

Wyckoff YMCA Sharks Team Handbook

1. Introduction & Philosophy

The Wyckoff Family YMCA Sharks Swim team offers the opportunity for competitive swimming in both YMCA and United States (USS) competitions. The team is comprised of girls and boys from ages 6 through 19.

The major objective is to offer the competitive swimmer a fun and challenging program that facilitates optimization of each participant's potential. The Wyckoff Family YMCA Sharks coaching staff stresses individual self-improvement as each swimmer's primary goal. Training in stroke techniques, speed, and conditioning/endurance are customized to ability and age to help achieve this goal. All swimmers learn and train all of the competitive strokes with attention to a "specialty" as they gain experience and demonstrate success.

Beyond learning and mastering the competitive swimming skills, one of the most important goals of this program is to teach life skills, which include management, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. A positive environment is provided at all times.

In addition to working toward each individual's personal success, the program stresses the team concept: each participant is a member of the Wyckoff Family YMCA Sharks Swim Team. Membership on the team carries with it responsibility, loyalty, and dedication to each of the team members. Mutual support during training and competition are valuable assets attributable to the program. Parental support and involvement are highly encouraged and are major incentives for many swimmers at all levels of competitive experience.

It is responsibility of both parents and swimmers to read the handbook and understand the operation of the program.

2. General Organizational Structure

The Wyckoff Family YMCA participates in the Northern Jersey YMCA Swim League and in the United States Swimming (USS) competitions. YMCA swimming is conducted utilizing the current NCAA rules unless otherwise designated by Northern New Jersey League rules.

YMCA and USS age groups are divided as follows:

8 and Under

9-10 years old or 10&Under

11-12 years old or 12&Under

13-14 years old or 13&Over

15-18 years old or 15&Over

Open/Senior

For YMCA meets, the age group the swimmers compete in is determined by the child's age as of December 1. For USS meets, the swimmer competes in the age group of his/her actual age on the first day of each meet.

There are two swimming seasons in a year. The Winter Sessions begins in September and runs through the end of March. The Spring/Summer Session starts in May and ends at the end of July.

3. Practice Training Group

Practices are broken up primarily by age and then within the age groups by ability and commitment level.

Practice Group 1 – Includes swimmers age nine and under; primary focus is basic mechanics of the four strokes, starts and turns. This group is introduced to basic endurance conditioning, attention to breathing patterns, and familiarity with race situations.

Practice Group 2 – Includes swimmers age 9-12. This group continues to develop all four strokes, paying increased attention to technique, turns and starts. Endurance and conditioning begin to play a more important role.

Practice Group 3 – Includes swimmers age 11-19. These swimmers continue to build on foundations already mastered with increased focus on intervals and training. Constant drill work to perfect stroke technique, start and turn mechanics are covered.

Practice Group 4– Include swimmers 12 years and over. Endurance, speed, drills for technique on all strokes, turns, starts, race strategies etc. are covered.

Dry-land is required for all groups.

Official's Certification

A large parent involvement comes from those who become certified to be swim officials:

USS Certification- qualifies one to officiate at any New Jersey Swimming (USS) meet, various levels of certifications are available

YMCA Certification – qualifies one to officiate at YMCA dual meets and other Y-sanctioned meets; various levels of certifications, courses are offered in the fall and spring

4. Swim Team Fees

YMCA Membership Fee

The YMCA Swim League requires each member of the swim team to be a full member of the YMCA in good standing. This fee must be paid in full. Renewals and new memberships must be done in person at the front desk of the Wyckoff YMCA. For more information on membership, check the YMCA brochure or inquire at the Front Desk. Checks should be made payable to the Wyckoff Family YMCA.

Swim Team Program Fee

Separate from the YMCA membership fee is the swim team program fee. This fee encompasses the fall/winter session or spring/summer session. Payments will be paid full for each session. A discount is offered if both sessions are paid in full in September.

League Fee

Included in this fee are USS registration and the meet fees.

5. USS Registration/Meet Fees and Sign Up

Included in each swimmer's league fee are the funds to cover registration costs to be eligible to compete in USS meets. Each swimmer on the team must be registered with USS annually.

Sign Ups for Meets

At the beginning of each season the swimmers and their parents will be given a meet availability form where they must indicate the weekends they are not available to compete. This form must be returned to the coaches by the deadline.

