

Welcome!

Welcome to the Marion Area Dolphin Swim Team. I am excited to have the opportunity to work with you and your children. Competitive swimming teaches many skills other than how to get from one end of the pool to the other. Some of these skills include:

- Building Self Esteem
- Responsibility
- Character Development
- Discipline
- Communication Skills
- Time Management
- Goal Setting

This handbook is designed to answer many questions that may arise during the season. If you have questions or concerns that are not addressed in this book, please ask your coach.

YMCA Philosophy

The mission of the Marion Family YMCA is to put Christian principals into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The YMCA's involvement in competitive swimming has been one means of carrying out our mission. Through swimming we also work to promote character development through our four core values: caring, honesty, responsibility, and respect.

The YMCA's Motto is: "Everyone swims, everyone wins!" In swimming, winning is not an accurate measure of success. Winning is based on individual improvements, not solely placing in an event, or at a meet.

**YMCA Core Values

We will work as a team to develop the four core values in each swimmer:

- We will **RESPECT** ourselves, teammates, coaches, parents, opponents, equipment and facilities.
- We will have **CARING** attitudes for others around us.
- We will be **HONEST** with everyone.
- We will take **RESPONSIBILITY** for our actions and we will learn the responsibilities we have to our teammates and family.

**Coaches Philosophy

We will focus on individual improvement. Success in swimming cannot be adequately measured by place at meets. We can measure improvement in a number of areas, including:

- Attitude
- Times (meets or practice)
- Behavior
- Attendance
- Technique
- Racing strategy

- Effort
- Pacing
- Many more!

It is important to understand that swimming is a challenging sport. Improvement can be very small over a period of time. We encourage our athletes to be prepared to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This promotes versatility and encourages swimmers to explore their potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Keeping a positive attitude is essential for success!

Team Goals

Goals are an important part of swimming. They allow us to focus on what it is that will help us to do our best and improve. Of those goals, the most important team goal we can have is to have fun! There will always be unpleasant things that we don't like about swimming. However, they're a necessary stepping stone for continued success in the sport. If we can have fun as a team, those unpleasant skills will become more conquerable! More team goals include:

- All swimmers will practice the YMCA's Four Core Values and will build their confidence through swimming.
- All swimmers will learn the correct technique for all four competitive strokes.
- All swimmers will learn correct technique for strokes, turns, and starts, and any other aspect of competitive swimming.
- All swimmers will improve meet performance.
- All swimmers will improve practice effort and focus.
- All swimmers will improve their knowledge of competitive swimming.
- All swimmers will learn how to set goals.
- All swimmers will learn good sportsmanship.
- All swimmers & parents will have fun.
- All parents will support the team through volunteering.
- All parents will support the team by participating in fund raisers.

Expenses

Throughout the season, there will be fees that will need to be paid. Some of these fees include:

- Membership Fees
 - All team members are required to be Y members
 - Financial assistance is available (see page 5).
- Meet Entry Fees (including Championships)
 - To participate in invitational meets or championship meets, all swimmers must pay entry fees for each event in which they enter. Fees range from \$6 -- \$16 per day, per swimmer at most meets.
- Team Suits / Practice Suits / Caps / Goggles
 - Team suits are not mandatory, but swimmers do need to own a suit for practice. Any suit worn at a meet must meet FINA guidelines.
 - Team suits should not be used for practice. Practice suits (usually) advertised as "Grab Bag" suits can be purchased cheaply from most swim product distributors.

- We will have special Marion Y swim caps for sale for meet purposes. Like team suits, different caps should be worn during practice. Goggles can be purchased at any sport goods store or swim product distributors.
- Out of Town Meet Expenses
 - Swimmers who sign up for out of town meets will need to pay for hotel (in few circumstances), travel and meal expenses.

Financial Assistance

The Marion Family YMCA is committed to providing financial assistance with membership fees for those who demonstrate financial need. Financial assistance is available due to the generosity of special grants, and YMCA donors. Applications are available at the Service Center and on our website at www.marionymca.com. Please speak with me if you have any other questions regarding team fees.

