

WASHINGTON WATER SHARKS SWIM TEAM



FAMILY/SWIMMER HANDBOOK 2025/2026

Sponsored By "The Y's Men & Women's Club"

Dear Swim Team Families –

The Washington Water Sharks Swim team strives to fulfill the mission of the YMCA: to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

The YMCA strives to build character in all who participate in YMCA programming. The 3 focus areas are:

- 1.) Youth Development
- 2.) Healthy Living
- 3.) Social Responsibility

Swim team seeks to encourage and motivate each swimmer to develop his or her individual skills and to enhance self-esteem and build confidence. The team can only accomplish this through the active involvement of each swimmer and his/her family. Everyone is involved in the successful coordination of the swim team: administration, aquatics personnel, Water Sharks Shiver and coaches. Together, they pledge to make this an experience that will positively shape your child.

We thank you in advance for your involvement and commitment to this program and we look forward to a fantastic swim season!

Swim Strong! Swim Fast! Swim Determined!

Samantha Van Houten, Head Coach
swimteam@washingtoney.org

Water Sharks Shiver (a group of sharks), Family Booster Group

Communications:

Team email: swimteam@washingtoney.org

Team website: www.teamunify.com/ymca-2229 or through the link on the Washington Community Y webpage, www.washingtoney.org, under the programs/aquatics tab.

Mobile App: SportsEngine Motion (Formerly OnDeck) (iOS, Android)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/watersharksswimteam

Participation Requirements:

To participate on swim team:

- Swimmers are required to be full YMCA members (Kalona only does not count).
- 8 and under swimmers must be able to swim 25 yards (one length) of freestyle and 25 yards (one length) of backstroke continuously, without assistance or floatation device or have passed level 4 swim lessons.
- 9 and up swimmers must be able to swim 100 yards (4 lengths), without assistance or floatation device using 2 of the 4 competitive strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, or butterfly).

***Swimmers who are unable to swim combined 50 (or 100) yards should consider swim lessons prior to joining swim team. Swim team is not a replacement for swim lessons.**

Participation Supplies:

- **SUIT/SWIM CAP/GOGGLES:** A one-piece suit for girls is required. Jammers are preferred for boys. Team suits are available for purchase but are **not required**. Team swim caps are strongly encouraged for swim meets by Iowa YMCA Competitive Swimming organization (available for purchase from the Water SHARKS Shiver) but are not required. Goggles are encouraged. We usually have a few extra pairs if someone forgets, but please bring your own. **Goggles should not cover the nose.** Swimmers 12 & under will not be allowed to wear "tech" suits.
- **CLOTHING/APPAREL:** **Optional** apparel orders for team spirit wear are coordinated by the Water SHARKS Shiver. Information will be sent out when available.

Fees:

Y memberships and dues must be paid by October 13. ***All memberships and dues are payable to the Washington Community Y. If these fees are not paid by the date specified, the swimmer/s may not be allowed to practice or attend swim meets.***

All swimmers must have a **Washington Community Y Membership**. The following memberships may be obtained by swimmers and/or their families:

- \$90.00 – 1 year Youth Membership
- \$300.00 – 1 year Teen Membership
- \$720.00 – 1 year Family Membership

Swim Team Season Dues: \$200 per swimmer. Swim team dues specifically cover the cost of participating in swim team and cover all expenses incurred by the Y to conduct swim team: meet registration fees; coaching and coaches travel expenses; promotion and printing; scheduling and submissions; lifeguards; t-shirt for each participant. There are no refunds.

Practice Times:

Age Group	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday
Red	4:15-5pm	No Practice	4:15-5pm
White	5-6pm	No Practice	5-6pm
Blue	6-7:15 pm	7:00-8:30 pm	6-7:15 pm
Gold	7:15-8:30 pm	7:00-8:30 pm	7:15-8:30 pm

- The regular swim practice schedule is effective up until the sectional meet. Regular practice times may change for swimmers who qualify for state or regional meets.
- There are **no practices** when Washington Community School District cancels classes or gets out early due to inclement weather.
- No Practice Dates (some may be added): November 27 (Thanksgiving) December 23-January 2 (optional swim clinics or Swim-a-Thon may happen during this time), and March 9.

*Swimmers will be grouped for practices based on ability, but meets will use the age of the swimmer as of December 1.

Groups – Based on ability (or at coach discretion)

Red – Beginner training group for younger/1st or 2nd year swimmers working on stroke technique and skills (starts/turns). Swimmers must be able to swim the length of the pool backstroke and freestyle without assistance or have passed level 4 lessons. Swimmers are able to swim 300-600 yard sets.

White – This training group must have a 50 freestyle time of 45-60 seconds. This group will continue to grow with stroke technique but also begins to increase endurance and strength. Capable of swimming 20-35 minute sets and 1000-2000 yards per practice.

Blue – Training group must have 50 freestyle time of 32-45 seconds or faster and a 100 freestyle time of 1:30. Recommended to practice 3 times per week. Capable of swimming 30-45 minute sets and 2000-3500 yards per practice. Will also have dryland practices

Gold – This training group must have a 50 freestyle time of 32 seconds or faster and a 100 freestyle time of 1:15 or faster. Capable of swimming 35-45 minute sets and 3000-4000 yards per practice. Will also have dryland practices.