YMCA dual meets- all swimmers are automatically "signed up" by a coach and entered into the event(s) chosen by coach. Swimmers are required to attend these meets.

USS and invitational meets- have many different formats; i.e., the events swam for each of the age groups varies from meet to meet. All swimmers will be signed up for selected events by coaches (only if swimmers meet attendance requirements and are available and meet qualifying times).

YMCA Championships- all swimmers who qualify for the YMCA Championships will be entered (they must have participated in at least 3 dual meets in order to compete). The swimmers are required to attend these meets.

Swimmers are required to participate in YMCA dual meets and YMCA Championships. A swimmer that fails to participate in 4 or more dual meets and the YMCA Championships will be asked to leave the team and try out for the next season.

It is very important that swimmers discuss any possible questions about participation in the meets with their coaches.

6. Swim Competition

Time Trials

Time Trials are run as needed to help assess a swimmer's improvement during the course of the season. They are also used by the coaches to see where the swimmers are in their training schedules at the beginning of the season compared to the previous season. Time trials are set up by the coaching staff. A swimmer can discuss possible events with his/her coach.

YMCA Dual Meets

We participate in the Northern New Jersey YMCA dual meet league (one on one meets with other YMCAs in the North Jersey area). Each team competes in 6 of these meets, which take place on Saturdays from November through February. In these meets, each team may enter three swimmers per individual event (unofficial heats may be swum), and up to three relays per each relay event. Each swimmer is permitted to swim in two individual events and one relay. The coach makes all event and lane assignments and they are changeable at his/her direction. NCAA rules apply to YMCA competitions. All swimmers on the team are required to compete in dual meets.

YMCA Championship Meets

The NJ State, Silver, Bronze Championships East Field Regional Championships are competitions held at the end of the dual meet season.

YMCA State Championship is for those swimmers who make cut-off times according to their age group (these meets are based on age as December 1).

Silver Championship is offered to those swimmers that have only one or don't have any State cuts and have at least one Silver cut (this is for 9-10, 11-12 age groups only).

Bronze Championship is for those swimmers (9-12 swimmers) that have one or no Silver cuts.

Note: All the swimmers are required to participate in YMCA Championships.

YMCA National Championship Meets

The most prestigious (top-level) YMCA competition is the National YMCA Championship, which is an open national competition, where all contestants must be 12 and older and swim against each other regardless of age. The swimmer has to make rather stringent National qualifying times during the season. This meet is usually held in Florida in April for SCY and in July for LCM.

United States Swimming (USS) Meets

USS is the national governing body for swimming in the United States and is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States and is affiliated with FINA (The International Federation for Aquatics). It is responsible for certifying the local swim committee (LSC) of USS in which we compete. Our LSC is New Jersey Swimming. USS rules apply to all USS sanctioned competitions.

Swimmers can gain additional valuable experience by competing in NJ Swimming sanctioned meets.

USS Championship Meets

The USS season culminates similarly to that for YMCA competition. In March, there are Bronze, Silver and Junior Olympics (Gold) Championships for swimmers who have achieved respective time standards for these meets (NJ Time Standards). There is a regional (Eastern) Zone Championship in which the top New Jersey age group swimmers compete.

There are Silver, Junior Olympics and Eastern Zone Championships also during the summer LCM season.

For the very Elite 12 and older swimmers, there are USS Sectionals and Senior National Championships. The swimmers must achieve qualifying standards to attend these meets.

All the time standards for each session are posted on the bulletin board.

Swimmers interested in USS Championships must attend at least 2 USS invitational meets in order to participate in these championships.

Transportation for swimmers to and from meets is the responsibility of the parents. Details regarding air and hotel reservations are usually sent out via e-mail or posted on the bulletin board.

7. Relays

Relays (4 swimmers; freestyle relay = all freestyle, or medley relay = one swimmer each, back, breast, fly, freestyle) are a great source of camaraderie! In YMCA and USS meets (where applicable), relays are set by the coaching staff. We try to give as many swimmers as possible the opportunity to swim on a relay at the Y dual meets.

