



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Duluth Area Family YMCA
Northerns Swim Team
Handbook
2023-2024

Table of Contents

Everybody Swims, Everybody Wins! ___	3	Volunteering _____	11
Contact Information _____	4	<i>Volunteer Requirements _____</i>	<i>11</i>
Team Communication _____	4	<i>Other Volunteer Opportunities _____</i>	<i>11</i>
Guardian Expectations _____	5	<i>Unfulfilled Hours _____</i>	<i>12</i>
Practice Skill Groups _____	6	Swim Meets _____	12
Practice Locations _____	7	<i>Behavior at Meets _____</i>	<i>12</i>
Program Fees _____	8	<i>Meet Sign-up _____</i>	<i>13</i>
Competition Fees _____	8	<i>Meet Attendance _____</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Attire for Competing _____</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Meet Schedules _____</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Sections and State Meet Fees _____</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Meet Attire _____</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Travel _____</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Meet Checklist _____</i>	<i>14</i>
Practices _____	9	<i>Meet Format _____</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Behavior and Participation at Practice ___</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Arm Codes _____</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Attendance at Practice _____</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Individual Events _____</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Injuries _____</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Relay Events _____</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Make-Up, Pro-rating, Long-term Absences</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Disqualifications _____</i>	<i>18</i>
_____	<i>10</i>	<i>Ribbons & Recognition _____</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Practice Attire _____</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>Advanced Swim Meets _____</i>	<i>19</i>
		Nutritional Guidelines for Swimming	19

Everybody Swims, Everybody Wins!

Welcome to the YMCA Northerns Swim Team! We're dedicated to putting the principles of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

This team exists to benefit all youth who are interested in training and competing in the sport of competitive swimming and diving. All youths entering kindergarten through high school are eligible to join the team.

The following are the goals of the Northerns Swim Team which fall into alignment with each of the 7 objectives that characterize all YMCA programs:

- **Grow personally:** nurture the potential of all youths by building self-confidence through realistic goal setting and incremental successes.
- **Learn values:** instill the core values of caring, honesty, responsibility, and respect.
- **Improve personal relations:** help create and foster lasting relationships between swimmers and demonstrate teamwork and sportsmanship.
- **Appreciate diversity:** respect all people regardless of age, abilities, incomes, race, religion, orientation, culture, religion, or beliefs.
- **Become better leaders:** develop leadership skills and accountability for self and team.
- **Develop swim abilities:** swimmers will learn new skills necessary to help them succeed.
- **Have fun:** having a sense of humor and a sense of play is key to a happy swim team.

This handbook is designed to give swimmers and guardians a better understanding of what to expect from this program. Policies outlined within will help guide our program toward meeting the seven objectives listed above and ensure that the competitive swimming experience is a positive one for the athlete and family.

Contact Information

- Northern's Swim Team Head Coach
 - Lucas Crawford-Nichols
 - lcrawford@duluthymca.org / (218) 722-4745 x134
- Cook County Community YMCA Point of Contact & Aquatics Coordinator
 - Karen Runkle
 - krunkle@cookcountyyymca.org / (218) 387-3386 x610
- Assistant Coaches at the Cook County Community YMCA
 - Allison Plumer, Lori Rothstein, Bryan Kelly
- Assistant Coaches at the Downtown YMCA
 - Abby Vincent, Sarah Barnes, Hanna Hovland, Dan Bielski
- Assistant Coaches at the Essentia Wellness Center YMCA
 - Tessa Schumann, Isabel Romay, Amelia Ashcroft, Gillian McNeal

Team Communication

Email: Primary team communication method for all announcements including practice updates, volunteer requests, meet performance reports, team social events, fundraisers, etc.

Check your email regularly and expect weekly or bi-weekly announcement emails.

Team Webpage: Consider book marking this central resource of team information which includes practice schedules, meet dates, team events, volunteer registration, etc.

www.duluthymca.org/programs/swimming/competitive-swimming/northern's-swim-team

Coach Conferences: Contact the Head Coach for scheduling. We encourage direct and transparent communication in order to best serve our swimmers, and we're happy to meet at your convenience. Please understand that engaging Coaches in an involved conversation during practice is not feasible. Coaches are responsible for all the swimmers at practice and must devote their attention to them, rather than to their guardians.

