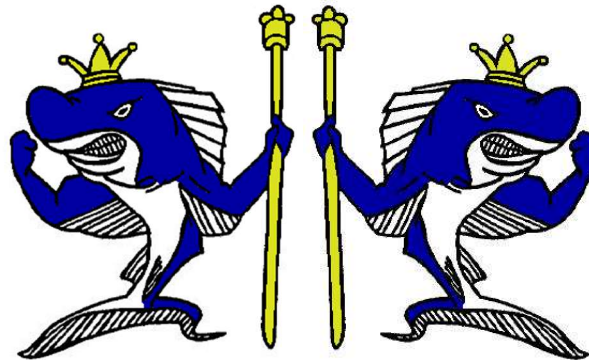




South YMCA KEY Swim Team PARENT HANDBOOK

www.keyswimming.com

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1.0 KEY Swimming Program Overview

KEY Swimming is a full year swim program founded on the YMCA core values of honesty, responsibility, respect, and caring. KEY Swimming supports the YMCA mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The KEY Swimming program also has a proven success record in major competitions at all age levels.

KEY Swimming at South YMCA is one of the finest year-round swimming programs in the Dayton area. Our training program ensures age-appropriate conditioning and proper technique with an emphasis on developing self-esteem, sportsmanship, and teamwork to prepare the swimmer for success in and out of the pool.

KEY Swimming depends on parent volunteers, skilled coaches, and enthusiastic swimmers for success. This handbook provides an overview of the program goals and organization in addition to expectations for participation. The program is organized by skill level and age with age-appropriate coaching techniques and focus areas.

KEY Swimming participates in YMCA League Short Course (August through April) and Long Course (May – July) seasons. During the season we participate in meets at area YMCA pools. We also offer the opportunity to participate in select USA Swimming League meets.

KEY Swimming hosts three home meets during the Short Course season at the West Carrollton YMCA. Our home meets are:

- KEY Fall Invitational (October)
- KEY Armed Forces Invitational (November)
- KEY Valentines Meet (February)

The complete Short Course and Long Course schedules are available at <http://www.keyswimming.com>. Information about our league, the Southwest Ohio YMCA Swim League (SWOYSL) at <http://www.swyswim.org>.

YMCA League Short Course season culminates in a series of progressive Championship meets. All swimmers in the KEY program participate in the “A” Championship meet which is conducted at Countryside YMCA. KEY Swimmers who achieve qualifying times progress to the “AA” meet which is held at Corwin T. Nixon Natatorium at Miami University. Swimmers with qualifying times also participate in the regional ZONE championship meet.

KEY Swimming participates with other teams in the Southwest Cluster including teams from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Participating teams rotate hosting responsibility and therefore the ZONE meet location is different each year. Our top swimmers with National qualifying times participate in National League Championships.

These meets are hosted on a rotational basis in a three-year cycle. For A, AA, and National qualifying times, see the Southwest Ohio Website at <https://www.swyswim.net/page/home>.

Every family must work a specified number of volunteer shifts at KEY home and League championship swim meets. The number of required volunteer shifts will be emailed to parents at the beginning of the Short Course season. Families make volunteer commitments for specific activities on <http://www.keyswimming.com>.

KEY also has a volunteer Parent Advisory Board that supports the KEY Swimming program and coordinates volunteers to achieve the program goals.

Our website and mobile phone app are hosted by TeamUnify. These allow for efficient administrative management and communication for the team. Team rosters, a calendar of events, email messaging, season registration, meet event sign ups, meet volunteer sign ups, and invoicing are managed through TeamUnify at <http://www.keyswimming.com>.

2.0 Coaching Philosophy and Age Group Definitions

KEY Swimming provides an environment for swimmers of all ability levels to develop the technical skills and character traits necessary to achieve individual and program goals. Swimming is a sport that requires effort and dedication to achieve incremental improvements. Our coaches use age-appropriate techniques to motivate swimmers to set aggressive yet attainable goals and work to achieve them. We celebrate each swimmer's contribution to the team whether it is a personal best or a meet record. The strong team performance culture combined with YMCA values provides an excellent framework for each swimmer to develop swimming skills and self-esteem.

KEY coaches bring a variety of backgrounds and experiences to their work including personal swim team experience (some with KEY as kids/teens), teaching swim lessons, building positive coaching relationships with children and youth, and most importantly, a love of swim. They participate in coaching clinics each year to maintain their skills and keep the program competitive. Coaching clinics provide opportunities for KEY coaches to learn new techniques and strategies to incorporate into the program. All coaches are CPR, AED, Concussion Awareness, and Lifeguard certified.

