run a special event, talk to Colin.

16. SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAM

The Madison YMCA Mariners Swim Team is a year-round experience. Like many sports annual participation in the activity is crucial to long-term success, particularly for athletes over the age of 11. It is expected that all athletes in our programs aged 11 and older participate in our spring and summer programs and it is highly recommended for our 10 and under athletes.

Spring is the time at which athletes will receive the most comprehensive stroke work. By the end of the spring, all athletes should be well conditioned with improved strokes and should be prepared to begin the summer program.

In the summer we participate in competitions in both USA and YMCA meets—but there are no YMCA dual meets. A separate fee is charged for the spring and summer session for some groups.

17. SWIMMING IN COLLEGE

Like any other commitment driven extra-curricular activity, swimming for the Mariners can help a student-athlete greatly during their college search as successful academics and athletics generally go hand in hand. Being part of a team such as ours proves goal setting, work ethic, dedication, determination, time management, and a desire to succeed. Many high school graduates have chosen to continue competitive

swimming at their respective colleges. During the junior year in high school, those interested are encouraged to meet with Colin to start the selection process—keeping in mind academic abilities and demographic choices—while exploring competitive swimming opportunities.

18. Expectations of Athletes

The following portion of this handbook is dedicated to what the coaches collectively expect from our athletes. Please be aware of this portion, as it is important that the athletes know where we are coming from. Athletes who do not adhere to these guidelines will be asked to re-try out and risk their spot on the team.

Improvement:

We expect that all athletes in our programs want to improve. Realize that in order for improvement to occur you must increase your frequency and intensity of workouts. In short, attend more practices and work harder than you did yesterday to make that happen.

Practice Attendance:

All training groups have a set number of practices that the coaching staff recommends—you are expected to stick to these. If you need to come late or leave early to practice, your deck coach needs to know and approve this at least 24 hours in advance in order for that practice to count towards your requirement. Excused absences will be given for Religious reasons, as well as with proof of a medical note.

Meet Attendance:

All swimmers are expected to be at all meets and fully participate in all events registered for. Contact Head Coach Colin Kostyak if you cannot be there as far in advance as possible—at the very latest the Wednesday prior to the meet. After that, only in the case of emergency is it acceptable to miss a meet. Encourage each other to attend every meet you are slated to swim.

Tardiness:

Swimmers should be on time to practices and meets. It is imperative that athletes partake in a warm-up session before participating in strenuous workouts. Lateness means missed warm ups. Missed warm ups mean injuries. BE ON TIME. Anyone who shows up to a meet later than check-in will be scratched.

Full Practices:

We expect that athletes come on time and stay for the duration of the practice. Warming up and Warming down are crucial. Get your schedule in order so you can be at practice.

Attitude/Will/ Determination:

Mariners must have the willingness to work hard, improve, try new things, break old habits, have fun, work with others, and be leaders. Simply, Mariners must have the will to succeed and be part of a team. Swimmers and parents are expected to have a positive attitude all season long.

Respect:

Mariners need to have respect for many things including ourselves, each other, coaches, the YMCA, FDU, Florham Park Pool, St E's, Drew, other YMCAs... etc. Mariners respect other people's belongings, the buildings we visit as a team, and the actions and activities we partake in while wearing team apparel.

Good Behavior:

It is imperative that Mariners behave in a respectable manner. We will not do anything that could bother, hurt, dishonor or disrespect anyone, or damage the facilities we are privileged to use. Use your judgment. Before you act, ask yourself if this action could get you or your team in trouble.

Equipment/Swimmer:

It is necessary that all swimmers bring healthy, well-rested, well-fed bodies to practice along with a good attitude. This should include goggles, a cap, fins, hand paddles, a bathing suit, towels, a water

bottle etc... Swim items should be on the pool deck during practice and not in the locker room.

Communication:

We expect that all athletes communicate with the coaching staff regarding anything that will affect their swimming; including but not limited to illness, injury, academics, swim camp, high school swimming, summer league swimming, private lessons, etc.

Time Management:

We expect that all athletes learn to manage their time to be able to fulfill the expectations that this program has on them. While we encourage other activities outside of swimming, please remember that balancing your time is the most crucial element that can be developed from competitive athletics. We expect that if athletes are having a struggle with time management, they will show effort to seek out the coaches for assistance.

Vacation and Absences:

We expect that families plan their vacations and individuals plan their absences (intensive courses such as SAT Prep, lifeguard courses, etc.) at appropriate times of the year so as not to affect their individual swimming goals. Whenever possible, plan vacations for April and August after the competitive season is over when the team is on break.

Continuity:

It is expected that swimmers over the age of 11 participate in spring and summer practice. You will be afforded the opportunity to swim in spring meets and long course meets with the team. Swimmers who have made qualifying times for Long Course Championship Meets should maintain their regular practice expectations. Swimmers who make qualifying times for Long Course USA meets will be expected to train with the team in the spring and summer.