Guardian Expectations

A successful swimming experience for youth is dependent on the swimmer, Coach, and guardians understanding and fulfillment their roles. Dr. Alan Goldberg, a nationally known expert in the field of applied sports psychology who often speaks at the Olympic Training Center, presents the following guidelines for guardians interested in supporting their swimmers:

- **Encourage swimmers to compete against themselves:** Although swimmers are on a swim team, it is inherently an individual sport and an important opportunity to build self-confidence. For example, if a swimmer finishes last in a race but beats a personal best time, help them understand that this is still a “win.” Focus on nurturing a growth mindset.
- **Be a fan, not a coach:** The guardian’s best role is to be your swimmer’s ultimate fan, unconditionally! Coaching interferes with your role as supporter and fan.
- **Help make swimming fun for your swimmer:** In sports, athletes should have a genuine interest in competing, not because their guardians want them to. When a sport becomes too serious for youth, they tend to burn out and are more susceptible to repetitive performance problems. It is a proven training principle that, the more fun an athlete has, the more they will learn and the better they will perform.
- **Support the Coach:** Our YMCA Coaches commit a substantial amount of time to help your swimmer improve. If you have any concerns, please do not go to other guardians to discuss problems. Immediately contact that Head Coach and if the issue still hasn’t been resolved, escalate the issue to the Aquatics Director.
- **Support the Team and cheer for other swimmers:** Foster teamwork. Your swimmer’s teammates are not the enemy. When your swimmer is beaten, they have a wonderful opportunity to improve. Hostility towards other guardians and swimmers isn’t tolerated.
- **Help your swimmer prioritize:** The Northerns Swim team is a commitment, but it is equally important to assist your swimmer in handling stress across their various activities. Help them in maintaining focus and balance on schoolwork, relationships, and other things they enjoy besides swimming. We strive to empower swimmers to be their best self.
- **Teach your swimmer to have a proper perspective on sports experiences:** Guardians must facilitate realistic expectations for a swimmer’s abilities, without diminishing their dreams and potential. For example, initiate meaningful conversations about losses, disappointments, and areas of growth in stroke technique. Keep them motivated by always support a swimmer’s choice in trying new strokes or events.

Practice Skill Groups

The structure of the Duluth Northerns Team is rooted in a development plan that supports each swimmer's ability. This strategy allows swimmers to grow at an appropriate pace throughout the course of the season based on our skill groups criteria (as found on our [website](#)).

Each swimmer should be able to swim 25 yards of front crawl and 25 yards of back crawl without flotation aides or assistance. Swimmers are separated into skill groups and include the following training:

- **Novice (5 – 18 years):** focus is placed on entry level competitive concepts and basic skills of all four strokes. Swimmers start learning skills essential for competition and learning practice versus race concepts.
- **Age-Group (5 – 18 years):** heavier focus is placed on essentials of competition, refining technique, and training strategies.
- **Senior (8 – 18 years):** focus is placed on more serious training, stroke refinement, aerobic and strength training.

If a swimmer cannot meet the minimum requirements to join the team, we will facilitate a growth path to help them do so. Two program offerings include:

- **YMCA Swim Lessons:** completion of all 6 stages is not all are required to join, but it is recommended that swimmers complete stages 1-4 (or equivalent) before joining the Northerns Swim Team.
- **Introduction to Competitive Swimming:** this program introduces swimmers in a lesson-style format to the skills needed to join a swim team. This program is designed to help bridge the gap between the Y's swim lesson stages and a competitive swim program. Currently only available at the Cook County location.