Payment Policies

Y memberships and program fees need to be paid in on the 15th of the month during the season starting in October with a \$50.00 deposit at registration. If doing so would prevent your child from swimming please see the Aquatics Director prior to the start of the season.

Meet Terms

Block – The starting platform.

Bullpen – The area designated for lining up the swimmers before entering the pool area. It is usually in or adjacent to the set-up (gymnasium) area.

Cut, Q time, or qualifying time – Achieving a certain time standard in order to be able to swim in a particular event at a particular meet.

Deck entry – Some invitational meets allow you to enter on the day of the meet. Being deck entered means you will swim entered as a “no time” in the slowest heat and is eligible for awards. The event will not be re-seeded.

DQ – Disqualified. If you break a swim rule during a meet you can be disqualified. You can be disqualified for a start, stroke or finish. This is normally shown as a “DQ” behind the swimmer’s name on the official results. If your child is disqualified, don’t worry. It’s an opportunity to learn. Note: A swimmer can also be disqualified for being in prohibited areas at the meet site. These areas are clearly marked as “DQ Areas.”

False start – Occurs when a swimmer is moving prior to the start.

Heat – A race within an event. Most pools in the league can accommodate at least six lanes of simultaneous swimming. When there are more swimmers in an event than lanes, children are grouped together in heats. Each event may have a number of heats. Swimmers are grouped into heats according to their fastest time in that particular event. The slowest heat is first followed by progressively faster heats.

Heat sheet – Heat sheets order events, identify swimmers and give each swimmers’ best times. These sheets are for sale at the door and are worth the cost if you plan to follow the meet events.

IM – Individual medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

Meet – Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer tests him/herself against the clock to see how he/she is improving.

Official – A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces the rules. There are administrative officials, stroke and turn judges, starters, timers and referees.

Relay – An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Seed Time – A swimmer's best time for a particular event. The seed time is used to match a swimmer with others of similar times and abilities.

Split – A time for a set distance within a race. This may be the time to swim a lap or a leg of a relay.

Meets

Swim meets, unlike some other sporting events, demand that just about everyone participate. There are few "true" spectators. Swim meets are a lot of things...they can be hectic (lots of people moving in limited spaces), trying (some meets are run more efficiently than others), and long, but most of all SWIM MEETS ARE FUN! The roar of the crowd, the smiles, the feeling you get being a part of the team and most importantly, watching as the swimmers' hard work pays off in achieving their personal bests!

The home sponsor of each meet sets the schedule for the meets so starting times will vary.

Remember that our conduct at meets and other team activities reflects the philosophy, mission, and goals of the YMCA and the Marion Family YMCA.

Types of Meets

Invitational:

An invitational meet hosted by a home team. Any USA team that wishes to attend may compete. The order of events varies depending on the host team. These meets are longer than dual meets. Invitational meets are on weekends and are usually one to two day meets. Entry fees are charged per event. Invitational meets generally last 3 to 5 hours, or longer, depending on the number of swimmers present and how efficiently the meet is run.

Which Meets to Attend

Swimmers are encouraged to attend all YMCA League dual meets scheduled. We also encourage athletes to attend as many invitational meets as possible, as well as YMCA League Sectional Championships. We strongly encourage athletes to attend YMCA League Championships if they qualify.

- *Remember that all swimmers need to swim in three YMCA meets, either league duals, or YMCA invitational to be able to swim at Y Championships, Y Zones or Y Nationals.*

How to Sign up for Meets

Please register your child at the Service Center for swim meets. You will not be registering them for events; instead you will be registering them for the meet in whole. All meets will have a registration deadline that to which you will need to pay attention. Some deadlines will be sooner than others, depending on if it are an invitational or dual meet. Some meets also may have an entry fee, so please be prepared to pay that fee when

registering. Please sign up as soon as possible so the coaching staff can work on meet entries in advance.