Age Groups: During swim meets, events are divided into age groups. For both **YMCA Meets** and **USA Swimming Meets**, swimmers will swim in the group matching their age as of the first day of that swim meet. As a result, a swimmer's age group for swim meet competition may change during the course of the season; however, their KEY practice group remains the same.

Standard Meet Age Groups are as follows:

- *8 & under*
- *9 & 10 years old*
- *11 & 12 years old*
- *13 & 14 years old*
- *15 - 18 years old*
- Senior (Anyone 12 & over as of the 1st day of YMCA Short Course National Championship is eligible to swim senior events)
- *Open* (swimmers of any age are eligible for open events)

KEY training groups and qualifications are defined as:

*Head Coaches determine all swimmers' group placements.

Kingfish	<i>Age 10 & Under</i>
Must be able to swim 25 yards Freestyle with an understanding of rotary breathing Must be able to swim 25 yards on back Minimum age of 4	
White Group	<i>Ages 8 - 10</i>
Must be able to kick 10 x 25 yards in an acceptable streamline position Must be able to circle swim 8 & Under must be able to swim 200 yards Freestyle with flip turns 8 & Under must be able to complete 100 yard IM legally 8 & Under must have 2 AA qualifying times	
Red Group	<i>Ages 10 -13</i>
Must be able to swim 500 yards continuously with flip turns Must be able to swim and kick 100 yards of all four competitive strokes Must be able to attempt a 200 yard IM Must be able to kick 10 x 100 yards on 2:20 10 year olds must have 3 AA qualifying times	
Blue Group	<i>Ages 11 -14</i>
Must attempt a 1000 yard Freestyle Must attempt a 400 yard IM Must attempt 200 yards of each stroke Must be able to swim 16 x 50 yards Freestyle @ 0:55 Must be able to kick 10 x 100 yards @ 2:00 Basic knowledge and attendance of dryland activities Swimmers must show good listening skill, work ethic and attendance	
Senior 4	<i>High school aged swimmers who want extra training or a jump start on their high school season</i>
Ability to manage time and outside obligations Ability to set realistic goals and work to attain them	
Senior 3	<i>High school aged, competitive swimmers</i>
High School Swimmers are automatically placed in this group regardless of ability Must be able to understand time cycles and read a pace clock 8th graders must have at least 3 Zone qualifying times and/or a YMCA Summer National Qualifying time Ability to manage time and outside obligations Ability to set realistic goals and work to attain them	

Senior 2	<i>High school aged swimmers needing slightly more intense training than that offered in Senior 3 group</i>
Must be willing and able to train at high levels Must be able to swim 3000 yards Freestyle Must be able to attempt 200 yards of each stroke Must be able to attempt a 400 yard IM Must be able to understand time cycles and read a pace clock Ability to manage time and outside obligations Ability to set realistic goals and work to attain them	
Senior 1	<i>High school aged athletes who are serious about swimming at the highest levels in high school and who want to continue their careers in the college swimming ranks</i>
Must be willing and able to train at high levels Must be able to swim 3000 yards Freestyle Must be able to swim 200 yards of each stroke Must be able to swim a 400 yard IM Must be able to understand time cycles and read a pace clock Ability to manage time and outside obligations Ability to set realistic goals and work to attain them	

Coaches decide each swimmer's group placement based on factors including age and current swim ability. New swimmer evaluations are held in August and coaches observe swimmers to determine the appropriate group. Coaches also determine when a swimmer is ready to advance to the next group. Most group changes happen at the start of the season in the fall; however, some are made in the spring at the conclusion of the short course season.

3.0 Swimmer Expectations

The KEY Swimming program emphasizes dedication, discipline, and effort for all age groups to produce high-performing athletes and strong individuals. Cooperation, compliance with team rules and expectations, and dedication to the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility foster a safe environment for all program participants.

This section addresses the major expectations for swimmers in the program.

3.1 Attitude / Goals / Discipline

Positive attitude sets the character of the team and enables high performance:

- Bring a positive and winning attitude to every practice and every meet. A positive attitude creates a productive and more fun environment.
- Be a Team Player. Individuals are expected to respect coaches' decisions to achieve team goals.

Criticism is a necessary element of coaching:

- Be coachable – take direction and work to apply it. If you choose to ignore your coach's directions in practice, do not expect to see improvements at meets.
- Learn to handle constructive criticism. Coaches are trained to identify flaws in your techniques and provide corrective instructions.
- Sulking, complaining, arguing, shouting, and other poor behaviors are not going to help you achieve your goals, so don't display them. Persistent poor behavior will not be tolerated.

Goals focus the team and individuals and help eliminate pettiness/negative behaviors:

- Swimmers and coaches set realistic goals for a season or series of seasons at the team and individual level.
 - Practices are designed to push toward those goals.
 - Performance at swim meets provide feedback on progress.
 - Goals can be for time, events, or techniques.
- If you do not understand the goals, talk to your coach.