Practice Locations

Although we practice at three different YMCA locations, we are a single team! Families must select a primary pool for practice. Unless otherwise coordinated with the Head Coach to prevent substantial absences, practice days cannot be split between pools. Location details below:

- YMCA at the Essentia Wellness Center; 4289 Ugstad Rd, Hermantown, MN 55811
- Duluth Area Family YMCA; 302 W 1st St, Duluth, MN 55802
- Cook County Community YMCA; 105 W 5th St, Grand Marais, MN 55604

2023 - 2024 Practice Schedules			
	YMCA at the Essentia Wellness Center	Duluth Area Family YMCA (Downtown)	Cook County Community YMCA
Novice	Tue/Thu; 6:00–7:00 PM Fri; 5:00–6:00 PM <i>(Downtown pool)</i>	Mon/Wed; 6:00–7:00 PM Fri; 5:00–6:00 PM	Mon/Wed; 5:30–6:30 PM Thu; 4:15–5:15 PM
Age-Group	Tue/Thu; 7:00–8:15 PM Fri; 6:00–7:00 PM <i>(Downtown pool)</i>	Mon/Wed; 7:00–8:15 PM Fri; 6:00–7:00 PM	Mon/Wed; 3:45–5:15 PM Thu; 4:15–5:15 PM
Senior	Tue/Thu; 7:00–8:15 PM Fri; 6:00–7:00 PM <i>(Downtown pool)</i>	Mon/Wed; 7:00–8:15 PM Fri; 6:00–7:00 PM	Mon/Wed; 3:45–5:15 PM Thu; 4:15–5:15 PM

Diving is not allowed in the YMCA at the Essentia Wellness Center due to the shallow depth. In turn, swimmers from that pool join the Downtown location on Fridays to practice diving and get to know their other teammates.

Program Fees

Overview by Skill Group:

- **Novice:** \$200 deposit at time of registration + \$175 due on **October 16th**
- **Age-Group:** \$200 deposit at time of registration + \$280 due on **October 16th**
- **Senior:** \$200 deposit at time of registration + \$280 due on **October 16th**

Please note that while this program fee is higher than some of our other offerings, this fee covers a program which runs for nearly 5 months with three 1+ hours practice per week. The last day to drop this program with a full refund is Friday, October 13th. After this date, refunds will only be available for swimmers with long-term illnesses or injuries which prevent participation in the remainder of the season. Refunds for illnesses or injuries will be prorated and will only include a refund for any remaining practices which the swimmer will not be able to join.

If your family has a personal pricing plan for programs or membership, we're happy to help with your swim team program fees as well. If you don't have a plan and feel your family could benefit from one, please speak with our membership team for details. Everybody Swims, Everybody Wins! We never want cost to be a barrier and we're willing to work with you to establish personal pricing and payment plans that fit your needs. Scholarships only apply to membership and program registration fees and not the additional competition fees.

Competition Fees

Attire for Competing

All athletes are required to purchase a team swimsuit for competition. Swimmers may wear a suit from previous seasons as long as it is in good condition and fits. Suits range in price from \$45-65 depending on style and will be available for try-on at the Skills Assessments during the first week of practice in October. To provide the best possible price to families, swimsuits are ordered in bulk, once per year, with payments being made to the YMCA and due on October 16th. Once ordered, suits cannot be returned or refunded.

Families are also responsible for providing their own goggles for both practice and competition. Goggles should fit the swimmer well and should not block the swimmer's mouth or nose. For goggle recommendations, please contact the Head Coach.

Sections and State Meet Fees

This registration-type fee is collected by the host team to cover the cost of awards and other required aquatics staff for the event. This fee is typically less than \$50 and is due upon request by the hosting team.

Travel

When there is a swim meet which requires traveling to a destination, all families are asked to make their own travel arrangements. Since each family is responsible for making their own travel arrangements, estimates for the cost of travel aren't available. The amount depends on each family's needs, so please plan accordingly.

Practices

All skill groups for the Duluth Northerns Swim Team practice 3 days per week, but the duration and scheduled time of each practice varies depending on the skill group and location. Over the course of a season, practice schedules may change as space needs and team size change. Practice changes due to swim meets may also occur on an as needed basis.

Practices may be cancelled if there is a problem with a pool at one of our facilities or with the facility itself or for inclement weather. In the event any family or swimmer feels uncomfortable with commuting to and from practice due to inclement weather, they should make that family decision and communicate the change to the Head Coach. Coaches will make every effort to communicate cancellations and changes due to inclement weather by email and via our website.

