

## **Practices**

### **How do I know when practices are, or if there are any holiday schedule changes?**

We will communicate major changes ahead of time. However, under Events on our team website, there is a “Practices” [tab](#). All of the practices for the season are listed there. This is updated for holidays and planned schedule deviations.

### **Is there a way to check my swimmer’s practice attendance?**

Yes! In the SportsEngine Motion app, click on the three bars in the upper left corner. Under “Attendance & Calendar”, you will be able to see your swimmer’s attendance history.

### **Can I watch practice?**

Unfortunately, with how our pools are set-up, there isn’t a feasible way to observe practice in the East Pool. Having parents on deck during practice is a distraction for all of the swimmers. Aside from Tuesdays, the West Pool Lounge is typically open. Parents can observe West Pool practices from there. However, remember that no photos can be taken from behind the blocks, during practice or meets, as that is a USA Swimming SafeSport violation.

### **My swimmer can’t make it to practice on a specific date, do I need to let the coach know?**

If a swimmer knows they won’t be at a specific or reoccurring practice ahead of time, have them tell their coach so they know what to expect. Going to every practice is not required, but the more they attend, the more growth they will see. The coaches also understand that things come up or a swimmer gets sick and can’t be at practice. If a swimmer is just going to miss a practice or two, it’s not necessary to inform the coaches. If there is going to be an extended absence, an injury that we should know about, or a sickness has the potential to affect meet entries – please let the coaches know, as soon as possible. We care about your swimmers and want to know how they are doing and where they are if they are suddenly not at practices that they normally attend.

**Can my swimmer leave their swim equipment at the Y?**

Yes! Swimmers can leave their equipment bags in the storage area behind the metal doors off the West Pool. We are still working on hooks or some sort of storage option for the equipment bags, but for now, they can neatly place them on the floor in a manner that allows people to walk into that storage room. That area is unsecured during normal lap swim times, though, so you may feel more comfortable with your swimmer carrying their bags back and forth each day. For all swim equipment, please make sure the swimmer's name is on their gear!

**My swimmer says they aren't constantly swimming during practice and they are waiting at the wall a lot?**

Our pool space is crowded, we know! The coaches are managing the lane space as best we can. We ask that when swimmers complete their set or finish on the wall, they move out of the way for finishing swimmers and wait for the next set of instructions per the coaches preferred method – based on space and swimmer age, some of our coaches prefer the swimmers wait sitting on the pool deck, stacked on the lane lines, on the side of the wall, etc. The more focused our swimmers stay, the quicker our coaches can deliver instruction and get them back to swimming!

**When can my swimmer move up to the next practice group?**

Lots of factors go into separating swim practice groups – age, maturity, experience, and skill of the swimmer all play a role. The swimmer's motivation and goals also factor in. So does group size and group dynamics between all of the swimmers in a particular practice group. Typically, moving practice groups is reserved for the start of each new season. Determining practice groups is something that the coaches spend a fair amount of time and effort on, and are looking out for what is best for each individual swimmer and the team. However, if you or your swimmer have a specific concern regarding their placed practice group, you or your swimmer can discuss it with the coaching staff.

## **Meets**

### **Do we have to attend meets in order to be on the team?**

Meets aren't required to be on the swim team. However, they are highly encouraged and are a fun aspect of being on the swim team. If you have questions regarding if your swimmer is ready to compete, please bring those concerns to the coaching staff – likely the answer is going to be, “yes, they are ready!”.

### **How do I register for meets, what should I pack or expect?**

Check out this [PDF](#) for how to register for meets and this [PDF](#) for everything else you want to know about swim meets.

### **What should my swimmer wear for meets?**

In order to be as unified as possible, we do ask that swimmers wear an all-black as possible suit, if not wearing the team suit. Team caps should be worn. Additional team caps (with no last name) can be purchased for \$10. See Sarah Zerr.

### **What is Y Champs? Do swimmers have to qualify for Y Champs?**

“Y Champs” refers to the NW Ohio YMCA Swim League (NWOYSL) YMCA Championships. This is the culminating meet of our season where we get to race all of the other area Y swim teams. To be eligible to swim at Champs, a swimmer must compete in 3 YMCA (dual or Invites) meets during the season.

### **What are the differences between Y dual/tri meets and Invites?**

Dual/Tri meets are between 2 or 3 other teams. These meets typically range between 2-4 hours. Y Invites have lots of teams, lots of swimmers, and take lots of time. Although we try to limit the number of all day meets we attend as a team, some of the Invites are all day affairs. However, the time spent on gym floors with their teammates are sometimes just as fun and memorable for our younger swimmers, than the actual swim races themselves.