Progress depends on effort applied:

- Simply attending practice is not enough. You must WORK at practice to see improvements.
- High attendance and consistent work will result in more dramatic improvements in time- and technique-based goals.
- Self-discipline is an important part of training and preparation for competition. Swimmers should take an active role in their training and assertively work toward goals.

Meet with Your Coach:

- Swimmers are expected to talk to their coach to resolve questions or clarify instructions. Simple issues should be handled immediately through respectful conversation. Swimmers are expected to set up a time to talk to their lead coach outside of practice time for longer discussions. Individual swimmers should not exclusively tie up a coach during practice time as this is not fair to all participants.
- The Head Coach is available to discuss issues with swimmers, although the swimmer should discuss issues with their age group coach first.

Good sportsmanship is non-negotiable:

- Be respectful, considerate, and polite at all times to your teammates and coaches, and to those from other teams.
- Treat all swim facilities with respect by cleaning up after yourself and using equipment and the pool appropriately.
- Cheer for your teammates, encourage them to do their best, and don't critique their swims. Don't disparage your opponents.
- Remember that you represent KEY Swimming and the YMCA at all times, and conduct yourself accordingly.

3.2 Practice and Meet Attendance / Rules of Conduct

Attendance: There are no mandatory attendance rules for age groups; however, progress does depend on participation. Swimmers are strongly encouraged to attend as many practices as possible (including dryland practice). It is best not to miss consecutive practices if it can be avoided. The Head Coach has established the following guidelines for the number of practices that a swimmer should reasonably attend:

Kingfish	2 of 3 practices per week
White Group	3 of 4 practices per week
Red Group	4 of 6 practices per week
Blue Group	5 of 6 practices per week
Senior 4	no requirements
Senior 3	no requirements, 6-8 practices per week suggested
Senior 2	80% requirement for the short course season and 70% for the long course season
Senior 1	85% requirement for the short course and 75% requirement for the long course and expected to attend 85% of AM and PM practices to participate

All swimmers are expected to attend any championship meet for which they qualify. For prelim / final format meets, you are expected to swim finals if you qualify.

Be on Time: For practice, arrive on deck with all equipment and be ready to get in the water at the scheduled practice start time. For meets, arrive with all equipment ready to get in water at scheduled warm up times. The point of warm up is to get used to the facility, prepare swimmers for a good day of competition, and prevent injury. Warm ups are not optional.

Equipment: Bring your equipment to each practice in a mesh bag, along with a water bottle and towel.

Absence: If you miss practice for any reason, call or send an e-mail to the lead coach of your training group. National Team athletes must text or email the Head Coach prior to scheduled practice.

Use of Restrooms: Restroom use should be restricted to emergencies and before and after workouts/practice only.

Respect the YMCA and its patrons: You represent KEY Swimming and the YMCA at all times. Conduct yourself accordingly. After practice, change promptly and exit the locker rooms. Be considerate while waiting for rides/carpools in the lobby.

Only swim program participants on deck: In accordance with YMCA rules & regulations, non-participants will not be permitted on the pool deck during meets and/or practice. Parents are permitted to observe practice through the glass windows in the lobby. Please remember that your child must be able to concentrate on practice and their coach at all times. Reserve any questions for the coach until practice has ended.

Coaching is for coaches: Swimmers should talk to coaches about questions or concerns. Parents should encourage the dialog between swimmer and coach.

Encouragement: Parents are advised to encourage swimmers. Avoid lecturing or “arm chair quarterbacking” a race.

Event selection: Coaches make the final decision on events for each swimmer in a meet. Events and meets are selected to benefit the swimmer and the team. Do not look for additional meets for your swimmer to participate in.

Can I swim for my high school’s team and also participate in KEY?

Yes; however, swimmers may not compete for both their club (i.e., KEY Swimming) and high school teams at the same time. Therefore, once you have competed in your first high school meet of the season you may not compete for your club team again until after your high school season ends (usually in January or February).

Most area high school teams recognize the value of club swim practices for their athletes and permit their swimmers to continue to practice with KEY on most days. Check with your high school coach about practice requirements with your high school team – you may practice with both teams during the high school season.

The high school swim season lasts from approximately late November through mid-February. During this time you may not compete in any KEY or USA Swimming meets. Notify the Head Coach at KEY when your high school season ends.

3.3 Equipment and Apparel

Dress Well to and from Workouts: Your season's success depends on your health. Come to practice dressed for the weather with an extra towel and your training equipment in a team bag. In colder weather, wear appropriate clothing, taking into consideration that the temperature may change drastically from the start of practice to the end. Take care to be dried and dressed warmly before you leave. Wear a hat when you arrive and leave.