For USS meets, if enough swimmers in an age group attend the meet, the coaches will put together relay when preparing the entry for each USS meet. It is very important to check with the coach at any USS meet to establish whether a swimmer has been assigned to a relay.

Remember, it takes four (4) swimmers to make a relay and if one swimmer doesn't swim, the remaining three lose out! Swimmers are required to check with the coaches before they leave the meet to ascertain whether or not they are in a relay.

8. Transportation

It is parent's responsibility to make travel arrangements for the swim meets and have the children at the meets on time. The swimmers have to be at the meets at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time. Arrangements should be made with another parent if there is a conflict of schedules. Upon arrival to any competition, the swimmer must immediately check in with the coaches.

A complete packet of directions to all the YMCA pools will be given or sent out via e-mail to each swim team family before the competitive season begins.

9. High School Swimming

Many Senior level swimmers represent their high schools' swim teams during the winter. While high school swimming is encouraged, there are rules (look at attendance requirements and meet requirements) to which each Wyckoff Y swimmer must adhere. All swimmers in high school must commit to training with Wyckoff Y Sharks Swim Team.

10. Behavior at Practice Sessions/Swim Meets

It is very important for a swimmer to be on time to practice to allow for stretching/dryland and warm up. Swimmers are expected to stay in the pool area during the entire practice and they must not visit their parents during the sessions. Parents are welcome to observe practice from the viewing area and are asked not to come on the pool deck unless invited by a coach while practice is in progress. "Coaching" by parents from the viewing area will not be tolerated.

During practice sessions, it is expected that swimmers pay attention and listen carefully to directions. No physical or verbal abuse or profanity directed at anyone will be tolerated. The coaches are in essence teachers and are expected to be treated with respect. A swimmer who misbehaves may be dismissed from the practice and will be given a warning. Three warnings will result in a swimmer being asked to leave the team. Remember, the coach's major objective is to teach – thus, the swimmers should be able to learn in a suitable environment.

Swim caps must be worn in the pool by all swimmers having hair length below the ears. Showers must be taken before entering the pool. The shower should be brief and the swimmer must remember to turn off the shower. Also, swimmers are asked to use the bathroom before practice to avoid disruption during practice. There must not be any horseplay or yelling in the locker rooms.

The YMCA is not responsible for personal belongings. It is the swimmer's responsibility to bring a lock and lock up their valuables. It is recommended that valuables left home or with a parent; however, valuables may be checked at the front desk or locked in the lockers. Please, try not to give any valuables to coaches. All swimmers are required to store their belongings in a locker during practice.

No gum or food is allowed in the pool area during practice. Swimmers are encouraged to bring water bottles (only plastic ones, no glass, no aluminum cans!) to practice labeled with swimmer's name. Please, do not share water bottles!

No swimmer is allowed to enter the water unless a coach and lifeguard are in attendance. Never jump in the water when there is any danger to you or to another swimmer. Feet first entry at all times.

No smoking is allowed at any time in the YMCA facility.

At swim meets and practice each swimmer is a representative of the Wyckoff YMCA. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Behavioral violations at practice or at the meets may result in suspension or expulsion from the team.

11. Communication

Notices and information will be sent out via mail or e-mail. It is important to keep your address, e-mail and phone number updated. These notices are the primary link between parents/swimmers and coaches. They provide important information, which should be read thoroughly. It is recommended that all correspondence be filed at home for future reference. Information will also be posted on the swim team bulletin board located outside the swim team office. Parents or swimmers should check the bulletin board at each practice to look for updates.

Feel free to approach the coaching staff before or after practice, not during the practice! You may also contact the coaches by the phone or via e-mail.

12. Weather/Vacation/Illness

Practice and YMCA dual meets will be held unless notified. Y meets have been canceled due to inclement weather or other emergency situations. USS meets are rarely canceled.

Please inform your coach if you are missing practice or meets because of vacation (in advance of time) or illness. It is very important to inform the coach about illnesses so that he/she can give an appropriate workout to a swimmer. Please try to avoid sending any information verbally through other swimmers or parents. This way we avoid any confusion or miscommunications. You can send a note, e-mail, contact the coach before or after practice or call the coach at the Y.

At the beginning of the season each swimmer will receive a tentative meet schedule and a meet availability sheet. All the swimmers must return the meet availability sheet with circled dates by the deadline so coaches know if the swimmers are available for meets.