Separation:

It is expected that all swimmers who leave the team during, after, or before a new season notify the coaching staff of the decision. It is requested that you let us know why as well. If you do not wish to do this face to face, please write an e-mail or a letter. We feel strongly that this is a responsibility that all people must face in life. We won't hold it against you, but we have an onslaught of swimmers who are looking for greener grass, then find out that they left for a worse situation, then wish to return to the team. It is very hard for us to allow a swimmer to return to the team after leaving for another team when they did not discuss it with us before they left.

Rules of Swimming

It's expected that all swimmers familiarize themselves with the technical rules of the sport. There are rules in the rulebook that athletes are unaware of which they are held accountable for. Breaking rules such as prohibition of deck changing, spitting, swearing, throwing goggles, and unsportsmanlike consequent violations that will have the athlete(s) removed from competition—whether or not they are aware of the rules.

Uniform:

At swim meets, the current team cap and a current team suit (or a plain black suit) is required.

19. FDU Drop Off and Pick Up Policies

FDU Facility Usage:

Use of the Locker Rooms at FDU is a privilege for the Mariners swimmers and is primarily for use by the entire FDU population. Yelling, fooling around, or any unsafe/bullying behavior will result in the loss of locker room and or facility privileges. We expect the Mariners swimmers to follow the YMCA Code of Conduct while using any facility, as you are representing the Madison Area YMCA. However, because we are on FDU property, we cannot regulate the behavior of the FDU population. Please remember, this a college campus and college students are present and will act as such. Please be alert while on campus and report any alarming behavior to campus security. Please understand this building is dedicated to FDU staff and its students. Our relationship with FDU is very important to the team. Please do everything you can to not put that relationship in jeopardy.

Be aware we will sometime lose locker room usage at zero notice. Practices will be cancelled due to FDU events with little notice.

Please adhere to the following:

- 1. When entering the FDU campus please be aware you need to come to a complete stop at the security gate at both the Madison Ave entrance and Park Ave entrance.**
- 2. Please be aware you are not allowed to drive onto the sidewalk curve in front of the Ferguson Recreation Center. Only enter and exit the building from the front door entrance only. Please do not use any other doors to enter the building or leave the building.**
- 3. The door to the pool deck must remain closed at all times; it may not be propped open unless it is done by FDU staff.**
- 4. If the pick up area on the parking lot side of the building has space you can hover out front, but YOU ABSOLUTELY CAN NOT STOP THE CAR TO DROP OFF OR PICK UP ON THE MAIN ROAD OF CAMPUS WHICH RUND IN FRONT OF THE POOL.**
- 5. Parents are not permitted on the pool deck**
- 6. No one is allowed to bring glass onto the pool deck at any time**
- 7. No one is allowed to use a heavy stainless steel water bottles on the pool deck at any time**
- 8. No one is allowed to use the upstairs lobby or classroom in FDU during practice and meets without permission from FDU**
- 9. All swimmers must be in the care of a parent/guardian no later than 15 minutes after practice ending. If your swimmer needs additional time for showering, changing, etc. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise after the 15 minutes at the end of practice. Coaches will stay for 15 minutes after the end of practice.**
- 10. Parents may meet their child in the lobby or in the car, at the discretion of the parent, but again, you CAN NOT DROP OFF OR PICK UP IN THE MAIN ROAD OF CAMPUS.**
- 11. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the Head Coach and/or age group Coach if you are unavoidably delayed in picking up your child(ren) at the completion of practice. If we do not hear from you within 15 minutes we will make every effort to reach your emergency contact. Once the 15 minutes has passed, additional late fees may apply (\$20). The YMCA will notify the authorities if we do not hear from you and are unable to reach an emergency contact after one hour beyond the end of the class.**

12. If the regular parent/guardian is not picking up your child, it is your responsibility to inform the Head Coach and/or Age Group Coach to make alternate arrangements.
13. This is a college campus. Parents must notify the coaching staff via note or text when an athlete is late or leaving early.

Suggestions:

1. Do not leave items of value in the locker room. Most athletes bring their bags on the pool deck.
2. Check in on your athletes. There have been incidents of athletes getting dropped off for practice and never coming to practice.
3. Get your swimmer(s) to practice and meets early enough to enable him/her to be on deck ten minutes prior to the start.

20. Drew Drop Off and Pick Up Policies

DREW Facility Usage:

Use of the Locker Rooms at Drew is a privilege for the Mariners swimmers and is primarily for use by the Drew population. Yelling, fooling around, or any unsafe/bullying behavior will result in the loss of locker room and or facility privileges. We expect the Mariners swimmers to follow the YMCA Code of Conduct while using any facility, as you are representing the Madison Area YMCA. However, because we are on Drew property, we cannot regulate the behavior of the Drew population. Please remember, this a college campus and college students are present and will act as such. Please be alert while on campus and report any alarming behavior to campus security. Please understand this building is dedicated to Drew staff and its students. Our relationship with Drew is very important to the team. Please do everything you can to not put that relationship in jeopardy.