Training Equipment: Be prepared for practice by arriving ready for dryland or ready to swim. Each individual is responsible for supplying caps, suits, and goggles. Some additional supplies (i.e. kickboards, pull buoys, and paddles) may be necessary as determined by the coach of your training group. Coaches will advise groups of what gear they will need early in the season. Make sure everything is in working order and fits. The equipment needed for each age group is listed on <http://www.keyswimming.com> under the group descriptions.

Team suits and all equipment are available from Swimville USA, from which KEY Swimming Program participants receive a 15% discount. There are instructions to receive the discount when ordering online on <http://www.keyswimming.com> in the Swimville USA Welcome Letter.

Swimmers are required to purchase a navy blue Speedo Endurance+ suit with the KEY logo. We will host a suit fitting and ordering session with Swimville USA at South YMCA each September. Items ordered during this event will be distributed during practice.

Caps and goggles are required for practice and meets. All swimmers will be given a KEY practice cap and a red KEY cap for meets. There will be an opportunity to purchase personalized red caps (silicone or latex) early in the season.

3.4 Nutrition, Hydration, Sleep

Proper nutrition, hydration, and sleep are essential for swimmers' top performance. Bring a water bottle to practice every day. To achieve your best at swimming, you should invest some time in learning about nutrition for swimmers. There are some resources under Other Documents on <http://www.keyswimming.com>.

4.0 Family Volunteer Requirements

KEY VOLUNTEER POLICY

KEY Swimming requires the participation of members to be successful. The volunteer policy is intended to share the workload of running a competitive YMCA swim team. Each

season we host three meets as our primary fundraising opportunities. This allows us to keep individual fundraising requirements to a minimum.

We also hold an annual event called Swim for Excellence in the fall. This fun event is a chance for KEY swimmers of all ages to play games and spend time together as a team. There is an online fundraising component and donations are encouraged but not required.

It takes up to 160 volunteers to run each home meet. ALL families, regardless of whether their swimmer(s) participates in the meet(s), are required to volunteer. The number of volunteer job shifts required per season is determined based on team size. The number of volunteer shifts* is the same for each family and is subject to change each season based on the number of families swimming. You will receive an email stating the number of required shifts following the two-week trial period but before the first meet.

* Please note that the number of required volunteer shifts only pertains to regular season meets –you are expected to fill additional volunteer jobs for championship meets.

Your Team Unify account will be billed \$100 for each of your required volunteer job shifts that you do not complete. All swimmers, regardless of age, level of participation, or number of years with the team, are included in this policy. **There is no buyout option.**

Swimmers in Blue and Senior Groups are asked to assist at our hosted meets. Swimmers run Clerk of Course, assist with timing, and fulfill other duties as needed. These service hours do not count toward the family volunteer requirement. However, students can use them toward service hour requirements for school or community organizations by submitting the appropriate forms to the Head Coach or Volunteer Coordinator following the meet.

To sign up for volunteer job shifts:

Step 1: Prior to the Meet

Volunteers must sign up online prior to the event. You will receive a notification email when job sign-ups are available on our website. The Team Unify site also keeps track of volunteer hours fulfilled. You must sign up for your volunteer position under “Job Sign Up” by midnight Thursday prior to the start of the meet. All jobs are on a first-come, first-served basis, so please sign up promptly.

When you sign up, check the start time for your job. Some jobs require you to arrive and start work before warm ups, such as set up, concessions, concessions runner, and hospitality. Please arrive when you are scheduled to start work.

Helpful tips for volunteers:

- You will be able to see your child swim while you are volunteering. Depending on your job, such as Timing or Head Timing, you may have an excellent view of the pool the entire time. If your job takes you farther from the pool, such as concessions or hospitality, feel free to coordinate with the other volunteers in your area to take turns briefly stepping away during your swimmers' events.
- Some jobs work well for families with small children or limited availability. Jobs including, Runner, Set up, Tear down/clean up, Heat sheet sales, Non-concessions sales, Trash, Hospitality, and Concessions runner are all possible to do with a small child in tow or if you need to assist your swimmer between events.
- If you are having difficulty finding a volunteer job in order to fulfill your requirements, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Step 2: At the Meet

Volunteers must sign the volunteer check-in sheet located at the Non-Concession Sales table in the lobby. All check-ins will be verified by the Volunteer Coordinator after the start of each session. Unless excused by the Meet Director or Volunteer Coordinator, each volunteer must remain during the entire length of the session to receive credit.

Most shifts last for the entire session (i.e., Friday evening, Saturday AM, Saturday PM, etc.). Set Up begins prior to warm ups and ends around when the session begins. Likewise, Tear Down/Clean Up begins during the last 30 to 45 minutes of the session.

