

**Lakota YMCA Stingrays Swim
Team Parent Handbook
2023-2024**



Lakota YMCA Stingrays Swim Team

6703 Yankee Road, Liberty Township, Ohio 45044

513-779-3917

www.lakotastingrays.com

INTRODUCTION

Purpose- The purpose of this handbook is to provide information and guidance on the various policies and procedures related to the Lakota YMCA swim team. All team members and their families are expected to read and become familiar with the rules and procedures of the team.

Memberships- The Lakota YMCA swim team is a year-round program at the Lakota Family YMCA that provides competitive swimming opportunities to athletes 6 to 19 years of age. ***All swimmers must be members of the Lakota Family YMCA to participate in the year-round program.***

USA Swimming- USA Swimming is a national organization to which many of our team members belong to. USA Swimming is the sanctioning organization for all officially recognized swimming in the United States, including Junior Olympics, Junior Nationals, Senior Nationals, and the US Olympic Trials. USA Swimming memberships are a separate/optional fee of \$80 for the following groups: Senior 1, Senior 2, Pre-Senior, and Gold. The cost is set by USA Swimming and allows participation in their meets and includes insurance coverage.

Mission Statement- To have an organized and competitive swimming program that teaches all levels of swimmers to learn, train and compete at their highest individual level of achievement, while emphasizing individual progress, family participation, Christian principles, individual integrity, and team play.

It is important to note that you are a member of a YMCA swim team. Common YMCA goals for swimming year-round include Christian principles, physical fitness, superior skill development, friendships, competition, learning about being a Team Member and more; all are emphasis of our program. Like many competitive programs, ours involves many facets that include training, teaching, goal setting, discipline, fundraising, swim meets and parental cooperation.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential to a successful team. The Lakota YMCA swim team strives to create an open and informative environment for communication among swimmers, parents, and coaching staff. No question should go unanswered. There are several channels of communication available:

Website- The Lakota YMCA swim team website is www.lakotastingrays.com. Our website will have timely information on practice schedules, meet schedules, frequently asked questions, important documents, team fees, team suits and equipment, team store, and links to other important sites. Every family is responsible for checking the team website daily for updates and information. Please do not call/text coaches for meet times, warm-up times, practice times, etc. All information will be posted on the website and/or emailed out.

All families are required to register cell phone numbers and email addresses in the ACCOUNT email and text messaging section as well as the MEMBER (swimmer) email and text messaging section.

We will be utilizing a app called "GroupMe" for our quickest communication output. You will need to download the app and join both the Team Group and your swimmers individual group. Please see head coach for any questions.

Coaches- When contacting coaches, please be considerate. During practice times the coaches are focused on running the workout. The best time to speak to a coach is **after** practice. All coaches have email addresses posted on the website or you can send a note with your swimmer(s). The following are some guidelines for communicating with a coach: Please remember that you and the coach have your child's best interest at heart. Trusting that a coach's goals coincide with yours even though the approach may be different will lead to a positive dialogue.

Coaches must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the whole team and/or training group. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for the occasional short-term inconvenience.

Use the Rule of 24. Give yourself 24 hours before you react to a situation unless it is a harmful situation. Think through and discuss with your swimmer first, then reach out to your swimmer(s) group coach.

Always discuss the matter first with your swimmer(s) group's coach. If necessary, you may then ask the head coach to join in the discussion as a third party.

Coaching Staff

Head Coach **Bryce Alexander**

Age Group Coach **Catherine Ott**

Age Group Coach **Ashley Becks**

Age Group Coach **AJ Mann**

Parent Board

President **Robin Hill and Sarah Barnes**

Treasurer **Rob Frayer**

Secretary **Jamie Ostdiek and Laura Winzler**

YMCA Board Liason **Erin Ackerman**

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Seasons- Short Course (Fall/Winter: late August through early/late March)
Long Course (Spring/Summer: late April through mid-July)

*National qualifiers' seasons run a little longer

**A swimmer's season ends with the completion of their final championship meet

Practice Times- All practices are held at the YMCA for both the short and long course seasons. Practices are generally held from 4:00pm until 8:30pm Monday through Friday. For specific practice times, please visit the team website.

