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Southern Prairie YMCA Stingrays Swim Team



2018-2019
Parent Handbook

Dear Parents:

Welcome to another season of Stingray Swim Team and YMCA Competitive Swimming. The YMCA strives to build character in all who participate in YMCA programming. The character values of CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY, are part of every program the YMCA offers. The Stingrays Swim Team seeks to nurture participants to grow individually and be their best within a team.

Our goal is to encourage and motivate each swimmer to develop their competitive swimming skills and personal character. This includes quality instruction and building confidence through goal setting, promoting a positive work ethic and creating opportunities for achievement. We also seek to build relationships and create a community, where each swimmer is valued, connected and supported.

The team can only accomplish this through the active involvement of each swimmer and his/her family. We thank you in advance for your involvement and commitment to this program and we look forward to a great season!

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Requirements:

- Swim Team participants are required to be YMCA members. Swimmers must be a YMCA member for 30 days before competing in a swim meet, and he/she must be a YMCA member for 90 days prior to competing in any championship meets.
- Swimmers must be able to swim 25 yards (1 length), unassisted, of a legal freestyle. To compete in meets, 9 and older swimmers must be able to swim 50 yards (2 lengths), unassisted, of a legal freestyle.
- December 1st is the date used to determine swimmer's age group for the season.

Practices:

Practice Groups / Schedule

While hard work and dedication are necessary for swimmers to reach their goals, finding the proper balance between work and play is important. In order to help athletes find that balance and develop a long-term love for the sport, we will seek to create a positive (and Fun!) atmosphere which encourages strong team bonds. This season the Stingrays will be divided into different groups for practices. Each practice group has recommended practice times. We try to structure practices to best match the abilities and needs of each group. We recommend that each swimmer attend at least two practices per week. Please talk with a coach to discuss alterations to the recommended practice schedule.

Blue Group: The Blue Program is designed for both young/beginning swimmers and also recreational swimmers - kids who do lots of different activities, or are just looking for a fun way to get some exercise as part of a team. They will focus on developing the fundamental skills for all four competitive strokes, starts and turns, along with some moderate endurance work. The Blue Group may still compete in meets, but will only practice for 1 hour, 2 days a week (Tuesday/Thursday from 6:30-7:30 pm).

Black Group: The Black Program is designed for dedicated, competitive swimmers who have specific goals (such as qualifying for championship meets), along with the drive and desire to work towards those goals. This is a competitive training group aimed at developing advanced technical skills along with building strength and endurance through gradually increasing the distance and intensity of the workouts. The Black Group will practice for 2 hours 3-4 days per week. (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 5:30-7:30 pm and on Saturdays, as scheduled / when we don't have meets, from 8:45-10:00 am.)

There are no practices when school is cancelled due to inclement weather. If practice is cancelled, for any reason, texting and/or phone calls will be used to spread the message as efficiently as possible. The front desk will also be notified - if in doubt, please call to check.

Equipment needed

Swimmers will need to bring a competitive swimsuit, goggles, a swim cap (optional) and a towel to each practice. We prefer that swimmers not wear their current team suit at practices, if possible. Goggles need to be of good quality to reduce the amount of time 'fiddling with them' at practice and to help them stay on during dives. The Stingray "Guide to Gear" posted on the team website can help you determine what is best for your swimmer. *All kids with asthma MUST have an inhaler ON DECK.* We also recommend that swimmers bring a non-breakable water bottle to practice each day. (This water bottle should be labeled with the swimmer's name.)

Guidelines for Swimmers:

- Be on time and ready to swim when practice is scheduled to begin.
- Work hard and try your best.
- Listen and follow directions from coaches.
- Follow all pool and facility rules.
- Use locker rooms only for dressing, showering, and restroom facilities as provided. Be courteous to others who may be using the locker rooms at the same time.
- Demonstrate proper sportsmanship. Treat all swimmers, coaches and officials with RESPECT. There is no place in the YMCA for bullying/mean behavior, rude comments, displays of anger or arguing with coaches, volunteers or other adults.

The following progressive discipline will be taken if deemed necessary:

1. Verbal warning to swimmer
2. Swimmer sits out for 5-10 minutes or the swimmer may be given appropriate conditioning to perform to help focus their attention.
3. Swimmer will be asked to leave the activity or event for the day. Parents will be notified.
4. Swimmer will be asked not to participate for an extended period of time in team activities. This action will be communicated by the coaches and Aquatic Director to the parent and swimmer.
5. If locker rooms, facilities or equipment at any swimming site are damaged, the swimmer and family will be responsible for the cost of the repair or replacement.

Guidelines for Parents:

- Keep informed of Swim Team activities and events.
- Encourage and enable your swimmer to attend practices and meets.
- Be uplifting and supportive of your child throughout the season.
- Help your child plan, set, strive toward and achieve his/her goals.
- Be patient. Each swimmer progresses at a different pace.
- Much of swimming is an individual sport, but swimmers are also part of a TEAM. Support your child's responsibility to his/her teammates.
- Be involved for fundraising or volunteering when needed throughout the season.
- Encourage and model YMCA character values of CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY.