****Parents may volunteer during any session of the meet, regardless of when their swimmer(s) participates. For example, parents of younger swimmers may wish to volunteer during the morning swimming session and watch during the afternoon session when their child is swimming.****

Championship Volunteer Requirements

Volunteering at championship meets is required in addition to your regular season volunteer quota.

KEY Swimming is assigned jobs by SWOYSL for all Championship meets. Our team is subject to expensive fines from the league if we do not fill all our assigned volunteer slots at these meets. ALL families with a swimmer participating in a Championship meet must volunteer for a shift. If you do not sign up for an open slot by the deadline, the Volunteer Coordinator will assign you a spot. Failure to volunteer will result in your Team Unify account being billed for your proportion of the league fine.

4.1 Parent Advisory Board

The Parent Advisory Board meets once a month. The President is responsible for publishing an agenda in advance, presiding over the meeting by leading the discussion of agenda topics, and assigning actions to board members. Minutes are recorded by the Secretary. The Parent Advisory Board agenda is typically focused on coordinating upcoming team events. Board members provide input to the discussion and help coordinate activities as needed.

The KEY Swimming program is supported by the Parent Advisory Board and Parent Volunteers. The Parent Advisory Board and the Parent Volunteers operate under the direction of the Head Coach. The Parent Advisory Board is chaired by the President. A list of current board members is maintained on the KEY website.

4.2 Officials

The team is responsible for managing officials and computer operations. KEY is required to provide a certain number of officials for league meets, and all/most officials for our home meets. In order to meet our obligations we need eight officials for each session of our home meets. Our team is always in need of additional trained officials. Training sessions for new officials are offered periodically throughout the season. Please contact the Head Coach to learn more about these opportunities.

4.3 Team Events

Team events build team morale and relationships among swimmers in all age groups outside of practice. These include the following annual events:

- Team pictures – individual and group photos
- Swimming for Excellence – Annual fundraising and team building event in the fall
- Swim Camp – Training and team bonding for Blue and Senior Groups at the world class facility of Indiana University, held December 27-30 (dates do not change)
- Spaghetti Dinner – Team dinner to kick off the championship season in early March
- End of Season Banquet – Held after the short course season to celebrate the team's accomplishments

Additionally, there will be a parent information meeting for ALL parents, and a team suit and equipment sale hosted by Swimville USA, both at South YMCA in September.

4.4 Spirit Wear

Spirit Wear orders are placed in the fall. Information about ordering, dates, and a link to the online spirit wear shop will be sent by email prior to the sale.

5.0 Team Fees

Team fees are established well in advance of the season. These fees help cover coaches' salaries, coaches' travel, training, pool rental, and miscellaneous expenses associated with the team. Swim team fees are paid automatically through the TeamUnify (TU) online system (www.keyswimming.com) at midnight on the 1st of each month.

You are required to provide a credit card during the registration process, and your card will be charged the monthly fee based on the swim group to which your child is assigned and your preferred payment plan. You may choose between six or 10 monthly payments, or you may elect to pay in full in the fall. The six payment and one-time full payment options will be discounted by 5% and 10% respectively. All team fees are due by March 1, for the six payment plan and by June 1, for the 10 payment plan. Fees for each swim group and additional pricing details are available on our website.

Your swimmer must also be a YMCA member, either as part of your family membership or as an individual youth member.

You will be billed for meet registration and entry fees after each meet. These amounts will be added to the outstanding balance on your account.

Suits, caps, goggles, equipment, and YMCA and USA Swimming memberships are all additional expenses that are not paid through your TeamUnify account.

If you have a credit balance when you leave the team, the remaining balance will be considered a donation toward the KEY Swimming Program and will be tax deductible.

Swimmers with delinquent accounts of two months of payments or more will not be permitted to participate in practice or meets until fees are up to date or special arrangements have been made through Eric Wentzel or Melinda Moore, Executive Director of the South YMCA.

5.1 Concession Stand Contribution

Concessions at our three home meets raise significant funds. In lieu of donations of food and supplies, a \$15 per swimmer, per season fee will be assessed. This help will stock concessions with cost-effective, saleable items to maximize profit. This required fee is assessed as part of registration.

6.0 Communication and Website

The KEY Swimming Program uses several methods of communication to keep parents and swimmers informed throughout the season.

Bulletin Board: The Swim Team has bulletin boards in the hallway, directly across from the aquatic office at South YMCA and in the pool area at the West Carrollton YMCA. Please check the bulletin board regularly for swim team information and updates.

Swimmer's Folders: Each Kingfish, White, Red, and Blue swimmer has a file folder in the file box located by the swim team office at the South YMCA. Folders may contain copies of any handouts as well as ribbons or medals from past meets. Swimmers are responsible for checking their folders and making sure contents are removed regularly. Senior group swimmers do not have folders. Information will be given to them by the coach.

