

Cranston YMCA Marlins Swim Team



Team Handbook

"Determination and Fortitude in the Pursuit of Excellence"

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SECTION A-----INTRODUCTION

The handbook is an essential and comprehensive resource for Cranston YMCA Marlins team members and their families. The handbook provides new members with an overview of what competitive swimming at the Cranston YMCA is all about. It also contains team policies and information that all swimmers and their families need to know. All families should read the handbook so that they become familiar with important facts and rules of the team.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE

The Cranston YMCA Marlins Swim Team is a year-round swim program which offers a guided competitive program for swimmers age 6 to 18. Swimming ability ranges from beginner swimmer to the most competitive and skilled swimmer.

Team members learn the values of sportsmanship and teamwork. Swimming, through the Cranston Marlins Swim Team, provides physical, emotional and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

The Team's mission, grounded on the four YMCA character values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility is: To inspire and motivate young people to develop positive habits of character along with the necessary technical skill to achieve their potential in the pursuit of excellence.

TEAM PHILOSOPHY

The Team's philosophy is expressed in the motto: Determination and Fortitude In the Pursuit of Excellence. We believe that DETERMINATION, FORTITUDE and EXCELLENCE can be cultivated through swimming and will help prepare our swimmers for the challenges they will face in life.

Determination is an act of the will in which an end is firmly fixed and vigorously pursued. It is the quality of being resolute while working hard to achieve a goal.

Fortitude is the physical and inner strength to stay the course notwithstanding disappointment and setbacks.

Excellence is superior performance which is the fruit of hard work and preparation: it is more than merely trying one's best. While excellence may seem impossible to achieve in the fullest sense, we encourage our athletes to strive after excellence.

'Y' SWIM?

The YMCA Swimming age group swimming programs are America's largest programs of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a life- time of good health.

Physical Development

Many pediatricians consider swimming the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance: the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and technical skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

Intellectual Competence

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must plan and develop movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally, the accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image.

Why My Child Should Be a Swimmer

(Courtesy of USASwimming)

1. Swimming is an outstanding activity for young people.
2. Swimming promotes fitness and teaches a child to strive for physical achievement. Many super-stars in other sports started out as swimmers and gained strength and coordination that helped them excel.
3. Swimming is an exciting individual and team sport.
4. Swimming is a technical and specialized activity involving extensive skill and development.
5. Swimming is a healthy "lifetime" activity. Participants may be 1 or 101 years old.
6. Swimming is a relatively injury free sport in comparison to other youth sports.
7. Swimming teaches the life lessons of sport and sportsmanship which include learning to deal with winning and losing, as well as working with officials, teammates and coaches.
8. Swimming motivates participants to strive for self-improvement and teaches goal orientation.
9. Swimming cultivates a positive mental attitude and high self-esteem.
10. Swimming can prevent drowning.

Important Questions

Setting records, winning races and swimming fast are fine achievements. It is important, however, to keep things in perspective. An over emphasis on speed, times and achievement will eventually lead to frustration. Therefore, as coaches and parents ask yourselves:

- Did the child learn to swim with greater skill and confidence?
- Did the child learn to show initiative in wanting to come to the pool to practice without being constantly coerced by parents and coaches?
- Did the child learn something about being part of a team and that sometimes personal wishes and desires are sacrificed for the good of others and the team?
- Did the child learn to overcome obstacles, setbacks and problems?

HISTORY

The Marlin Swim Team was started in the early 1970's. The Team is part of the South Eastern New England Community of YMCAs (SENECY) Swim League. For many years the team's orientation had been developmental rather than competitive. In recent years, the team has expanded to include a more comprehensive competitive swim program for our community. The team now swims throughout the year and is working on becoming a registered USA Swim club.

SECTION B-----COACHING STAFF AND TEAM STRUCTURE

COACHING STAFF

The competence and excellence of the coach is perhaps the single greatest influence on the quality of youth sports. The Cranston YMCA Marlins Swim Team consists of professionally trained coaches. Our coaches are members of the American Swimming Coaches Association and have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States. Certified coaches in YMCA and U.S. Swimming programs possess training and experience in the physiology and psychology of adolescent development. Our head coach provides the assurance that the time your children spend in the pool is quality time. To read more about our coaches visit our team website where the coaches' e-mail addresses will also be found.

COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Marlins Swim Team coaching staff is committed to providing a program that will enable young swimmers to learn the value of striving after excellence and striving to "be the best that you can be". Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in all matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and skill level of each child. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, the coach will move the swimmer to a more challenging training group.
2. Blue Marlins' coaching staff are responsible for stroke instruction and training regimens. Each group's practices are based on sound training principles and geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets Marlins swimmers will attend. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events swimmers will enter.
4. At meets the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmers' performance. (It is the parents' job to offer love, support and understanding regardless of their youngsters' performance)
5. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.
6. The coaching staff and a parent support group also work to build team camaraderie among all levels of swimmers. Many long lasting friendships have been formed among swimmers in our program.
7. The coaching staff is always striving to improve the Marlins Swim Team program. It is the swimmers and parents' responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

YMCA TEAM LEVELS

The Cranston YMCA Marlins Swim Team uses a "progressive" age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined long term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during 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. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge must 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 the reverse situation.

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is important that we establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. Unfortunately this is not always the most convenient approach to take, but it is always the most productive.

At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long term goal of excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at their own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental and emotional level of development.

The levels are: Senior Team, Junior Team, Age Group Team, Mini-Marlins

Senior Team: The Senior Team consists of swimmers who are generally over 13 years old and/or exhibit a high level of swimming and workout ability. These swimmers are expected to be mature, dedicated, responsible and dependable, as they serve as role models for the younger swimmers on the team.

Junior Team: Junior A swimmers are generally under 14 years old, are well versed in technique for all 4 competitive strokes, and have a sound understanding of racing strategy. This group has a greater focus on challenging swim sets during practice, with a moderate emphasis on continued stroke enhancement.

Age Group Team: These swimmers are generally under 12 years old and have started to develop good swimming skills in each of the 4 competitive strokes. Practice time focuses on stroke technique, developing competitive strategies, and enhancing their endurance.

Mini Marlin: This is our developmental group; these swimmers are under 10 years old and can perform at least 25 yards (1 pool length) each of beginning freestyle and backstroke. During the season, further improvements are made with these strokes, and they are taught the fundamentals of swimming competitively and are taught skills in diving, breaststroke, butterfly, and flip turns.

SECTION C-----SWIMMERS TRAINING SEASON AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SWIM SEASONS

Training Sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress through the classes of swimmers. Training schedules are designed to provide only slightly more time than is required for a swimmer to accomplish this. Therefore it is important that each swimmer attend as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefit of the program. Pool availability is our most limiting factor. Don't waste it.

At the Cranston YMCA, competitive swimming is offered throughout the year in different capacities:

Fall & Winter Season (Short Course) ---- September through mid-March

The longest and most substantial season for the Marlins Swim Team. Practices begin in September after a short tryout period for new swimmers, and run through March. Numerous competitions will be held against the area YMCAs, culminating in the SENECA League Championships in early March. Swimmers who perform exceptionally well during the season may qualify for the YMCA New England Championships, traditionally held in the middle of March.

Spring & Summer Season (Long Course) ---May through early August

The focus of the spring and summer teams is to provide an opportunity for swimmers to continue to improve their skills in preparation for the upcoming fall/winter season, while many others turn their attention to other activities. Competitions (though less numerous) are held during these months, with more of an emphasis being placed on maintaining and improving upon the previous season's results.

YMCA Rules of Membership

All swimmers must have an active membership at the Cranston YMCA for the duration of the season. Swimmers who carry Youth or Teen membership have access to member pricing on programs and may have facility privileges if they are age 11 and older. Parents of swimmers do not have facility privileges (gymnasium, fitness center, group ex, etc.) unless they have an active family type membership (Family or One Parent). Please see the Welcome Center if you need assistance deciding which membership option is best for your family and swimmer.

PRACTICE SCHEDULE & ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The Practice Schedule for each group can be found at the end of the Handbook. It will also be posted in the swim team display case, outside the pool area. Practice Schedules can change once the season begins, please remember to keep an eye on your email AND the schedule posted in the display case for the most up-to-date information.