Behavior and Participation at Practice

Swimmers should arrive punctually on deck with a water bottle and dressed for practice. Athletes should be prepared to listen, challenge themselves, and be respectful to Coaches, teammates, lifeguards, and other guardians or patrons at the pool.

Coaches follow the simple three-strike rule: if a swimmer receives three warnings, they will be dismissed from practice and guardians will be contacted. Please review our **Swimmer Expectations Agreement** that each swimmer signs at the start of season for a list of behavior requirements. If a swimmer is dismissed from practice during the week leading up to a swim meet, that swimmer will not be prohibited from participating in that meet.

Attendance at Practice

Swimmers are expected to attend all scheduled practices. If a swimmer will be late or miss a practice, please notify the Head Coach via email. Swimmers are marked Tardy if 10 or more minutes late. Homework and school projects are not an excuse. Teach time management.

Acceptable excuses for missed practice include illness / injury, mandatory school functions (concerts, plays, conferences, etc.), or inclement weather. Family vacations will be considered excused if an email or written notice is given to the Head Coach in advance. Practice fees will not be prorated or refunded for vacations. If you know well in advance that your swimmer will be consistently late due to scheduling issues, prior arrangements need to be made with the Head Coach, however, this is discouraged. Full participation for the duration of practice including warm-ups and skill work is expected.

Injuries

Injuries must be reported as soon as they occur. Athletes should let their Coach know immediately if something is painful. If an injury is persisting or getting worse after two weeks, we recommend consulting with a doctor. Please forward any injury-related doctor's notes to the Head Coach, who will also give it to your swimmer's skill group Coach. Without documentation, Coaches can't follow the doctor's instructions, nor can they stay updated on the healing process.

Make-Up, Pro-rating, Long-term Absences

Make-up practices are not available. Due to the varying ability levels as well as space limitations in our pools, it is not realistic for a swimmer to join another group's practice. Even within our various locations, practice pacing and skills worked on may vary based on the needs of the swimmers within that specific location's skill groups.

A long-term absence is considered 3 or more consecutively missed practices. Swimmers will not be pro-rated for missed practices, including but not limited to illness, family functions, vacations, school functions, other sports, etc. Pro-rates will only be considered for long-term illness, injury, or medical issues with a doctor's note.

Practice Attire

Appropriate attire includes a well-fitting one-piece swimsuit, swim cap, and goggles. An optional rash guard or board shorts may be worn over a swimsuit if desired. To keep your swimmer's team swimsuit in good condition, we recommend that swimmer have a separate swimsuit to be worn at practices. Please reach out to the Head Coach for product suggestions.

Volunteering

Volunteerism is core to the YMCA and we value the involvement of our families in helping create a positive team culture where everyone supports the swimmers in their swim journey. Opportunities are typically in two categories: 1.) meet operations and 2.) team building / celebratory events. For that reason, we have the following volunteer policies. In most cases, any teen or adult member of a swimmer's family can volunteer to meet these requirements.

Volunteer Requirements

- Minimum Participation Hours: Over the course of a swim season, each family is required to volunteer 8-12 hours depending on the number of swimmers in their household enrolled in the program. For a family with only one swimmer in the program, 8 hours is required. For a family with two or more swimmers in the program, 12 hours is required. The swim meet volunteer requirements listed below can count towards these hours.
- Home Meet Volunteer Requirement: For each home meet hosted by the Duluth Northerns that a swimmer is entered in, guardians are required to volunteer for a role in the operation of that meet. As each home meet approaches, we will examine the volunteer sign-ups and reach out to families in the interest of facilitating volunteers to fill unfilled roles. We understand that there may be situations where guardians may not be available, and we are happy to work with each family as needed.
- Sections and State Volunteer Requirement: For any swimmer eligible and registered to compete in Sections and State Championship swim meets, guardians are expected to volunteer as lane timers during the meet. Lane timer shifts are broken into morning and afternoon sessions. No special training or experience is required for this role and it provides a front row seat to the action in the pool! Each team attending the Sections and State swim meets are responsible for providing several volunteers to time.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

During the season there are many opportunities and needs for guardian volunteers. We offer a variety of volunteer opportunities to accommodate different schedules and interests. These opportunities include, but are not limited to, assisting with fundraising events, organizing team gatherings, supporting events, cleaning / organizing, and helping with swim meet setup and breakdown. The Head Coach will regularly communicate upcoming volunteer opportunities, allowing families to select the roles that best fit their availability and preferences. We will continue to add more opportunities the athletes themselves can volunteer for as well!