### **What are the differences between Y meets and USA Swimming meets?**

Y meets will have swimmers just from YMCA teams. USA meets have swimmers from Y teams and other swim clubs, but all of the swimmers competing must be registered with USA Swimming. There are certain rules that USA Swimming meets must adhere to. The most striking difference from Y meets is that USA Swimming meets are typically broken into multiple sessions and each session may not last longer than 4 hours. Swimmers typically only swim in one session per day for a timed final meet (some Championship level USA Swimming meets are conducted as prelims and finals).

### **What are the meets after Y Champs that I have seen qualifying posts about?**

The meets after “Y Champs” are sometimes referred to as “Championship level” meets, because for USA Swimming, Regionals is the last meet where qualifying times are not required to compete in. Junior Championships (14&Under) require specific cut times in each event and age group to compete. You’ll sometimes hear “Junior Championships” referred to as Junior Olympics or JOs, this is an old holdover term that is hard to get rid of because “Championships” can be a confusing term and JOs is much more fun to say. USA Swimming has an entire pyramid of meets after Junior/Senior Championships with faster and faster cut times, that culminates in the Olympic Trials.

On the YMCA side, after YMCA Championships, there are qualifying times that allow swimmers to compete at the Great Lakes YMCA Zone Meet (USA Swimming also has “Zones” on their pyramid, but this is a different meet than YMCA Zones). The next and top-level Y meet to qualify for is YMCA Nationals.

### **What is USA Swimming Regional Championships?**

“Regionals” is the last USA Swimming meet that does not have qualifying standards. In fact, swimmers with qualifying times in an event cannot participate in that particular event. For instance, if a swimmer has achieved the 200 Free Jr Champs qual time, they can’t swim the 200 Free at Regionals, but they could swim the 100 Free. 10&Under swim as “timed finals” (the standard way we swim at most meets). Ages 11-14 swim as prelims and finals. This makes Regionals a unique event and gives additional swimmers the opportunity to “make finals”, earn a specific place goal, or focus on what may be an “off” event for them right now – but they could end up excelling and loving!

## **Times, DQs, and other Results**

### **My swimmer hasn't dropped time in their events all season, does that mean they aren't trying?**

It's completely normal for swimmers to go through plateaus where their times are not improving. This could be for a multitude of reasons. They may have just had a growth spurt and they are figuring out their new body. The coaches may have given technique corrections that the swimmer is still adjusting to that is temporarily slowing them down but will benefit them in the long run (both for speed and injury prevention).

### **What are some helpful things to say after a meet/race?**

Aside from "Great swim!" and "I love watching you swim!", a great thing to ask your swimmer is "What did your Coach say after your swim?". This serves to help your swimmer remember to see their coach after each swim and forces them to remember what the coach said! It also lets you know the things the coaches are trying to work on with your swimmer.

### **My swimmer seems frustrated, how can I help them?**

Encourage your swimmer to trust the coaches and their process. Ask them questions like, "Are you doing the things Coach has said?" If your swimmer has ongoing concerns, encourage them to vocalize with their coach. If needed, parents can help with bringing their concerns to the coaching staff.

### **Why was my swimmer DQed?**

At most meets, coaches are told why a swimmer has gotten disqualified (DQed) or they are able to find out. However, DQs take time processing, so the coach may not know immediately after the race if an official observed a DQ on the swimmer in order to tell them right away when the swimmer talks with the coach post-race. As coaches, we try to only put swimmers in events that they can legally swim, but when they are just learning, sometimes the excitement of a race takes over and all the technique work of practice is forgotten. If your swimmer is unsure of why they were DQed, have them ask their coach at the next practice – it's likely something they have heard their coach say before.

### **My swimmer won their race, but the results say 10<sup>th</sup> place? Why is my 9-year-old girl racing a 13 year-old boy?**

Often times, races are mixed (girls and boys) and combined (different ages) in order to speed up the meet and provide for better competition for each individual swimmer. This leads to multiple heats of the same event. A swimmer could win their heat, but take a lower place in the overall event. A swimmer could also take 3rd in their heat, but win the event. That's the beauty of a sport where everyone is racing themselves and the clock.

### **I've seen "cuts" for the qualifying meets, but are their other times my swimmer can use to help set goals?**

We previously mentioned "cuts" for Championship-level meets. These are high standards that may not be attainable for all of our swimmers right away. However, USA Swimming publishes what they call "Motivational Standards" for each event and age group. The times range from slower than B, B, BB, A, AA, AAA, AAAA. These times are updated every four years, following a Summer Olympic cycle, and are great for helping to set goals and trying to push to hit the next level. For reference, Y Zones and Jr Champs cuts are typically similar to the A times. All of these times can be found on our website [here](#).

### **Miscellaneous**

#### **What is TeamUnify, SportsEngine, and OnDeck?**

TeamUnify is our main communication and registration platform. However, it is being rebranded as SportsEngine. The app OnDeck is related to TeamUnify, but is no longer being updated. The new app (looks the same once opened) is SportsEngine Motion. There are a few SportsEngine apps, so make sure you download the ones with "se" and a yellow-stripe that has "motion" written in it.