Swimmers are expected to attend practice as often as they can for their respected age group. Simply put, attending practice will directly impact your child's performance throughout the season. As a team, we depend on your child to perform at his or her best during competitions. There are numerous training methods that will be used throughout the season to focus on many different parts of a stroke or a race, and not all methods can be done in one practice, one week, or even one month. Therefore, it is imperative that your child participate as often as possible to benefit the most. To help ensure that swimmers are attending practice often, the following policies will be in place throughout the season:

- Senior swimmers are expected to attend practice at least 4 times per week
- Junior swimmers are expected to attend practice at least 4 times per week
- Age Group are expected to attend practice at least 3 times per week
- Mini Marlins are expected to attend practice at least 2 times per week

SWIMMER TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

The coaches of the Marlins swim team make every effort to provide for all swimmers to reach their potential each season, but the majority of the responsibility to enjoy success falls on the swimmer. In addition to attending practice as often as the swimmer is able, the swimmer must pay attention to all instructions of the coach and make every effort to follow the directions given at the start of practice and during the workout. Practice can be demanding at times and very challenging from a mental standpoint, and it is at these times where the swimmer must persevere in order to obtain the long term goal of improving their performance. In addition to paying attention swimmers also have a responsibility with Sportsmanship, Dryland Training (Senior's and Junior's only), Shoulder Injury Prevention, and Healthy Eating.

Sportsmanship is defined as the qualities and conduct befitting a participant in sports. Furthermore, one who exhibits good sportsmanship qualities accepts victory or defeat graciously. Throughout the course of the season, the coaches will do their best to ensure all of our swimmers exemplify good sportsmanship qualities in practice and in competition, no matter how fierce the competition may be or how the opponent may act.

Dryland Training for swimmers in the Senior group, Junior group, and Age group will be conducted prior to the swimming portion of practice. Dryland Training consists of a series of exercises that will aide in the swimmer's performance that cannot be accomplished as effectively in the water. Examples of these exercises include pushups, sit ups, and core routines (of which there is a vast amount). Drylands will occur on the pool deck for the majority of the season, though there will be added time in one of the fitness studios or in the well ness center for the 13 and Over Senior swimmers to add exercises that involve weights and the cardiovascular equipment (bikes, treadmills, etc.). Again, the swimmers must pay attention to all directions in order to perform the exercises correctly and avoid injury, particularly those who will use the

wellness center. Further information about using the wellness center and/or fitness studio will be given later in the season.

Exercises for Shoulder Injury Prevention will be included in our dryland training program. These simple, yet very effective exercises help to ensure the stability of and provide balance to the shoulder region over the course of the season.

Healthy Eating is another area that will have a great impact on the success of the swimmers, as well as the team. Maintaining a balanced diet will give the body the nutrients and energy it needs to perform well before, during, and after practice. The team will be provided with guidelines and recommendations for the swimmers to ensure they are eating healthy throughout the season, located at the end of this handbook.

Please keep in mind that this responsibility will mainly fall upon the parents to ensure that their swimmer is eating properly. Most Importantly, **SPEAK WITH YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR OR PEDIATRICIAN BEFORE MAKING CHANGES TO YOUR CHILD'S DIET.**

ILLNESS AND INJURY

During the course of the season, swimmers will not always be healthy. It is the parent's responsibility to use his/her best Judgment when the swimmer becomes ill. The wellness of the swimmer is of the utmost importance in order for him/her to overcome the illness quickly and to avoid other teammates from becoming sick. When a swimmer becomes ill, it is more important for that child to rest and drink plenty of fluids for a speedy recovery. Furthermore, illnesses will not count against the swimmer with regards to the attendance policies, but please inform the coaches when your child is not feeling well. In order to ensure that your child maintains his or her health, we encourage good hygiene and using healthy habits throughout the day, such as washing hands and covering up sneezes/coughs.

Instances of injury are possible over the course of the season. When a swimmer becomes injured, it is imperative for the family to consult with their physician/pediatrician in order to map out the best path to recovery. Injuries can occur at school, at home, at swim practice, or even at a meet. For injuries that occur outside of the YMCA, please contact the coaches to inform them of the situation as you see fit. It is important for the coaches to be aware in order to make adjustments in the practice for the swimmer (if he/she is able to practice), or to know that there will be extended absences. For injuries that occur at YMCA related activities (practices, competitions, etc), we must be able to contact the parent/guardian immediately if they are not on-site. The coaches and staff at the YMCA will handle a situation that results in injury to the best of their ability, following the procedures that they have in place.