13. Health Forms

It is required that each swimmer has a yearly physical. The completed form must be turned in before the racing season starts. It is important for us to know if any of the swimmers are on medications or have any allergies. Swimmers will not be allowed to participate in the meets without a completed health form.

14. Uniform/Equipment

Team uniformity is important for togetherness and team spirit. Each swimmer has to have a team suit which has to be worn at both YMCA and USS competitions in which swimmers represent the Wyckoff YMCA. It is required that, if a cap is worn, the team cap be worn at any competition for which swimmer represents the Wyckoff Y.

Goggles have to be worn at all practices by all swimmers; they enhance vision and protect eyes from effects of chemicals in the water. All swimmers need to have fins (for stroke technique work, ankle flexibility and speed assistant training). All 11 and over swimmers need to have hand paddles to enhance stroke mechanics and increase resistance during pulling sets.

The team suits and caps must be worn at all the meets. At championship meets the swimmers are allowed to use the "fast skin suits" (rather than team uniforms).

15. What to Bring to a Meet

The following is a list of those items to make the day at a meet a little smoother:

- Team suit and extra suits
- 2 T-shirts
- 2 pairs of goggles (appropriately fitted to a swimmer)
- 2 caps (must wear swim cap)
- At least one towel
- Warm-ups (some gyms and pools are chilly)
- Sandals or clean sneakers
- Socks
- Healthy snack
- Book, cards
- NO GAMEBOYS (or portable electronic games)

Most meet sponsors do serve snacks, but they often are not very healthy or they run out early. Come prepared and come early to get settled!

16. Nutrition

During the season it is important that parents ensure that each swimmer eats healthy, well-rounded meals. The healthy eating means well balanced diet with enough protein (chicken, eggs, cottage cheese, steak, soybeans, bean, lentils, tofu, yogurt, fish etc.) carbohydrates (rice, potatoes, whole wheat bread, pasta etc.) and fat (healthy fat like peanuts, raw cashews, hazel nuts etc.). Salads with low calorie dressings together with fresh fruit and vegetables are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. Healthy snacks like yogurt, banana, orange, apple, carrots, dry fruit and nuts, fruit bars are not only very tasteful, but also very nutritious. There is literature available which addresses nutrition for athletes in training. Parents can help by instilling good eating habits at home.

It is extremely important that fluid intake occurs frequently during more difficult workouts and most definitely at swim meets in between events. Swimmers are encouraged to bring labeled water bottles to practice. For each swimmer's safety we ask that swimmers do not share water bottles. "Power" drink and bars are good supplements at practice and meets.

17. Dryland

Dry-land includes conditioning, weight training and stretching. For our swimmers it is important to attend dry-land training to improve the cardiovascular system with running, jogging, relays, games etc. We cannot forget about body strength. Weight lifting (either in the weight room or with our own body weight-push ups, sit ups) is the easiest way to develop it. A swimmer must be very flexible. Stretching is a very good exercise for flexibility and together with weight training helps athletes avoid any possible injuries. Swimmers should do stretching before each practice and meet (part of warm-up).

18. Log Books/Best Times/Records

Swimmers and parents should try to be as knowledgeable as possible regarding the swimmer's progress during the season. One affective way of tracking a swimmer's progress is by recording all times and results from each competition in a log book during the season. Swimming log books are commercially available or can be made up in any blank book. The results, where you can find the swimmer's times, are posted on the bulletin board after each meet. You can look them up and write the times down in the log book.

Swimmers are also encouraged to keep track of their daily workouts. This is most easily done each day, immediately after practice, by writing into a notebook the day's swim workout.

It is important that swimmers are familiar with the time standards for upcoming championships. The time standards for upcoming season for each age group are posted on the bulletin board.

19. Goals

Goal setting is an extremely effective motivational training goal. At the beginning of the season each swimmer will be asked to set three goals that he/she could realistically accomplish during the season. Parents and coaches can encourage and advise swimmers through this process.

20. Socials

From time to time social gatherings and special events (Halloween party, age group party, Shark-A-Thon etc.) are offered to encourage socialization of teammates and/or parents. Members on this team travel from many different areas in New Jersey, which makes socialization more critical to the success of the program.