Website: Additional information regarding meets, practice schedules or changes, fundraising activities, upcoming events, etc., can be found on the KEY Swimming website at www.keyswimming.com. In addition, your account information is managed through this website. Parents are responsible for checking the website often. New information is posted frequently, especially as Events approach.

Please pay attention to registration deadlines for specific events. When registering for meets, select at least one event on days you plan to participate. You may also add a comment in the notes section to let the coaches know if your child will not participate on certain meet days or if you need to leave early. Swimmers must participate in a minimum of three regular season meets to be eligible to participate in Championship meets.

Coaches: The coaches are available should you or your swimmer have any questions or problems. Please call and make an appointment or stop in before or after practice to see any coach. We ask that you do not attempt to talk to any of the coaches during practice, as they are responsible for the safety of your children. The coaches have mailboxes, voice mail, and e-mail for messages.

Email: We use email to maintain contact with our KEY team family. Important information such as fundraising reminders, invoices, newsletters, and last-minute schedule changes are communicated through email and the website. We have found this method to be the quickest, least expensive, most convenient, and most complete method of communication with our families. Please make certain we have the best information for you. If you are not getting emails, check your TeamUnify profile. If you still have problems, talk to the Head Coach.

Cancellations: If the YMCA is open, there will be practice. If there is any question, please contact your coach. Practice changes or cancellations will also be communicated by email.

Facebook: We use Facebook to post changes in schedules, warm up times, and several reminders throughout the season. We can be found on Facebook at KEY Swimming-South YMCA. You may also request to join the private group for KEY families called KEY Parents.

Best Times and Goal Times: The coaches will periodically post swimmers' best times and goal times. These will be posted on the swim team bulletin board and on the website.

League Website: The SWOYSL league website has information about league meets and championships. Check <https://www.swyswim.net/page/home> for details.

Newsletter: The Parent Advisory Board President may periodically prepare and email a newsletter with timely information.

Apps for Smartphones: Families can use the free Sports Engine mobile app to track swimmers and the KEY team at league meets. Download the app for iPhone or Android, and use oskeys (case sensitive) to logon to Sports Engine (parent). You will be prompted for your TeamUnify user name and password (the same ones used for our website). The Meet Mobile app is another tool for tracking meet entries, events, and times that many families use. It is available for iPhone or Android. Both free and fee-based versions are available.

7.0 Team Organization and League Information

YMCA League: YMCA Swimming in Ohio is divided into four leagues. The South YMCA - KEY Swimming program is located in the Southwest Ohio League (SWOYSL), which includes 17 teams: Auglaize-Mercer, Blue Ash, Champaign, Coffman, Countryside, Darke County, Huber Heights, Kleptz, Lakota, ME Lyons, Miami County, Powel Crosley, Preble County, RC Durr, Sidney-Shelby County, South (KEY), Springfield, and Union County.

Swim Meets

League teams host various meets throughout the season. Meet information, psych sheets, warm up times, and other information are posted at <http://www.keyswimming.com>. Be aware of meet registration deadlines. Check back often as the meet approaches to see updated information from the host team.

While meet participation is not required, all swimmers are strongly encouraged to participate in meets throughout the season. Many meets are last for multiple days, and swimmers may choose which day(s) on which to participate.

Dual Meets: A dual meet consists of 43 events each for boys and girls, divided into five to seven individual events and two relays for each age group. Swimmers are entered in one or two individual events and possibly relays. These limitations are for the purposes of scoring and awards, although no ribbons or trophies are given. By agreement of the opposing coaches, swimmers may swim additional exhibition events and exhibition relay teams may also be added to events. Points are not normally given to exhibition swimmers. Obviously, the size of a particular age group will, to some extent, dictate the number of events in which a swimmer can be entered. Our emphasis in dual meets is to allow the maximum number of swimmers to participate and to possibly enter a swimmer in events that he or she may not be used to swimming. Dual meets are not charged to your meet fee account. The entire team swims at a dual meet and it is usually done within an afternoon or morning time frame.

Invitational: Most meets KEY participates in are invitationals. Four or more teams compete in an invitational meet over two or three days. Swimmers can usually enter as many events as needed.

KEY hosts three invitational meets each Short Course season. These meets are conducted at the West Carrollton YMCA. KEY's home meets are our major fundraising activities. Parent volunteer committees work for several weeks leading up to and during each meet.

KEY Fall Invitational (mid-October): This meet is held in October on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. For the past several years this meet has been the first meet of the Short Course season.

KEY Armed Forces Invitational (early November): This meet is held in November with the same format as the KEY Fall Invitational.