SECTION D-----PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and Guardians also have a large responsibility to ensure their child's success over the course of the season. In addition to ensuring your child is prepared for practice, arrives on time, and is aware of what he/she is responsible for during the season, please be aware of these additional responsibilities:

1. Realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. The greatest contribution you can make to your swimmer's progress is to be a loving, supportive parent.
2. Encourage good diet and sleeping habits.
3. The Cranston YMCA swim team has a reputation in the SENECA league of hosting swim meets throughout the season. A percentage of our operating budget is generated from the Team hosting swim meets throughout the season. We expect that you will volunteer your time during our home and away meets when necessary in a variety of roles (see Section E-Volunteering). At certain Championship meets we will be asked to supply a certain number of parents to time races or to officiate.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS OF ATHLETIC CHILDREN

Reprinted from The Young Athlete by Bill Burgess

1. Make sure your child knows that- win or lose, scared or heroic, you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/hers competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.
4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be 'out there trying,' to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, and sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his/her world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you win or lose he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
6. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy; attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
10. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort.

THE COACH IS THE COACH!

We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and oftentimes insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your swimmer's coach, speaking with them after practice if there is a problem. *Please Note: If a parent has a question or concern about a final time posted by a meet director or disqualification by an official you are not allowed to argue the call with either. Instead, please bring the problem to a Cranston YMCA coach. If the coach believes the time or call was wrong they can bring the protest to the appropriate official. Please do not approach officials at meets with any questions.

The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition.

Ten and Unders: Ten and Unders are the most inconsistent swimmers and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and the swimmer alike! Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these swimmers to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins the swim team, there may be a brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is a result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual.

Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not do their best times. These plateaus are a normal part of swimming. Please be supportive of these performances and bear in mind that over the course of a season times should improve.

Often times, as swimmers age-up to the next competitive age group, they can be overwhelmed by the increase in competition. This is a normal reaction as swimmers move from the upper range of one age group to the lower age group of the next age group. Parents should also recognize that the older swimmers may have only two or three meets a year for which they will be properly rested for peak performance.

PROBLEMS WITH THE COACH?

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but in fact this approach often results in new problems being created.

Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising issues with a coach:

- Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good relationship with a constructive dialogue.
- Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range in size. 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 occasional short-term inconvenience.
- If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and procedures noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask that the head age group coach or head coach join the dialogue as a third party.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

COMMUNICATION

In order to operate a successful team, effective communication must occur on a regular basis between the coaches and the parents. The most frequent form of communication will be email. Please refer to the Appendix Section for the form labeled "Contact Information," which must be completed and submitted upon registration. Notification will be sent to parents via email on a regular basis about swim team related events and deadlines. Please check your email often to be up to date.

In addition to email and the team website, the team will have a mailbox, located near the door outside of the pool area. Notices, Meet sign-up information and Awards will placed in the mailbox periodically. Inside, each swimmer will find his/her named file. This is to be done after practice when the swimmer is completely dried off.

Outside of the pool area, the swim team has a display case, which will feature notices about upcoming meets and events. Please be familiar with our display case so you do not miss anything important.

SECTION E-----VOLUNTEERING

The success of the team greatly depends on the support of the parents throughout the season. Numerous opportunities are available to ensure the team has a successful season:

- Opportunities at Home Swim Meets:
 - o Timing Races- Each lane requires three timers in order for the swimmer's time to be legal. The pool at the Cranston YMCA requires 20 timers to operate a meet (18 for the lanes and 2 backup timers). The visiting team is also responsible for supplying timers, due to the amount needed. Prior to the start of each meet, the Head Timer will search for parents to perform this task. The job requires persons to operate a digital stopwatch, record the times, and ensure the correct swimmer is in their lane. You will be properly trained before your timing duties. Timers will be required to stand for the majority of the meet, and the pool area will be quite warm so plan accordingly. Timing Duties are mandatory by family members of each swimmer. Timers will be picked by lottery by the Head Coach and you will be informed a few days prior to the meet about your duties. NOTE: YOU MUST TIME IF YOU ARE PICKED TO!!!