21. Awards Brunch/Dinner

The Annual Awards Brunch will be held at the conclusion of the winter season in April or May.

22. Attendance Requirements

50% of practice time (dryland and swim) is the minimum required for a swimmer to be on the swim team. After failing to attend 50% of practice time a swimmer will be asked to leave the team and must try out for the team again. Swimmers who are 10 or more minutes late for practice or leave 10 or more minutes early will be charged with a one half-practice absence.

Swimmers must meet attendance requirements to attend USS meets & championships. The requirements are as follows:

At least 50% attendance for 8& under

At least 60% attendance for 9-10

At least 60% attendance for 11-12

At least 70% attendance for 13& over

23. Meet Requirements

YMCA dual meets: Every swimmer is required to compete in dual meets (unless emergency or planned vacation). There are 6 dual meets for each group during the season.

YMCA Championships: Y-Bronze, Y-Silver, Y-States

All swimmers will be signed up for these championships and they are required to attend these meets.

USS meets: All swimmers that have met the meet requirements, have good attendance (see section 22: Attendance Requirements) and that have indicated they are available will be signed up for these meets and are required to attend them.

USS Championships and YMCA Nationals: Only swimmers that meet the attendance and meet requirements (time standards) will be signed up for these meets.

8 & Under 50%attendance

9-10 60% attendance

11-12 60% attendance

13 & over 70% attendance

The swimmers that fail to show up at a meet for any reason other than an excused medical absence (and planned vacations that coaches were informed of at the beginning of the season) will be asked to leave the team and try out for the team again.

24. Shark Swim Team Requirements

- All swimmers are required to swim both sessions (Fall and Spring/Summer).
- Swimmers must have a minimum of 50% attendance during the year (both sessions).
- Swimmers are required to attend a minimum of 4 dual meets.
- All swimmers must participate in YMCA Championships (except 8&Unders).

If swimmers are unable to meet these requirements, they will be asked to try-out for the next season.

Glossary of Swimming Terms

Age Group - Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10& under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Some LSC's have divided the swimmers into divisions differently to meet specific situations, e.g., 8& under, 15& over, senior, etc.

Anchor - the final swimmer on a relay.

Alternate - In a meet where qualifying or preliminary heats (prelims) are followed by finals, once the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers are designated first and second alternates, respectively. If a swimmer who has qualified for the finals cannot participate, an alternate is called to take his/her place, often at moment's notice. The term alternate also refers to the next (fifth) swimmer who would swim should one of the four relay swimmers not be able to participate.

Backstroke - back- alternating arms motions with flutter kick on back

Breaststroke-breast - simultaneous arm movements in same plane, elbows under water; kick is simultaneous, similar to frog (whip kick)

Butterfly - fly- simultaneous overhand arm stroke with undulating dolphin kick (legs kick together, not flutter).

Freestyle - free- the swimmer may use any stroke, most commonly the crawl; alternate arm motions with flutter kick.

IM - individual medley, all four strokes are swum by a swimmer in order of: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle

Relay - an event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time

Medley Relay - an event in which four swimmers on a relay swim each swim one of the four strokes in the following order of: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle

Freestyle Relay - all four swimmers do freestyle, each swimming one quarter of the distance 200, 400, 800 yds/m.)

Relay start - A racing start of a swimmer who on a relay starts when the previous swimmer swims into the wall, as differentiated from a "flat start" (a racing start with the sound of the horn at the beginning of a race). It is called a flying start because the more experienced swimmer can anticipate and time his/her start to coincide with the incoming swimmer's touch and actually be leaning over the water on the exchange.

Cut - Qualifying time; a time standard necessary to compete in particular meet.

Circle swimming - Performed by staying to the right of the black line (on bottom of pool) when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in the lane, when used during practice most of the time.

Drill - An exercise involving a portion of a stroke, used to improve technique.

DQ - Disqualification. This occurs when a swimmer does a stroke or turn incorrectly or false start more often than allowed by the rules governing the meet. If a swimmer on a relay leaves the block before previous swimmer has touched, the entire relay will be disqualified.

False Start - Occurs when a swimmer is moving before the start horn sounded. In USS and NCAA, one false start will result in disqualification.