Swim Meets:

We encourage swimmers to participate in a swim meet; however, it is not mandatory to do so. Each swimmer must compete in **THREE** YMCA meets to participate in the State meet (if qualifying time is met). ***Meets rarely get cancelled for weather, please prioritize these.**

These can last most of the day (usually 4+ hours). Warm-ups are sometimes 30-45 minutes before the meet starts. Once the meet starts, everyone will watch for their event numbers so they know when to go to the Clerk of Course (more information on this once meets start).

****Coaches are often on deck the whole meet, but ask a returning swimmer/parent if you need help or have questions about the meet.**

Signups

Swim meet signups will be done using the Team Unify website or app. An email for specific swim meet signups will be sent to parents/guardians. Swimmers can sign up for meets indicating specific events they want to swim (*coaches will have the ability to change these how they see fit), or just stating "yes" or "no" for attendance. If you have questions or problems, please contact the coaches. Swimmers can choose 1 event, coaches will choose the other 2 events.

Travel

Parents/guardians are responsible for driving swimmers to and from meets/practices. Carpooling is an option but not facilitated by the Washington Community Y.

Day of the Meet

- If you are unable to attend the meet, call/email your coach as soon as possible. This is very important so the coaches can re-adjust relays if needed.
- Arrive at least 10-15 minutes before warm-ups.
- Check in with volunteer or coaches to receive event numbers.
- All swimmers are required to warm up at our assigned time unless approved by a coach.

Communication:

- **TEAM UNIFY:** We will be using Team Unify for all swim team communications. The website will use email and SMS text messaging to communicate with swim team families. Coaches' contact information will be available on the website. The Team Unify website has a calendar with all meets and events, including addresses of meet locations and information about meet start times, warmups, etc.

Each family will have an account to track their swimmers' times, meet signups, practice times and other information. You will receive an email to set up your account after we have updated your contact information through registration. Team Unify can be accessed online via the website or on your mobile phone through the app. *Only **one** main login can be used, please provide an email that works best.

- **COACHES COMMUNICATION:** If you need to talk to the coaching staff, please do so before or after practice, by phone or e-mail, or by using the website. ***Please do not try to talk to coaches during practice or when they are busy at a meet.*** We appreciate your support with this!
- **CANCELLATIONS:** If a practice or meet must be canceled because of inclement weather, the cancellation will be posted to the KCII cancellations page and Facebook, as well as sent by email and/or text message.

Washington Community Y Water Sharks Swim Team 2025-2026 Schedule

November 8	@ Wellmark (Des Moines) – Returning swimmers only
November 15	@ Muscatine – Sprint Meet/Limited relays
November 27	No practice, Thanksgiving
December 13	@ Burlington
December 20	@ Oskaloosa
Dec 23-Jan 3	No practice – Christmas break (possible swim clinics)
December	Optional Swim Team Clinics (Days/Times TBD) – or Swim-a-thon
January 10	@ HOME
January 17	@ Wellmark
January 24	@ Burlington
February 14 or 15	Sectional Weekend – Day/Time TBD
March 7	State – Boys @ Marshalltown
March 8	State – Girls @ Marshalltown
March 20-22	YMCA North Central Regional -Wellmark YMCA, Des Moines
March 28-29	MYAS – Minnesota Regionals

*Suit, clothing, and picture information will be sent out as soon as it's available.

Championship Meets

*****Important highlights*****

***Swimmers will be able to qualify for the 2025-26 YMCA State Swim Meet and Regional Meet during any YMCA Closed Season Meet within the current season. Times from USA observed HS meets can be used as Q times.** Swimmers will still need to meet the three meet criteria to be able to attend.

***Sectionals will be optional to attend if State Q times and 3 meets have already been met.** Sectionals is a paid event. **If you cannot go or don't want to go, do not sign up.** Entry fees are due prior to the meet and are non-refundable. Families will be charged the entry fee if they decide not to swim after the deadline. We have paid several fees in which swimmers decide not to attend after the deadline.

***Sectional Meet:** Counts as a **THIRD** meet, but swimmers are encouraged to swim more meets prior to Sectionals in case of weather, illness, etc. YMCA pays registration fees. Here is the new information for the upcoming season for Sectionals:

***State Qualifiers Can:**

- Enter events in which they have a State Qualifying time as exhibition only to better their seed time.
- Enter events in which they do not currently have a state qualifying time.
- opt to skip the sectional meet

State Meet: To qualify for this meet, the swimmer must have equal/better state qualifying times *AT ANY MEET* (or a qualifying time from 3/1/25). *Qualifying with a relay team does not guarantee that same relay will swim at State together. Coaches will choose State relays as well as alternates. YMCA pays registration fee.

Y Regional Meet: (YMCA meet): The swimmer must meet qualifying times at *ANY MEET DURING THE SEASON*. A list of events and qualifying times will be posted on the website. YMCA pays registration fee.

MYAS Regional Meet: (Non-YMCA meet): The swimmer must meet qualifying times at *ANY MEET DURING THE SEASON*. Updated list will be out soon. **Swimmers will be required to pay registration fee.** Age-up date will be first day of meet.

***State qualifying times are allowed from 3/1/25 until Sectionals.**