Eligibility- This program is open to all Lakota YMCA members who maintain year-round membership and who, upon evaluation, meet the criteria to be a member of the team. It is the coaching staff's decision, however, whether to permit a child to participate on the swim team. The coaching staff will refer swimmers to the YMCA swim lesson program as appropriate.

Note: to be compliant for the swim team, families must have at least 1 adult on a membership through the Lakota Family YMCA in order to be a part of the team.

Registration- Registration begins in August. NEW prospective swimmer must be evaluated by the coaching staff and may only register for the approved group assigned by the coaching staff.

All members are considered active upon completion of the online registration process. Upon receipt of registration forms (hardcopy or online depending on the process used), all applicable Team Fees will be processed at the YMCA through your Team Unify account.

Practice Groups- Swimmers will be assigned groups by the coaching staff. New swimmers will be evaluated to determine which group will best fit their needs. It is important that swimmers attend only the practice times assigned for their group unless otherwise given permission by the coaching staff. Our team is at a regular capacity level and groups are assigned to best accommodate the needs of everyone involved. Swimmers will NOT be moved up to the next group until the end of the short-course and long-course season if the coaching staff feels it is time. Any group adjustments will be handled by the head coach with the families affected on a case by case basis.

No matter what group a swimmer is in, coaches will ensure everyone is challenged and educated for optimal performance and growth.

TEAM FEES AND EXPENSES

Team Fees- The Lakota YMCA swim team is solely supported by the collection of dues from its members and various fundraisers. Team fees are divided up into monthly payments and are not to be mistaken for a "monthly subscription". Team expenses involve purchasing pool time, paying for a professional coaching staff, equipment, scholarships, and various other team-related obligations. Every effort is made to keep costs as low as possible.

Team Fees are listed on the website.

Per Meet Expenses- Invitational swim meets are offered at an additional cost. This is typically up to \$5.00 (sometimes as high as \$10.00) per event entered and usually a maximum of four individual events per session plus

one or two relays with up to three sessions per meet. Championship meets also have a pool/swimmer surcharge of \$2.00 to \$10.00 per swimmer. Meet fees will be processed through the member accounts with TeamUnify. Meet fees will be invoiced at the conclusion of the meet and fees will be collected on the 15th after the meet date. For example, if a meet conclusion is on the 15th of a month, we will invoice and charge the credit card on file the next month on the 15th.

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Payment- All Team/Meet Fees will be processed through your family's swim account on TeamUnify. Payments for team fees can either be paid in full or in monthly payments. Families will be asked to add a credit card to their TeamUnify accounts in order for team/meet fees to be charged. **FAILURE TO PAY TEAM/MEET FEES WILL RESULT IN THE SWIMMER(S) BEING WITHHELD FROM PRACTICE, COMPETITION, AND ALL TEAM ACTIVITIES AND POSSIBLE LOSS OF PRIORITY REGISTRATION PRIVILEGES.**

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Any and all questions concerning billing issues must be directed to Sara Matchison at Sara.Matchison@LakotaYMCA.com.

Current account charges and status can be viewed at any time by logging into your account. Please do so on a regular basis and e-mail the Head Coach, with a copy to YMCA Billing, if anything looks out of place or in error.

Canceling Account Mid-Season- Any swimmer who intends to withdraw from the program must do so by giving a written notice via email to the Head Coach. YMCA Billing will then charge the card on file for all outstanding fees at that time.

Note: No spots will be held for swimmers "intending" to register at a later date. Registrations will be accepted until groups have been filled or registration closes. It is possible for a specific group to fill while others remain open.

If and when a group fills up, a waiting list will be kept for that group until December 1st. As spots become available throughout the season, swimmers will be contacted in order about filling those spots. After December 1st the team roster will be considered closed and all waiting lists will become void.

No refunds or changes in fees owed will be given for swimmers.

MEET EXPECTATIONS

Championships- Swimmers are required to compete in a minimum of 3 YMCA meets throughout the regular season in order for them to qualify for championships. Please remember, as a member of a team, each swimmer has a responsibility not only to themselves but their fellow teammates and the coaching staff. All swimmers should plan on being available to swim at (and training through) Championship meets unless specifically told otherwise by a coach. This includes Nationals for swimmers 12 & older that have a qualifying time. Individual exceptions may be granted by the Head Coach and the YMCA in extreme circumstances only and on a case-by-case basis.