KEY Valentine (mid-February): The KEY Valentine Meet is held in February on Sunday only. Swimmers 14 and under typically comprise the bulk of participants for this meet, as most 15 and over swimmers are still competing for their high school teams in February, and are not permitted to compete for their club team at the same time. However, high school swimmers are encouraged to work volunteer positions at this meet to help out.

Championship Meets: At the conclusion of the regular season, A, AA, and Zone Championships are held on consecutive weekends and at varying locations. Swimmers must participate in a minimum of three YMCA league meets to be eligible to swim at the A Championship meet. Please note that:

- In order to swim an individual event at the AA and Zone meets, a swimmer must have met a specified qualifying time in a meet before the entry deadline (find

qualifying time standards at <http://www.keyswimming.com> and <https://www.swyswim.net/page/home>.)

- If a swimmer has 6 qualifying AA times, then they are no longer eligible to participate in the A championship meet.
- Swimmers with Zone qualifying times are able to swim in the AA meet.

In addition, swimmers may qualify to participate in championship meets on one or more relay teams. The coaches determine the relay lineup that is best for the team.

All swimmers are expected to attend any championship meet for which they qualify. For prelim / final format meets, you are expected to swim at finals if you qualify.

KEY is assigned jobs by SWOYSL for all Championship meets. KEY Swimming is subject to expensive fines from the league if we do not fill all assigned volunteer slots at these meets. ALL families with a swimmer participating in a Championship meet must volunteer. If you do not sign up for an open slot by the deadline, the Volunteer Coordinator will assign you a spot. Failure to volunteer will result in your Team Unify account being billed for your proportion of the league fine.

The Championship meet format usually differs by age group. Generally, the younger age groups (e.g., 10 and unders) will swim all events as timed finals. Older age groups use a preliminary and final format. The online meet information packet will include these details, and coaches will send an email prior to the meet as well.

Top swimmers from the preliminary session return in the evening for finals. Qualifying swimmers are expected to swim in finals sessions. If you are not able to swim finals, you must scratch from your event within 30 minutes of qualifying. Do not scratch any event without the Head Coach's permission.

Nationals: Spring Nationals for the Short Course season are held in April at the Greensboro Aquatic Center in Greensboro, North Carolina. Any swimmer age 12 or older on or before the first day of YMCA Short Course National Championship competition, and meeting the specified qualifying times and KEY National Team Standards (which include academic standards) is eligible to participate in the National Championship Meet. Expenses for hotel, travel by van, meet fees, team meals, and optional team suits are charged to each participating swimmer's account. These costs fluctuate yearly. Qualifying swimmers will be provided a packet of information with details. Long Course Nationals are held in July.

USA Swimming Meets: To add variety to the swimmers' total experience, KEY Swimming encourages all swimmers to register with United States Swimming (USA Swimming). KEY attends several USA Swimming meets each year for various age groups.

USA Swimming requires all swimmers to register for membership individually. Coaches may no longer register their teams as a group.

With the change, each KEY family must register and pay fees for their swimmer(s) directly to USA Swimming.

There are two options for USA Swimming membership:

- Individual membership is valid through the end of the current short course season). This may exclude your swimmer from some long course meets that are held in spring.
- Premium membership is valid for 12 months.

7.1 Meet Schedule and Procedures

The season schedule is posted at <http://www.keyswimming.com> and on the league site at <https://www.swyswim.net/page/home> under Events. Register to attend each meet prior to the registration deadline. You may select events on days you will participate; however, coaches will make the final decision on events for each swimmer and the team.

At the meet, there may be a "Clerk of Course" especially for younger swimmers. Clerk of course is a staging area where swimmers are organized into their assigned lanes and heats prior to their events. Volunteers refer to the heat sheet to verify names, events, heats, and lanes and line swimmers up in an area close to the blocks. This is to keep the meet moving smoothly.

As soon as you arrive, look around the pool area and find the Clerk of Course area near the starting blocks.

Please listen for announcements of upcoming event numbers and calls to report to Clerk of Course. Usually swimmers are asked to report 3 to 5 events ahead of time.

When there is no Clerk of Course at a meet, swimmers should listen for events to be called by the announcer. Swimmers should be behind the blocks several heats before their scheduled start. Be aware that shorter distance heats go quickly, so you need to plan to be behind the blocks several additional heats prior to your event.

Swimmers should see their coaches after each race for a review of their performance.

7.2 Hotels

While most meets are in the Dayton or Cincinnati areas, we occasionally participate in out of town meets. In these cases, KEY may reserve blocks of rooms for KEY families. These will be listed on <http://www.keyswimming.com> under Meet Schedule early in the season. Please contact the hotel early as the block will be released by the deadline listed.

Hotels for championship meets fill up early. Plan to make reservations at the beginning of the season.