Volunteer Opportunities

We consider swimming with the Stingrays a family affair – meaning we would love to have you, the parent, involved as much as possible. Some ways you can get involved include:

- Swim Official Training – available for anyone wanting to volunteer. Gives information on how to time and officiate as well as aids parents in understanding YMCA of USA swimming rules. Certification opportunities are planned every fall prior to the start of the winter season.
 - Certified Timer / Timers
 - Although most meets have a timing system and software, timers are necessary in instances of system error or failure. We want to ensure that every swim counts. Also the best seat in the house!
 - The following certified officials are required to host meets
 - 1 Administrative Official
 - 1 Level II Official (requires a Level I certification followed by 12 sessions experience to take the Level II course)

- 1 Level I Official (or above)
 - We will not be hosting a meet this year, but we are asked to provide timers (including at least one Level 1 certified timer) at championship meets.
- Helping with Team Snacks / Meals – In order to help encourage Team Spirit, we will be having Team Breakfast after Saturday practices & Team Spaghetti Dinners before our 1st Meet and Sectionals.
- Photography – This is a great opportunity to capture the “moments” that will make up our season. Photos of swimmers racing, cheering on teammates, and having fun will be collected and put together in a slide show for our End of the Year Banquet.
- Helping with Team Events – Throughout the year, the swim team hosts events for swimmers and parents to bring everyone together before a meet, encourage team spirit, and celebrate our successes. Some events include: Parades, Saturday Team Breakfast, Spaghetti Dinners and the End of Year Banquet.
- Helping with Team Fundraisers

Communication:

Information about the Stingrays Swim Team can be found by clicking on the Stingray Swim Team Tab under Youth Development at the Southern Prairie YMCA website: www.southernprairieymca.com.

For coach and parent communication purposes, we use e-mail as the primary source of communication. Please provide your e-mail address during registration to ensure that you receive communication from coaches. Information/handouts will also be available in Family Folders located in the Pool Entryway. For short messages, reminders, or urgent matters we may send text messages or call parents.

You are encouraged to talk with the coaches AFTER practice or to set up a time that is convenient for everyone. Please do not try to talk to coaches when they are running practice or busy at a meet.

Swim Meet Information

We try to schedule 6-7 swim meets throughout the season (~2/month Nov-Jan), plus championship meets in February & March. Meets are typically on Saturdays and run an average of 3-6 hours (depending on how many swimmers are present and how efficiently the meet is run). We strongly encourage swimmers to participate in each swim meet; however it is not mandatory to do so. You must notify the coaches no later than the Monday before the scheduled meet if your swimmer is not planning to compete.

Dual/Tri-Meets

Dual and Tri-meets are when our team swims against one or more other teams. These meets give your swimmer an opportunity to get accustomed to swimming in meets, a chance to have their swim recorded and logged to see improvements, and at the same time creates camaraderie within our team. During most dual/tri-meets, swimmers may swim up to 3 individual events and maybe a relay event or two. The hosting team may elect to include all of the events from the list or create a specific type of meet (such as a sprint only meet). Warm-up times can vary based on the location of the meet and will be communicated via email, and also available in family folders the week prior to the meet.

Event sign up

Coaches may offer suggestions or guidance, but swimmers are responsible for choosing which events they would like to swim at meets. If you have suggestions or questions about entries for your child, feel free to email or talk to your coach. Coaches will select swimmers for relays.

Travel

Parents are responsible for driving swimmers to and from meets and making sure their children are supervised by an adult during the meet. Carpooling is encouraged but not facilitated by the YMCA. Prior to the first swim meet, a team roster will be distributed to each family to assist you in setting up carpools.

If a meet must be cancelled because of inclement weather, texting and emails will be used to spread the message as efficiently as possible. The front desk will also be notified – if in doubt please call to check. If your swimmer will not be able to attend a meet they are entered in, please notify coaches (via phone call or text) as soon as possible.

Championship meets

Championship meets are important as well. These are meets where we compete with other teams for points. These meets are more formal and there are many teams participating. Typically, medals are awarded for finishes 1st through 3rd as well as ribbons through 8th place.

Sectional Meet: This may be the last meet of the season for many swimmers. To be eligible to compete, a swimmer must swim in three closed YMCA meets prior to this meet. Registration fee for this meet is *included* in the annual swim team registration fee. All swimmers should plan to compete in the Sectional Meet.

State Meet: To qualify, a swimmer must equal or better the state qualifying times. *NEW* for the 2018-2019 season, a swimmer may meet qualifying times at ANY MEET DURING THE SEASON. A list of events and qualifying times will be available on the team website. Registration fee for this meet must be paid in addition to the annual swim team registration fee.

YMCA Regional Meet: Registration fee for this meet must be paid in addition to the annual swim team registration fee. The swimmer may meet qualifying times at any meet during the season. When available, a list of events and qualifying times will be posted on the team website.

YMCA Short Course National Championship: Qualifying period is March 1, through the entry date for the meet. Swimmers must be at least 12 years old on the first day of the National Championship Meet. Additional information will be provided for those who qualify. When available, a list of events and qualifying times will be posted on the team website.

*For more information, look for "The Swim Meet Survival Guide" on the team website.

Online Resources:

- Stingrays Page – click on the Stingray Swim Team Tab under Youth Development at the Southern Prairie YMCA website: www.southernprairieymca.com
- Iowa YMCA Competitive Swimming - <https://www.iowaymcaswimming.org>
This website lists information regarding meets, meet results, and officials trainings.
- USA Swimming - <https://www.usaswimming.org/Home>
- You can also Follow [Iowa YMCA Competitive Swimming](#) and the [Southern Prairie YMCA](#) on Facebook.