If a swimmer has signed up for a meet and an unexpected illness or emergency arises and he/she no longer is able to attend the swim meet, please notify the coach ASAP! Adjustments have to be made to the computer, at the Clerk of Course, and relays may need to be rearranged.

Meet Entries

The coaches will be responsible for each swimmer's individual event assignments at all meets. Swimmers are expected to swim all events in which they have been entered. Swimmers will not be assigned to events that they are not ready to do yet, whether legally or physically ready. The coaches will also be responsible for assigning swimmers to relays.

Transportation

Transportation to and from meets is the responsibility of the swimmer and their *families*. Carpooling is encouraged, but not facilitated by the YMCA. Coaches are not permitted to be involved in transportation due to YMCA insurance limitations.

Before and During the Meet

Swimmers should check in with their coach when they arrive at the pool. Likewise, if a swimmer needs to leave before the meet is over, check out with their coach.

Team Area

There is usually a team area where team members sit together fostering team spirit and the exchange of valuable information. Swimmers should rest, stay warm and cheer for their teammates between events.

Warm-Ups

It is required that all swimmers warm up before meets. Warm-ups give swimmers the chance to not only loosen and warm up their bodies, but it also gives them the opportunity to get familiar with a "new" pool. It is important to practice starts off the blocks, practice turns, and count from the flags if doing backstroke. Please arrive at meet sites at least 15 minutes prior to warm-ups to get settled in and be on deck prepared when warm-ups start. Each team is assigned a time for warm-ups, which will be announced prior to meet day. Athletes who are not present for warm-ups or do not notify the coach that they will be late may be replaced on relays, or scratched from the meet completely.

Events

Swimmers should check their events at practice prior to the meet or upon arrival at the meet. Parents are strongly encouraged to be sure the event numbers are written on the back of the swimmer's hand. A swimmer's event number will be called and usually posted. **Swimmers should be aware of which event is currently in the water.** At that time he/she should report to the bullpen where he/she will receive an event card that tells the heat and lane assignment. Swimmers will be lined up to enter the pool area. After entering the pool area, swimmers may have to stand or sit and wait a short while for their event. They will then move to the back of the blocks in their assigned lanes, where they will await their turn to swim.

Swimmers are not to scratch from an event without first talking with their coach. Parents are not to scratch a swimmer from an event without first talking with their coach. You're not doing your swimmer a favor by scratching an event YOU don't feel he or she can do.

Coaching

Swimmers should talk to their coach after each event. After swimming an event, the swimmer should ask for his or her time from the lane recorder and report the time to their coach. The coach will use this meeting to give encouragement and suggestions to the swimmer. It gives the coach time to focus on individual swimmers. The swimmer will improve more rapidly if he or she competes regularly and communicates with their coach.

Questions regarding an official's call, event results, or conduct of the meet should also be referred to the coach. Let the coach handle any and all problems.

Practice Guidelines

1. Swimmers should conduct themselves while following the four YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, and Respect & Responsibility.
2. Swimmers should bring their YMCA membership cards to practices and check in at the Service Center for each practice.
3. Follow all YMCA rules.
4. Practices will start and end on time. Allow yourself enough time to change before practice starts.
5. Swimmers should not leave the pool area without their coach's permission.
6. Swimmers will learn and practice all four competitive strokes, starts, and turns.
7. Swimmers misbehaving may be excused from practice.
8. Parents are invited to sit in the bleachers and watch practice. However, refrain from talking to your children while they are practicing. Also, please make sure you ask the coaches questions before or after practice.
9. Swimmers should use the family locker rooms.
10. In the case of bad weather, please check the level of the snow emergency. If it is a level 2 snow emergency in Marion County, we will not have practice.
11. Swimmers are expected to help pick up equipment after practice.