7.3 What to expect at meets

Every meet is a little different; however, most follow similar organization and procedures. If you have any questions, ask your coach or a “veteran” parent for clarifications.

7.4 Swimmer Information

- Dress warmly for arrival and departure. Bring extra clothes to wear in the bullpen between events.
- Be on time and ready to swim at your warm up start time.
- Bring several towels to a swim meet.
- Every swimmer should have a spare swim suit and at least one extra pair of goggles and cap at every practice and every meet.
- Bring nutritious food to keep your body fueled for competition.
- Be tidy. Dispose of your own trash.
- Bring and drink plenty of water between events.
- Sleep well the night before competition to be best prepared.
- Bring Sharpies to write your Event, Heat, Lane, and Stroke on your arm as a reference.
- Be prompt to the Clerk of Course or behind the blocks.
- Some meets or events require positive check in prior to the meet start. This means swimmers must check in with the meet organizers to declare that they are present and prepared to swim. Know when this is needed and make certain you are checked in on time when you arrive.
- Various types of starts are used to compress the timeline at some meets:
 - o Flyover starts require the swimmer just completing a race to remain in the pool below the blocks until the next race starts.
 - o Chase starts are used in Long Course meets. Chase starts allow the next heat to begin before the prior heat has completed the race.
- Promptly exit the pool after races but be aware of special circumstances for flyover and chase starts.
- When two pools are available or when both ends can support starts, odd and even heats may start at opposite ends of the pool. Make sure you line up behind the blocks at the correct end.
- Long distance heats (500 yards or above) require a counter to assist the swimmer. Each swimmer should ask a teammate to count for them.
- Long course meets are held at several outdoor pools. Bring sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, etc., for use poolside.

- Coaches will advise you if and when to shave in preparation for a meet. Generally speaking, swimmers shave 16 – 18 hours before the first race of a championship meet. Shaving is not permitted on site at any meet.
- Tech suits are usually only worn for major meets and championships (or only at finals). Swimmers age 12 and under may only wear certain tech suits, as outlined by USA Swimming (<https://websitedevsa.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/officialsdocuments/misc-officials/tech-suit-for-officials.pdf>). These rules apply to YMCA and USA Swimming competition.

7.5 Useful information for Parents at Meets

- Swimmers must arrive in plenty of time for warm ups. KEY coaches will meet swimmers in the bullpen area to check them in and assemble for warm ups.
- Each meet will have a different procedure, but often heat sheets are sold as a fundraiser for the host team (this is what KEY does). There will usually be a heat sheet sales table close to the pool entrance – many host teams sell heat sheets as a fundraiser. When a host team has chosen not to sell heat sheets, coaches will email psych sheets and heat sheets as soon as they are available. Some meets will also post them online with a QR code or as a file on their team website.
- Listen carefully for announcements. These include information about warm ups, when the meet begins, which events are approaching, and other time-sensitive details. ***Listening for and getting to events on time is the responsibility of swimmers and parents.*****
- Parents may walk their swimmer to Clerk of Course when their event has been called to report (not earlier). Parents may not remain in the Clerk area and may not accompany their swimmer behind the blocks. This is for safety and traffic flow in these crowded areas.
- Most indoor pools are hot and humid. Dress in layers and be ready to shed some once you are inside. In contrast however, many bullpens are chilly, so an extra sweatshirt comes in handy.
- Encourage your swimmer and help them have reasonable expectations.
- Encourage dialog with the coaches.
- Encourage positive team behavior and good sportsmanship.
- Discourage gossip and comparisons among swimmers.
- Take pictures, but do not use flash photography. Timers use a strobe light to indicate the start of a race. Photography and recording are not permitted behind the blocks.
- Meets are great opportunities to get to know other parents and share information, coordinate carpools, etc.

- Some meets have a host team-sponsored concession stand. Be prepared to pay cash and know that available options differ at each meet. Plan to bring additional nutritious food for your swimmer. Encourage water and food intake throughout the meet.
- No parents are allowed behind the blocks or on deck.
- Most YMCAs arrange a bullpen for visiting teams. Look for a sign on the wall or for other KEY parents when you arrive. Swimmers should bring quilts or sleeping bags to lie or sit on between events. Parents are usually more comfortable in folding chairs. Coolers are allowable in most bullpens.
- Some venues have stadium seating and no folding chairs are permitted. Seat cushions and back rests are useful if you have these available. Parents are encouraged to sit together in the stands. Some coordination may be needed to know how many seats to save so the team parents can sit together; however, please be considerate and remember parents from other teams hope to sit together also.
- Consider bringing an inexpensive towel rack to your hotel room for overnight trips.
- Please clean up the bullpen before you leave. The host team will appreciate it. KEY will be the host team for three meets this year.