Unfulfilled Hours

There are times when a volunteer role is left vacant and we need to pay staff to perform the task. For each hour not fulfilled according to the Minimum Hours (see above), a charge of \$25 / hour will be applied to the card or account on file for the family at the end of the season, following the team banquet. This fee helps us cover the costs associated with securing alternative assistance to fulfill the required volunteer duties. In the event this fee cannot be charged, the fee will be posted to the family's YMCA account to be paid via invoice.

Swim Meets

Swimmers are expected to attend at least three swim meets per season, and is a requirement to compete in Sections. There are typically eight meets per season throughout the October – February. The Duluth Northerns swim team is part of a local Section comprised of the Northern Minnesota region as well as the northwest portion of Wisconsin with most meets hosted in Grand Rapids, Brainerd, Duluth, Grand Marais and Superior. Any swimmer in good standing with the Northerns Swim Team is eligible to participate in our local Section swim meets.

Behavior at Meets

Swimmers will be expected to stay with their own team or with a supervising adult for the duration of the meet. Swimmers must be checked-in on deck with a Coach at least four events before their race and then ready behind the blocks three heats prior. Swimmers are expected to follow the **Swimmer Expectation Agreement** they signed at the start of the season. Improper behavior will not be tolerated and swimmers may be dismissed from the meet and, based on the seriousness of the situation, not invited to attend future meets. No refunds will be given in the event a swimmer is banned from attending meets due to repeated behavior not in alignment with the Y's core values.

Do not approach swim officials or lane timers at any time for any reason. Friends and family are not permitted on deck during the meet except when volunteering as lane timers. Cheer loud and proud from the spectator area, but please be respectful. Swimmers and their families must represent the core values of the Duluth Area Family YMCA and it is important that all comments, cheers, and chatter are positive. Negative comments about Coaches, athletes, or a swimmer's time will not be tolerated. If you have concerns regarding a Coach during a meet, please contact the Head Coach.

Meet Sign-up

Ahead of each swim meet, the Head Coach will email a swimmer sign-up form, which are also available on our webpage under the "Meets" section. Each guardian is responsible for responding to this form for each of their swimmers. Knowing who will be attending is vital for planning events and relays. Any guardian who has not completed this form for their swimmers by the cutoff date will be unable to attend the swim meet.

Meet Attendance

Upon submitting swim meet sign-up forms, attendance will be expected. If a meet must be cancelled, inform the Head Coach immediately by email. It is important that our meet rosters are accurate. For example, on relays, a no-show or late arrival can jeopardize the relay team's ability to participate. If no replacement is available, their entire relay team will be disqualified.

Each swimmer can participate in up to two relays and are expected to compete in three individual events. It may not always be possible for every swimmer to participate in two relays depending on how many other swimmers in each age category are signed-up. Coaches pick the events and relays which swimmers will participate in, and cannot be changed once entered. While the Coaches value guardian and swimmer input, your swimmer may not always be entered in their favorite events, or they may be asked to compete in an event they are not yet completely comfortable in; this is an important part of the growth process for swimmers. Coaches will never knowingly put a swimmer in a position to fail. If a Coach enters a swimmer into an event, they are confident that the swimmer is capable of competing.

Meet Schedules

Families will be provided which days and times swimmers will compete in advance. Host teams typically send out their schedules about a month to a week before the meet. The Head Coach will email out the meet schedule and meet sign-up form as soon as it is received from the host team. Swim meets follow a predictable order of events. Depending on what events your swimmer is entered in, you may be needed for only part of the day or the full day.