Nationals/Team Trips- For both Spring and Summer YMCA national meets and any other meet designated by the coaches and the YMCA as a "Team Trip", it will be standard procedure to schedule and plan attendance to these meets as "Team Trips" where coaches, swimmers, and designated chaperones (as needed-determined by the coaching staff and the YMCA) travel and attend competitions as a group.

Attending swimmers will be required to travel, lodge, dine, and compete in accordance with the team trip guidelines laid out by the coaching staff. Swimmers who are unable to follow the above procedures will NOT be eligible to attend the meet.

One exception is that swimmers are allowed to depart from a team trip with their parents for vacation, college visits, etc. without traveling home with the team. Departure may not occur before the final swim of any swimmer on the team (including finals). Exceptions MUST be approved by the coaching staff BEFORE the team leaves for the trip.

Parents of swimmers attending "Team Trips" are welcome to volunteer for and travel as chaperones (the need of chaperones and how many are needed will be determined by the coaching staff and parent board). Parents are also welcome at the meet and to stay at the "team" hotel in their own rooms so they can be near their swimmers. Parents will NOT be permitted to remove their swimmer(s) from the team at ANY time during the trip unless given written permission from the coaching staff BEFORE the trip commences.

Should the coaching staff and the YMCA determine that a YMCA National or other traditional "Team Trip" will not be run as such, all swimmers and parents will be free to make their own plans to attend the competition.

A determination on whether a "Team Trip" will be planned will be announced no less than 2 months ahead of the first day of the meet.

For YMCA Nationals, whether Lakota YMCA Stingrays travels as a team or not, hotel rooms will be reserved by the team and will be available for use in any situation (# may be limited).

ALL MEETS

Meets are generally optional, but highly recommended, since they are the measure of the swimmer's progress in training. Swimmers may be required for some in season meets and championship meets depending on their group placement. Any questions should be directed to the coaches of your swimmer(s) group. At the end of the day, we want all swimmers to showcase all their hard work throughout the season including all relay-only swimmers. Parents and swimmers should always be sure to thoroughly read the meet information packets posted on the Lakota YMCA Stingrays website for each meet. While many of the general procedures are the same, each meet has its own specific details that are important to know. Be sure to read over the event order, entry limits, session times, warm-up times and more. Specific warm-up times are usually assigned by the team after entries are received by the host team and may not be available until a few days before the meet. Please do NOT call/text/email coaches for warm-up times, check the website.

Swimmers are expected to arrive 15 minutes before the assigned warm-up start time, team suit on, goggles and team swim cap ready. Arriving at any time other than the assigned time must be APPROVED by the coaching staff ahead of time. Failure to do so could result in the swimmer being scratched from individual and relay events.

MEET ENTRIES

Each member has the ability to sign up for specific meets and select specific events at each meet. Coaches will then review entries after the signup deadline and make changes as they see fit. If a swimmer has restrictions on time or days of attendance at a particular meet during the REGULAR SEASON, please indicate that in the NOTES section of the signup so a coach does not enter a swimmer on a day in which they are unavailable to swim (this does not apply to Championships). Coaches will always have the final

authority on which events swimmers will be entered in. Parents/Swimmers should always double check the website for any changes made by coaches within two days of the signup deadline. Also, be sure to check the psych sheet for errors that may have occurred during the entry submission process and alert coaches immediately.

Relay Selections- are never final until announced by the coaches. Relays are on determined by coaches based on performance at meets, in practice, practice attendance, and any other criteria coaches see as being relevant to making the relay selections. Swimmers should never leave a meet before checking to see if they are on a relay.

Exception: for certain Championship meets, it may be necessary to have a more final relay decision prior to the meet due to some swimmers traveling to the meet for that relay only. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis by the coaching staff. For Zones, final relay selections will be announced the Monday after AA's. Any swimmer who may be considered in contention for a relay spot should plan on attending until notified otherwise. If you are unsure, please ask your coach.

EQUIPMENT

Speedo Sponsorship- Swimmers are expected to use Speedo brand products at all times when representing the Lakota YMCA Stingrays. This includes Championship Racing Suits!! The Lakota YMCA Stingrays have a signed contract with Speedo. Through this agreement our team receives discounts on many products, coaches equipment, items for National Team Qualifiers and other program benefits.