Please adhere to the following:

1. Please be aware you are not allowed to drop off or pick up on the main drive of campus which is the half-moon shaped fire lane by the lower doors next to the pool.
2. Everyone must use the main entrance of the Simon Forum building except when it is closed.
3. Parents are not permitted on the pool deck
4. No one is allowed to bring glass onto the pool deck at any time
5. No one is allowed to use a heavy stainless steel water bottles on the pool deck at any time

6. All swimmers must be in the care of a parent/guardian no later than 15 minutes after practice ending. If your swimmer needs additional time for showering, changing, etc. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise after the 15 minutes at the end of practice. Coaches will stay for 15 minutes after the end of practice.
7. Parents may meet their child in the lobby or in the car, at the discretion of the parent, but again, you are not allowed to drop off or pick up on the main drive of campus which is the half-moon shaped fire lane by the lower doors next to the pool
8. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the Head Coach and/or age group Coach if you are unavoidably delayed in picking up your child(ren) at the completion of practice. If we do not hear from you within 15 minutes we will make every effort to reach your emergency contact. Once the 15 minutes has passed, additional late fees may apply (\$20). The YMCA will notify the authorities if we do not hear from you and are unable to reach an emergency contact after one hour beyond the end of the class.
9. If the regular parent/guardian is not picking up your child, it is your responsibility to inform the Head Coach and/or Age Group Coach to make alternate arrangements.
10. This is a college campus. Parents must notify the coaching staff via note or text when an athlete is late or leaving early.

Suggestions:

1. Do not leave items of value in the locker room. Most athletes bring their bags on the pool deck.
2. Check in on your athletes. There have been incidents of athletes getting dropped off for practice and never coming to practice.
3. Get your swimmer(s) to practice and meets early enough to enable him/her to be on deck ten minutes prior to the start.

21. 12/U Athlete Drop Off Policy

ALL 12/U Athletes should be escorted by their parent or guardian into the building at both facilities and at the YMCA.

22. Training Plan

General Training Plan

Red&White Training will follow the physiological recommendations of the American Swim Coach's Association (ASCA) and USA Swimming (USAS). Most

of their training will be in the form of isolations and drill work. They will be doing some anaerobic and aerobic training.

Gray Training will follow the physiological recommendations of the American Swim Coach's Association (ASCA) and USA Swimming (USAS). Most of their training will be in the form of isolations and drill work. They will be doing some anaerobic and aerobic training.

Silver Training will follow the physiological recommendations of ASCA and USAS. Swimmers will do most of their workouts in the form of drills, kicking, pulling and swimming. Most of their fitness-oriented work will be in the form of sprint training because their anaerobic capacity is considerably lower than that of a senior swimmer. Their aerobic work will not consist of more than 15 to 30 minute swims regularly and shorter distance repeats will be the norm.

Gold and Platinum Seniors, according to the physiological recommendations of ASCA and USAS will be trained as adult athletes. This includes some drills, kicking and pulling, but mostly endurance and speed work. Seniors have a very high anaerobic capacity and we will be expanding upon that. Seniors also need to develop their aerobic capacity and we will be doing that in the form of longer distance swimming. It is imperative that the Seniors realize in order to be successful athletes, they must take all forms of endurance work seriously.

Specific Training Plan (Gray and Above)

Phase I is a time where swimmers will learn or relearn the strokes and turns. This may be a hard time for many swimmers who need to break bad habits. Along with this, swimmers will begin some endurance work.

Phase II is a time spent building endurance and strength through longer sets including long kicking and pulling sets and yardage swims. We will be doing a lot of drill work at this time.

Phase III is a time where much emphasis will be on speed work and fine tuning of strokes. The strokes we have by this point in the season will be worked with to make faster. Drills will still be used, primarily to reinforce all the good habits the swimmers have acquired.

Phase IV is a time where swimmers will be concentrating entirely on speed. Drills and stroke work will be done only during warm ups and loosen downs.

We will be nearing the end of the season and our last chances to qualify for our big championship meets.

Phase V is a time when swimmers will be getting ready for the final meets for which they have qualified. Practice schedules will change and swimmers will start tapering for their final performances. Swimmers will be divided up into more specific training groups to satisfy their needs based on their final meet.

Beginning of Season - Mid October = Phase I

Mid October - Early December = Phase II

Early December - Late January = Phase III

Late January - Mid February = Phase IV

Mid February - Late March/ Early April = Phase V