Local Section meets will usually be scheduled on Saturdays and run for about 4 – 8 hours. Sections take place on a Sunday and last 8 or more hours due to the size of the meet and number of swimmers competing. State typically takes place on a Sunday and is broken into two sessions. The morning session is typically for the younger swimmers (10 and under) and the

afternoon session is typically for the older swimmers (11 and older). Regionals take place over a long weekend and some swimmers may compete on multiple days.

Meet Attire

A team swimsuit and swim cap must be worn in order to compete. Fitted rash guards are allowed at competitions over a team swimsuit; however, these should be black or a solid neutral color and must be made of a synthetic swimsuit type material. Per YMCA swim league rules, no swimsuit modifications or embellishments, strings or designs are allowed. Swimmers must also remove all jewelry and nail polish prior to competition.

Meet Checklist

Swimmers:

- Nights before Meets:
 - Eat a healthy meal to be properly energized for the big day ahead
 - Pack your swim bag (see suggested items below)
 - Go to bed early and get a good night's sleep
 - Remove jewelry and any finger or toenail polish
 - Reflect on your goals and what you want to accomplish for the meet - think positive!
- Swim Bag:
 - Team swimsuit, team swim cap, goggles
 - Water Bottle, healthy snacks (see nutritional guidelines at end of handbook)
 - Hairbrush or comb, extra hair ties (if needed)
 - 2-3 towels to dry-off with between swim events
 - Sweatshirt or hoodie and warm pants to be worn over suits between events

Guardians:

- Mornings before Meets:
 - Wake up with enough time to get ready without stress.
 - Eat a healthy breakfast with your swimmer.
 - Make sure you give yourself enough time to get to the venue and with the possibility of getting lost, needing bathroom breaks, etc.
- Helpful items / expectations for the Meet:
 - Directions, cash, chair pad or blanket to sit on in the "crash area."
 - Entry fees into pool venues may vary and will be posted ahead of meets. Parking fees typically range from \$10 - \$30.

- Help your swimmer find the pool deck, locker area, their Northerns Coach, and then find your entrance to the spectator area.
- Even in the stands, you are also representing the Duluth YMCA when you are at meets. Please keep comments, cheers, and chatter positive and avoid unnecessary negativity.
- Do not approach any official at any time.
- Spectators aren't allowed on deck unless they are volunteering as a lane timer.
- Cheer loud, have fun, and encourage the Northerns!

Meet Format

Swim meets typically take between 4-6 hours but could take up to eight hours. Swimmers are encouraged to cheer for their teammates and stay for the entire duration of meets. At a minimum, you must remain onsite at least until all of the events your swimmer has entered, including relays, have been completed.

Swim meets follow a set schedule of events throughout the day, with specific events taking place in the same order at every meet. See below:

First Half of Meet		Second Half of Meet	
<i>Event #</i>	<i>Event Description</i>	<i>Event #</i>	<i>Event Description</i>
1-2	200 Yard Freestyle	29-32	100/200 Yard Freestyle Relay
3-6	100/200 Yard Medley Relay	33-40	25/50/100/200 Yard Butterfly
7-10	25/50 Yard Freestyle	41-44	50/100 Yard Freestyle
11-12	400 Yard IM	45-52	25/50/100/200 Yard Breaststroke
13-18	100/200 Yard IM	53-56	200/400 Yard Freestyle Relay
19-26	25/50/100/200 Yard Backstroke	57-58	1000 Yard Freestyle
27-28	500 Yard Freestyle		

Swimmers should arrive 30 minutes prior to scheduled to warm-ups to provide spare time to check-in, find a Coach, and familiarize themselves with the pool and surrounding area.