Swim Caps- a team cap must be worn at all YMCA and USA meets. One swim cap will be given at the beginning of the year to each swimmer. If a swimmer does not have a team cap, one will be given to them at the meet and charged \$10 to their TeamUnify account.

Suit- Our team suit may be purchased through our team provider, Swimville USA (www.swimvilleusa.com). Our team suits are a required equipment for our competitions. We will do our best to keep our team suits on a 2 year rotation so that you are not purchasing a new suit every year. A Speedo, Championship style suit may be worn at championships or specifically designated meets only. Championship style suits are not to be worn at in-season invitationals, dual meets, or other competitions unless otherwise specified by the coaching staff. Championship style suits include non-lycra suits such as: Lazars, Fast Skins, Aquablades, etc.

Practice Equipment- – It is recommended that swimmers have at least two pairs of goggles at all times in case one pair was to break. In addition there are specific items required for each practice group (our group descriptions on our website list each group's required equipment). YMCA provided equipment is not to be used in place of items that are on the required list for each swimmer. These limited supply items are for all YMCA members but there are not enough to provide for the entire team and/or to last through the heavy use that a swim season brings.

OPTIONAL COSTS

Spirit Wear- Swim bags, team apparel, and many other items are all available but not required!

VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

In-Season Invitationals- It is common practice for teams hosting large Invitational style meets that we attend to assign a limited number of worker positions to attending teams. Please be willing to help out where possible to fulfill these assignments. When we host our home invitations, The Bubble Bash IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FILL ALL MANDATORY VOLUNTEER POSITIONS. IN ORDER FOR US TO RUN A GOOD INVITATIONAL, WE HAVE TO HAVE ALL HANDS-ON DECK. OUR HOME INVITATIONAL IS A REQUIRED SWIM MEET THAT ALL FAMILIES MUST ATTEND (NO EXCEPTIONS). A \$100 FEE WILL BE ACCESSED TO EACH FAMILY THAT DOES NOT COMPLETE THEIR VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENT FOR OUR HOME INVITATIONAL. ANY EXCEPTIONS WILL BE HANDLED BY THE HEAD COACH ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS WITH EACH FAMILY.

Commented [WL5]: Are we hosting the Bubble Bash this year or should we say, "When we host our home invitational...."

Be sure to sign up early for the jobs and times that work best for your family. If you cannot work your shift(s) it is your responsibility to find a replacement and notify our Associate Meet Director of the changes. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THE INCONVENIENCE CAUSED BY NOT FULFILLING A POSITION.

Commented [WL6]: Should we state Meet or Volunteer Sub-Committee Chair or their designee?

Championship Meets/Workers- EACH TEAM IS ASSIGNED SPECIFIC WORKER POSITIONS AT ALL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS BASED ON THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES INTO THE MEET THE PREVIOUS YEAR. ALL FAMILIES OF SWIMMERS ATTENDING THESE MEETS ARE REQUIRED TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP FULFILL THE TEAM'S OBLIGATION TO HELPING RUN A SUCCESSFUL MEET. FAMILIES THAT HAVE A SWIMMER(S) COMPETE AT CHAMPIONSHIPS AND DO NOT VOLUNTEER WILL BE CHARGED the fee that the league will place on our team. VOLUNTEER POSITIONS WILL BE SELECTED AT RANDOM BY AN ONLINE GENERATOR ONCE THE TEAM IS

NOTIFIED OF THEIR REQUIRED POSITIONS. Teams at any championship meet that do not fulfill their volunteer responsibilities, will be fined by the Southwest Ohio YMCA Swim League, and may even have to forfeit. We are fortunate enough to be part of the best running league in the country. It is very important we do our part in helping to continue this standard for everyone involved.

Championship Meets include: A's, AA's, Zones, LC Championships (summer). The Associate Meet Director, under the guidance of the Head Coach and the YMCA, oversees all volunteer job assignments. Any questions or concerns regarding volunteer jobs should be directed to the Associate Meet Director or the Head Coach.

Commented [WL7]: Should we state Meet or Volunteer Sub-Committee Chair or their designee?

Commented [SM8R7]: I think because everyone answers to the meet director we can leave that out.

Commented [WL9]: Same question as above