- o Officiating- We ask that several parents attend a comprehensive training (4-6 hours long) in order to become an official for meets. Officials are responsible for ensuring swimmers perform the strokes and turns correctly. Swimmers who swim a race incorrectly are disqualified from the race by the officials. Officials are required to observe all of the swimmers throughout the meet and make fair and accurate judgments.
- o Starter- The responsibility of the starter (who must also be an official), is to begin each race throughout the meet using the electronic starting system. Training is available for officials who are interested in taking this role.
- o Concession Stand Operation- Several parents are asked to operate the concession stand throughout the meet. The purpose of the concession stand, in addition to feeding the swimmers and parents, is to generate revenue for the team. A portion of these funds are used for the Team Banquet at the end of the season.
- o Concession Stand Items- In the past, parents have been asked to donate items to stock up our Concession Stand. Again, funds that are raised in the Concession Stand are used to offset costs for our end of season Banquet, and to help provide awards for the swimmers.
- o Operating Meet Software- In order to determine the winner of the meet, a computer program exists (called Hy-Tek Meet Manager). This role requires the person to enter ALL of the data from the timers, score the events, create reports and labels, and remove swimmers from races if necessary.
- Opportunities at Away Swim Meets & Championships:
 - o Timers- (See description Above)
 - o Officials- (See description above)
- Other Opportunities
 - o During the course of the season, other opportunities may arise to volunteer. Parents will be notified of these opportunities as they surface.

SECTION F-----COMPETITION

WHAT IS A SWIM MEET?

A swim meet is a game or match against an opposing team or teams. Swim meets are usually held on Saturday afternoons, and will usually be against one opponent. The purpose of a meet is for swimmers to use the knowledge and skills they have learned in practice, to gauge at how they are progressing throughout the season. A swim race tells the coaches a great deal about the swimmer and what he/she will need to focus on in order to perform better. During a meet, swimmers may compete in 3-4 races, from a range of options (see next section). These events may change from meet to meet in order to determine the swimmers best events.

COMPETITIVE STROKES AND EVENTS

Swimmers will compete using the four strokes (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle) in varying distances, depending on age group. An Individual Medley (I.M.) consists of performing each of the four strokes in a specific order (which cannot change). Relays consist of four swimmers performing an equal portion of a race, such as the 200 Freestyle Relay where each swimmer will race for 50 yards. Below is a list of all of the events for each age group, not all of which are swum in a single meet.

- 8 & Under Swimmers:
 - o 25 yards of each stroke (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle)
 - o 50 yard Freestyle
 - o 100 yd Individual Medley
 - o 100 Medley Relay (Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle)-NOTE Change in order!
 - o 100 Freestyle Relay
- 9-10 Swimmers
 - o 50 & 100 yards of each stroke
 - o 100 yard freestyle

- o 100 yard IM
- o 200 yard Medley Relay and 200 yard Freestyle Relay
- 11-12 Swimmers
 - o 50 & 100 yards of each stroke
 - o 200 yard freestyle
 - o 200 yard **IM**
 - o 200 Medley Relay and 200 Freestyle Relay
- 13-14 Swimmers
 - o 50 & 100 yards of each stroke
 - o 50 yard freestyle, 200 yard freestyle, 500 yard freestyle
 - o 200 yard IM
 - o 200 Medley Relay, 200 Freestyle Relay
- 15 & Over Swimmers
 - o 100 yards of each stroke
 - o 50 yard freestyle, 200 yard freestyle, 500 yard freestyle
 - o 200 yard IM
 - o 200 Medley Relay, 200 Freestyle Relay, 400 Freestyle Relay

TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

There are several types of swim meets that the team will compete in throughout the season. Meets are generally held on Saturday afternoons:

- Dual meets: competitions where the Cranston YMCA will go against one other opponent.
- Tri-Meets: competitions against two opponents that are operated in dual meet fashion, essentially being two dual meets at the same time.
- Specialty Meets: each of these meets are unique in format, having their own distinct theme. These meets are held on either Saturday, Sunday, or both days, and can last a large part of the day. The Cranston YMCA Marlins host a Specialty Meet in December called the Holiday Classic. Several YMCAs attend this meet, which has proven to be a very successful and fun event over the past few years.
- SENECY Championship: Held in late February and early March, this is the culmination of the hard work the swimmers have done over the course of the season. Swimmers must compete in a minimum of (3) swim meets during the season to qualify for League Championships. All YMCAs attend this meet, which, in addition to determining the top team in the league, decide the teams in each division for the following season. This is where we hope swimmers will perform their best in the events chosen by the coaches. **ALL SWIMMERS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPETE IN CHAMPIONSHIPS**
- New England Championships: Held in Mid-March, this meet is one where swimmers must attain a qualifying standard in an event in order to attend. In an age group where a swimmer qualifies, additional swimmers will be invited to the meet (even if they have not qualified) in order to form relays for the qualifying swimmer. These relay-only swimmers are chosen by the coaches and are based on performance throughout the season, commitment to the team, an attitude during the season.
- Long Course Meets: During the Spring and Summer, we will participate in Long Course meets. This means that the pool is 50 meters long (Olympic Distance). Occasionally, we will also have practice in a long course pool, to help the swimmers be prepared. There is usually an additional charge for swimmers to participate in these meets, and can cost approximately \$15-\$20 per day and possible per event fees.