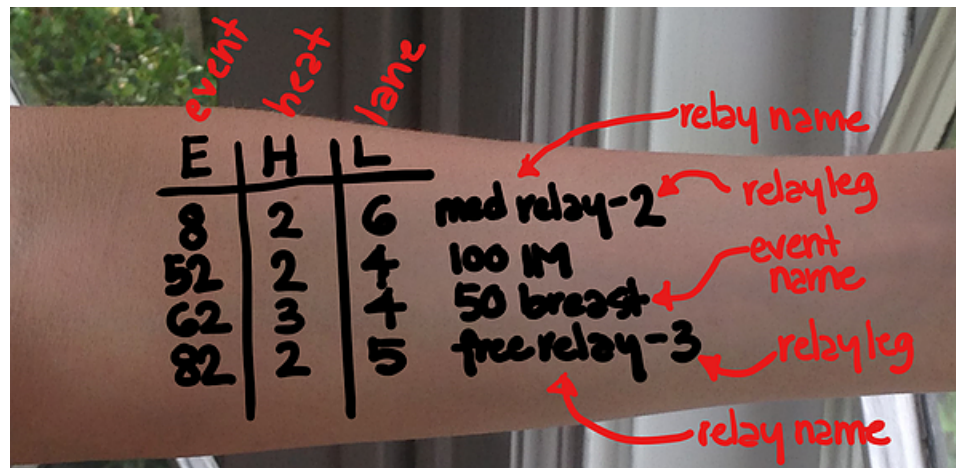
The traditional schedule of events at meets are as follows:

- Facility Opens: Swimmers arrive, check in with Coaches, and prepare for the meet. Coaches begin marking swimmer's arms with events (more information below).

- Warm-Up: Prior to competition time, athletes will have a chance to warm-up in the pool under the direction of a Coach. Keep in mind that lanes during meet warm-ups are crowded and circle swimming is required. No playing. Warm-ups typically last between 25–50 minutes. If your swimmer misses warm-ups, there is no opportunity to warm-up later. Coaches will finish writing events on swimmers arms.
- Competition: After all teams have warmed-up, everyone will stand at attention for announcements and the National Anthem. Swimmers for the first three events should be ready to swim and be with their Coach at the starting blocks or the team gathering area.
- Awards: At some swim meets, awards are provided once the competition is complete. In most cases, awards are sent home with Coaches to be distributed at the next practice.

Arm Codes

To help families and swimmers remember meet events, Coaches use a marker to write the following codes on each swimmer's arm before competition. We use this method as it will remain with the swimmer through the duration of the meet and is unable to be lost or damaged the way paper would be. Throughout the season, as guardians become more familiar with this process, we encourage families to write their own codes the morning of the swim meet.



- E (Event) - Column 1 (farthest left): This indicates which event the swimmer is entered in and are listed in order. Use this column to help your swimmer keep track of when they need to be on deck with the Coaches. Remember, swimmers should be on deck ready to swim a minimum of 3 full events before theirs.

- H (Heat) - Column 2 (middle): This indicates which heat your swimmer will participate in for their specific event. Some events have only 1 or 2 heats while others may have 10 or more depending on the number of swimmers entered in that event. Swimmers should be checked-in and waiting behind the starting block a minimum of 3 full heats before theirs. For shorter distance events, such as the 50 freestyle, swimmers may be requested to be prepared behind the blocks as many as 8 heats before theirs.
- L (Lane) - Column 3 (far right): This indicates which lane the swimmer should swim in for their heat in their event. Use the backstroke flags and starting blocks to help locate which lane it which.
- Event Descriptions (farthest right): The extra description to the right of the columns describes which event the swimmer is competing in, including distance and stroke, as well as their relay leg where applicable. See above image for examples.

Individual Events

On a swim meet schedule of events, swimmers are listed below each event's number and descriptions. See the below example which displays each swimmer's heat, lane, and seed time.