Swimmers' Responsibilities

1. ALWAYS give 100% effort, even if it is difficult!
2. Attend practice regularly and have fun!
3. Communicate with your coaches if you will not be at practice.
4. Show support for your teammates – show good sportsmanship always.
5. Show appreciation to your parents!
6. Attend and participate in all meets and events that you have been entered in.
7. Attend the championship meet for which you qualify.
8. Participate in fundraisers.
9. Take home information to parents.
10. Always show respect for coaches, teammates, YMCA Staff, officials, etc.
11. Always follow the four core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, & Responsibility.

Parents' Role & Responsibilities in the Marion Family YMCA Swim Team

1. Have fun!
2. Support the team through volunteer time.
3. Participate in team fundraisers.
4. Encourage swimmers to attend all practices and meets.

5. Provide transportation to team activities and meets.
6. Be supportive and loving towards your swimmers at all times while encouraging them to do their best and have fun.
7. Let the coach's coach. Your job is demanding enough without taking on additional responsibilities.
8. Keep communication with the coaches open and frequent.
9. Read all information carefully.

Parent-Swimmer-Coach Relationship

Adapted from the Dynamo Swim Club Handbook

To have a successful program, there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress your youngster makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is amazing how much a swimmer can progress in one year; however, there will be some ups and downs. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section carefully as you join the team.

Parents' Guidelines

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a person loses some of his ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his children. The coaches' experience has found that the proper guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective.

1. Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills.
2. Plateaus can occur at one time or another in any swimmer's career. Plateaus can occur both in competition and in training. A plateau signifies the swimmer has mastered lower-ordered skills, but they are not sufficiently automatic to leave the attention free to attack newer, higher-ordered skills. The more successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance, approaching their personal potential.
4. 10-and-unders are the most inconsistent swimmers, and this can be frustrating for the coach, parent, and swimmer alike. We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.
5. Parents must realize that slow development of the competitive drive at an early age is normal and perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced early development. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional distress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.
6. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, encouragement, and recognition necessary to help Young athletes feel good about themselves.

7. Parents' attitudes often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about his or her parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your child to practices and meets, fundraising projects, meetings, and so on – don't look on these functions as chores.
8. If parents can offer insight on their child that will enable the child's coach to work more effectively with the child, please be sure to contact that coach.
9. If you have any questions about your child's training or about team policies, contact your child's coach directly outside of practice time. Criticizing the coach in front of the youngsters undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.
10. No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team, or competitive swimming.
11. The communication between coach and swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at all practices. It is imperative that the coach has the swimmer's full attention at these times. It is for this reason that we ask parents to watch practice from the bleachers, and not participate in the coaching in any manner.
12. In general, it is best for parents to refrain from making stroke corrections or trying to coach their swimmer. If you differ with something, please confer with the coach. Our coaches would enjoy the opportunity to further discuss the program with you.

Parent Volunteer Responsibilities

Throughout the season, there will be a number of opportunities for parents to help with our swimming program. One of the most needed areas where parents can help is through volunteering. There are lots of jobs which are fairly easy and fun. Someone will be more than happy to show you how to do any of these jobs. We will need volunteers in a number of different situations and circumstances:

Communication

Communication between the coach and parents is essential and key to minimize frustration and anxiety. I plan to communicate with you in the following ways:

- **Website:** Check www.marionymca.org and go to the Swim Team page.
- **Remind 101:** Any last minute practice or meet changes, or anything else that needs to be communicated on short notice will be done so through Remind 101. To subscribe text using the number (567) 302-2982 using the class code @63545 in the message window and press send. You will receive all text once subscribed.
- **Bulletin Board:** Please check the bulletin board as we will have information about meet directions, meet sign-up, and other important items on their regularly.
- **Other:** I'm happy to answer any questions you have before or after practice. I'm usually in the office from 9am – 2:00 PM. I'll usually be back for practice by 5 PM. You can e-mail me at dsheehan@marionfamilyymca.org, or call me at 725-9622.

You may call my cell or text, but please, only in cases of emergency at (740)590-1553.

If there is anything that you have questions or concerns about, please feel free to contact me at any point throughout the season. Welcome to the Marion Family YMCA Dolphins Swim Team, and I look forward to working with all of you!