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOGNITION

Throughout the season, the swimmers will have many achievements in practice and competition. Some of these include winning a race, achieving a best time in a race, and obtaining a New England Qualifying Standard. Other achievements can include learning how to properly execute a dive or flips turn, learn a new stroke or drill to improve one's existing stroke, and gaining self-confidence to name a few. The coaches will look at these achievements and take steps to formally recognize these swimmers. At the conclusion of meets, the coaches will review the results of the swimmers and their performances and determine who was able to excel throughout the meet. This does not necessarily mean swimmers who win every event he/she swims, but will encompass those swimmers who made significant improvements in their races and their attitudes during the meet.

Coaches will select team captains near the beginning of the season. Team captains are swimmers who have been on the team for several years and have consistently demonstrated an exceptional level of maturity and commitment to the team. Captains are athletes who exemplify the YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility; they are role models for team members. The captains will be responsible for helping to organize swimmers during meets, ensuring that their teammates are focused and attentive so that events are not missed. They will also lead the team in cheers and other supportive activities at the start of meets. Captains will also support their teammates during practices and competitions and encouraging other teammates to do so as well.

At the conclusion of the season, a team banquet will be held to celebrate the successes of the previous season. At this time, several swimmers in each age group will be recognized for their efforts throughout the season.

MEET REGISTRATION

The swim meet schedule will be available at the start of the season. For each meet, swimmers will be required to sign up several days in advance of the meet, in order for the Coaching Staff to determine the swimmer's events. Meet Registration occurs with the coaches, and everyone will be given advanced notice of the details regarding the signup for each meet. There is no fee for most of the meets during the season. Specialty meets are approximately \$10-\$15 per swimmer and/or additional fees per event.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS

- I. Arrive 30 minutes BEFORE warm ups begin to find a parking space, the locker room and pool area, and for your swimmer to get ready for warm ups.
 - II. Swimmers should be checking in using their card for practices and meets. Guests attending meets should have a photo ID and leave time to sign a waiver as every adult entering our facility needs to be run through Raptor (A quick scan for our families' security). These policies are for your child's safety so we need to know who is in the building at all times.
2. Swimmers should bring comfortable clothes (i.e. team apparel) to wear between races (It will get wet!!)
 3. Bring warm clothes--- even though the pool areas are mainly warm/hot, some YMCAs keep the swimmers in a room or basketball gym, which can be cool, even cold, if the swimmers are wet.
 4. Swimmers MUST bring footwear to meets-(Sneakers/sandals)-The floors at the facilities will become VERY SLIPPERY during a meet from the wet swimmers walking around. For their safety, they must wear their footwear at all times between their races,
 5. Oftentimes, the swimmers will remain in the basketball gym between events; bring blankets, sleeping bags, foldable chairs for your sitting comfort. Swimmers should also bring games, books, or homework to help pass the time between races at longer meets.
 6. Parents will be required to volunteer for timing AT ALL MEETS and If you decline there will a non-refundable \$20.00 fine attached to your account that will be given to the team as a donation.

SECTION G-----FINANCIAL INFORMATION

YMCA MEMBERSHIP

All swimmers **MUST** be members of the YMCA in order to join the swim team AND have their membership active for 30 day prior to the first competition. The membership fee is in addition to any swim team fees. Please visit or contact the Welcome Center at the Cranston YMCA for current rates. Financial Assistance for membership and for the swim team is available.

SWIM TEAM FEES

Below are the fees to join the swim team. Please note that high school swimmers and additional children from the same family receive a discount for joining the team. The most advanced swimmer from a family will be assessed the full registration fee. Finally, the fee for the swim team can be paid in FULL OR be paid in a series of four (4) payments. Please view the chart below for the Fee and Payment Plan Information:

Mini		Age Group	Junior	Senior
Full Price	\$350	\$450	\$550	\$550
Pay Plan	-----	-----	-----	-----
Initial	\$140	\$180	\$220	\$220
First	\$70	\$90	\$110	\$110
Second	\$70	\$90	\$110	\$110
Third	\$70	\$90	\$110	\$110

REFUND POLICY

Swim Team fees are permitted to be partially refunded/credited based on circumstances that arise (i.e. illness/injury). It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the coach and the YMCA as soon as possible in the event the swimmer cannot participate on the team. Delays will result in a lesser refund/credit.