Event 17 Girls 8 & Under 25 Yard Freestyle					
Lane	Name	Age	School	Seed Time	
Heat 1 of 3 Finals					
2	Jorgenson, Sigrid	8	Northerns-MN	NT	___
3	Ternes, Eva	8	Northerns-MN	NT	___
Heat 2 of 3 Finals					
1	Pearson, Malena	8	Northerns-MN	1:04.21	___
2	Spampinato, Elizabeth	7	Northerns-MN	34.56	___
3	Krueger, Estelle	8	Northerns-MN	41.04	___
Heat 3 of 3 Finals					
1	Plummer, Adalyn	8	Northerns-MN	27.28	___
2	Poynter, Charlotte	8	Whalers-WI	21.68	___
3	Frank, Amanda	7	Northerns-MN	27.18	___
4	Plafcan, Vada	8	Whalers-WI	30.35	___

Relay Events

In general, the meet program reads the same for relays as for individual events. There are two important differences to be aware of:

1. In the far-left column, the lane number is located to the left of the relay team's name and is the lane where all swimmers in that relay will be swimming.
2. The number on the left of each individual swimmer's name shows the order in which each swimmer will be swimming. Coaches set this order as part of the meet registration process and to prevent timer confusion, it is important that swimmers swim in the order listed for their relay.

Event 9 Girls 10 & Under 200 Yard Medley Relay			
Lane	Team	Relay	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 1 Finals			
1	Northerns-MN	C	NT _____
	1) Sheils, Mail 10	2) Pearson, Alexandra 10	
	3) Wisehart, Piper 10	4) Houser, Aubrey 9	
2	Northerns-MN	A	NT _____
	1) Bergsven, Ilse 10	2) Johnson, Quinn 9	
	3) Kuettel, Layke 10	4) Houser, Alaina 9	
3	Northerns-MN	B	NT _____
	1) Loberg, Lexi 9	2) Tapper, Maari 9	
	3) Frank, Alison 9	4) Handy, Everlyn 10	

Disqualifications

Most swimmers will experience being disqualified (DQ'd) in their swimming career (including Olympians) and is a valuable learning experience. For example, improper stroke techniques, false starts, or incorrect turns may disqualify a swimmer. Coaches evaluate disqualifications to understand a swimmer's area of growth and will provide additional guidance at practice. It's important to have a positive conversation with the swimmer about what happened and what they learned by disqualifying.

If you have questions about disqualifications, please talk to your swimmer's Coach. Under no circumstances should a guardian approach an official to discuss disqualifications. This violates the behavior agreement previously mentioned in this Swim Meet section of the handbook.

Ribbons & Recognition

In recognition of their performance in swim meets, swimmers may receive ribbons for their races and will be provided as soon as they are available. Because we want to encourage personal bests and not just winning a race, we may have themed meets, prizes, and other incentives to encourage swimmers that beat their previous times.

Advanced Swim Meets

At the end of the season, qualifying swimmers may attend the following swim meets located both within and outside our immediate Sections.

- Section Swim Meet: The location of this meet is determined by the year's hosting team and may take place at any of the local home meet pools. If your swimmer competes on a relay at Sections with a qualifying State time, it is required that they attend the State swim meet as well. If you are not able to attend the State swim meet, please let the Head Coach know to ensure they are not placed in relays during Sections.
- State Swim Meet: Swimmers must either hold a state qualifying time or place in the top three in an event during the Sections swim meet to qualify. This meet is typically hosted at the U of MN Twin Cities campus.
- North Central Region Swim Meet: Swimmers must hold a regional qualifying time at a championship level swim meet (Sections or State) to attend this meet. This swim meet is typically hosted in Des Moines, Iowa.

Nutritional Guidelines for Swimming

Swimmers have long practices and seasons, and you will notice an increase in their appetite. The American Dietetic Association recommends the following nutritional tips for swimmer health:

- Hydrate: Swimmers sweat more than they realize while in the water or on a warm, humid pool deck. Keep bottles nearby and drink at least 2 cups of fluids two hours before swimming and half a cup every 20 minutes throughout practices or meets. No caffeine!
- Stay energized with carbohydrates: To prevent fatigue and under performance, eat at least 500 grams of carbs per day during the competitive season. Examples such as rice, potatoes, beans, and pasta should be prioritized over chips, pizza, soda, candy, etc.
- Eat at competitions: Swim meets can be long and include intermittent racing over the course of a day. Pack healthy snacks such as bananas, crackers, or grapes. If time between races is longer than 2 hours, pack carbs such as bagels, English muffins, peanut butter jelly sandwiches, or trail mix with raisins.