Swim Meet fees are non-refundable. The host team of a specialty meet requires entries to be submitted several days in advance, and the meet is planned according to all entries that have been submitted. Regardless of the number of swimmers who do not compete in these meets for any given team, the team is still charged for how many swimmers were entered.

TEAM SUIT AND APPAREL

Swimmers are required to purchase a predetermined team suit. Information will be available at the beginning of the season about ordering a team suit. All swimmers are provided with a team cap at the start of the season.

IMPORTANT: The team suit is for Competition *ONLY* and should not be worn in practice.

Team clothing and apparel will also be available to order at the start of the season. Swimmers and parents are welcome to purchase other items that are available. Please also keep in mind that team apparel makes great gifts during the holiday season, and your intentions will be kept confidential from your swimmer in order for the gift to be a surprise. More information about the Apparel Order will be sent out once the season begins.

SECTION H-----FUNDRAISING

During the season, the swim team will organize opportunities to raise funds for equipment with significant costs. During the 2022-2023 Season, funds will be raised to purchase a live score board, for the pool area.

SECTION I-----NUTRITION

Eat Smart, Swim Strong

Healthy Eating

Young athletes need to eat a nutritious, varied diet in order to feel good and perform well. It doesn't take special foods or expensive supplements to get your swimmer what he or she needs. Following the US Food Guide Pyramid and the these Dietary Guidelines is a good start to ensure active youth get the daily essentials for health, as well as the fuel needed for peak performance.

GRAIN S	VEGE TABLES	FRUITS	MILK	MEAT/BEANS	FATS
Make half your grains whole (oat, wheat, rye).	Vary your veggies. Include dark green and orange veggies every day.	Eat a variety of fruit daily. Go easy on fruit juice.	Go low fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, cheese.	Choose low-fat or lean meats, poultry. Select more fish, beans, nuts, seeds.	Choose foods low in saturated and trans fats.

Adapted from Myl'gramld.gov 11nd 2005 1>1clm'y' Guulehnes for Amencans

Balance is Key

Why is it important? There are about 40 different nutrients that the body needs every day to function properly. There is no one food, or one food group, that can supply them all. Therefore, eating a variety of foods from all the food groups provides important nutrients, such as carbohydrates, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals.

- Carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, whole grains in breads and cereals, milk and yogurt) are the body's primary source of energy. It takes approximately 1-2 hours for the body to digest and absorb carbohydrates. Muscles serve as a storage tank for the energy supplied by carbohydrates. Include healthy carb sources at each meal and snack. It is not wise for athletes to restrict their carbohydrate intake because this can cause fatigue and affect athletic performance. Although carbohydrates are important, they are only a part of the picture.
- Protein (lean meats, eggs, fish, beans, nuts, milk, cheese, yogurt and soy) is important for normal muscle growth, maintenance and repair. A balanced diet can supply a growing, active body all the protein it needs. Proteins are digested and absorbed in about 2-4 hours. Most young athletes eat enough protein and do not need to eat excessive amounts. Be aware, taking in too much protein can actually be harmful to the body.
- Fats (oils, nuts, seeds)-Over the years fats have had a bad reputation, but not all fats are created equal. Olive oil, walnuts, peanut butter, and avocado supply monounsaturated and omega-3 fats, which are an essential part of healthful eating. These nutrients are a concentrated source of energy and can take up to 4-6 hours to get digested and absorbed by the body. Fats help the body to absorb certain vitamins, i.e. vitamin A from carrots and Vitamin D from milk. Keep in mind a little fat goes a long way; use it in small amounts.
- Vitamins and Minerals (fruits, vegetables, fortified cereals, dairy, meat, and beans)
These nutrients are true powerhouses and play a large role in keeping an athlete's body healthy and fit. Strong bones rely on calcium, muscles receive oxygen from red blood cells that contain iron, and vitamin C helps the body to absorb iron.

Don't Skimp on Fluid

The body is made up of about 55-65% water. For an active youth, replacing fluids is just as important as what is eaten. Even mild dehydration can affect muscle strength and endurance which can decrease performance. And, severe dehydration can be dangerous to health. Signs of dehydration include feeling dizzy or lightheaded, dry mouth, and producing less and/or dark urine. The amount of fluid someone needs depends on several factors, i.e. age, size, activity level, "and temperature conditions.

Staying Hydrated

- Do not wait until feeling thirsty; this is a signal the body may already be dehydrated
- Experts recommend drinking before, during and after exercise.
- Water is the best choice for most athletes, it is easily absorbed and helps cool down the body
- Sports drinks are meant for more intense workouts of 60 minutes or more, or in hot/humid conditions
- Avoid soda and caffeinated beverages

When to Fuel-up

Eating and drinking healthy foods and beverages during the course of the week will help prepare athletes for practices and competition day. But it's also important to pay attention to the type and timing of foods and beverages consumed on that day. Everyone is different and your son or daughter may need to experiment with meal timing and food amounts to see what works best for them. Here are some general guidelines on what and when to eat:

- Eat meals 2-4 hours before practice or a meet-- avoid skipping meals.
- Choose meals rich in carbohydrate, moderate in protein and low in fat
- Eat a small snack between meals when needed.
- During competition, keep snacks low in fat, lower in fiber, as they can slow down digestion and absorption of carbohydrates
- Healthy snack ideas:
 - Fresh fruit, raisins, dried apples, 100% fruit juice
 - Yogurt, low-fat milk, pudding or cheese sticks
 - Pretzels, graham crackers, popcorn, trail mix, pita chips
 - Carrots with low-fat dip, celery sticks with salsa
- Eating immediately before any kind of activity may result in cramps, bloating or feeling sick.
- Digesting food requires energy –energy that's needed for performance.

Foods To Limit

Sugary foods, such as soda and candy offer "empty" calories. In their words, they are limited in important nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. They provide a rapid energy boost that fades quickly. Avoid high fat foods such as hot dogs, hamburgers, French fries, chips, donuts and packaged cakes or pies. In addition to being high in calories, they are also high in fat. As mentioned above, high fat foods take longer to digest. They may also cause discomfort if eaten right before practice or a meet. These foods are okay to eat occasionally, in moderation. But for the long haul, it's better to fuel the body with the healthy food and beverage selections mentioned above.

SECTION J -----COVID GUIDELINES

Any athlete or coach experiencing any symptoms of fever, recent cough, unusual fatigue, headache, or who has had any exposure to someone who has any symptoms, (which includes family and friends) should remain at home and seek medical treatment. Any athlete or coach with a fever or symptoms of illnesses may not attend practice until 14 days after the fever or symptoms has ceased. Swimmers and staff must see a physician and be cleared for training after being diagnosed or suspected to have COVID-19. For us all to stay healthy and be able to keep swimming, we ask our swimmers to please practice responsible social distancing (staying 6' away from others, avoiding large gatherings) when they are away from the pool as well.

If your swimmers has experienced any of the following symptoms you are required to stay home and/or visit your primary doctor:

- Cough (unrelated to seasonal allergies)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Severe fatigue
- Nasal congestion (unrelated to seasonal allergies)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Chills
- Loose stools

PLEASE NOTE: It will be assumed that your swimmer has no symptoms if at practice. Admitted swimmers will enter the pool area, 6' apart, and will leave their backpacks and street clothes on the assigned area and go to their assigned lanes, wearing their face mask until they enter the water.

POSITIVE TEST PROCEDURE

In the event that a swimmer or a coach tests positive, the following steps will be taken:

1. The person must let the coaches know immediately.
2. If the person testing positive is a swimmer, his or her lane mates and the swimmers in the lanes next to them on both sides are required to self-isolate for 14 days unless at least 5 days after exposure a negative test result can be shown.
3. If a non-symptomatic swimmer has been in close contact with a person who later is known to have COVID-19, we respectfully ask that swimmer to remain away from the pool after possible exposure for 10 days with a negative test or 14 days from exposure.
4. If someone in a swimmers household has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, we respectfully ask that swimmer to remain away from the pool after possible exposure for 10 days with a negative test or 14 days from exposure.

SAFETY PROCEDURES VIOLATIONS

Repercussions from violations of the COVID-19 Policy and procedures will be at the discretion of the coaching staff and YMCA of Cranston. Repercussions could include but are not limited to the removal of the swimmer from the premises for one practice, one week of practice, or for the remaining part of the season. No refunds will be provided.