Seed - Swimmers are assigned to heats and lanes based on their entry times. Faster swimmers are placed into later heats; within each heat (each "race" within an event), the faster swimmers are placed in the lanes.

Circle Seed - Done in meets with prelims (trials or qualifying round) and finals. Last three heats of an event in prelims are seeded with the top 24 (8-lane pool) entrants in "round-robin" fashion.

Lap - one length of the pool. In a 25 yard/meter pool (short course), 100 yards/meters equals 4 laps of the pool. In a 50 meter pool (long course, "Olympic size), 100 meters equals 2 laps.

Lap Counter - A set of display numbers used to keep track of laps swum during a distance race.

Check-In - At many USS or invitational meets, swimmers are required to report that are in attendance as they first arrive at the meet site. At many meets, coaches are now responsible for swimmer's check in. Knowing who is in attendance allows the meet marshal to properly seed the swimmers into heats.

Scratch - A swimmer originally signed up to swim in an event or meet and does not participate (for whatever reason) is withdrawn from that meet or event. There are specific rules that apply to scratching in meets where prelims and finals are swum.

Marshalling - For each event, swimmers are seeded into heats and are assigned to a heat and lane by the Marshall. Most often, the computer handles this job, and heats are posted before the event begins.

Dual Meet - A meet between 2 teams, usually with point scoring. In a 6-lane pool, each team gets 3 lanes (either 1,3 and 5 or 2, 4 and 6).

Time Trial - A time-only swim which is not part of a regular meet.

Event - A race that specifies age-group, sex, stroke, and distance, e.g. 13-14 girls 100 yard butterfly

Touch Pad - Large sensitive board at the finish end of the each lane, which electronically registers the swimmer's finish and time

Flags - Backstroke flags placed 5 yards (short course) from the end of the, to enable swimmer to execute backstroke turn more efficiently. (Swimmer counts from flags to turn or finish at wall).

Pace Clock - Large Clock with a large second hand (and smaller minute hand) or digital, used to pace or maintain intervals in practice.

Finals - Swimmers with the fastest times from the preliminary heats are grouped together to compete for the top places/awards. In an 8-lane pool, consolation finals are contested between swimmers ranked 9-16 in prelims.

Prelims - Preliminaries; also called heats or trials, races in which swimmers compete to qualify for finals or consolation finals.

Psych Sheets - A listing of all swimmers entered in each event listed from fastest to slowest seed time. These are also available to spectators/coaches the day of the meet.

Heat Sheets - A listing by order of event, the heats and lanes each swimmer is assigned in a meet. These are finalized once check-in and scratches are completed and posted.

Split - Time for part of a race. For relays, the time of one individual swimmer such that sum of the four swimmers' splits equals the final time. Splits are taken during distance races to assess swimmer's pace throughout a race.

Negative Split - In longer races, the splits for the latter part of the race is equal to or faster than that for the first part of the race.

Pentathlon - A swim competition during each competitor swim 5 events (distance depends upon age group): 50/100yds./meters of free, breast, back fly and 100/200IM. Awards are based upon the sum of the times for all five events.

Interval Training - (or cycle training)- Swimming conditioning using the pace clock (or stop watch). Swimmers perform a set of series of an indicated distance within prescribed amount of time. For example 10x100's on the 1:30 means swimmer will do 100 yards ten times; the interval between the starts of each 100 will be 1 ½ minutes. This is a powerful training tool to increase speed and endurance.

Sprint - Describes the shorter events (50, 100). In training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

Taper - The final preparation phase directly preceding the swimmer's culminating or peak meet of the season (e.g., Jr. Olympics, Nationals) during which training yardage is decreased to rest the swimmer and higher quality speed work is done. For those swimmers who have major meets at least 1 month apart, a re-taper or rebuilding followed by a second taper may be done. Tapers are usually specific for the swimmer; e.g. a girl distance freestyler will be prepared for quite differently than a boy breastroker. Often, just before the peak meet, the swimmer will shave his/her body hair for both physiological and psychological edge.

Turnover - Number of times a swimmer's arm cycle in given distance or time.

Distance Per Stroke - (DPS) stroke length; practice sets are designed to maximize length of stroke and efficiency.

Referee - Head official at a swim meet.

Meet Director - A judge on the pool deck at any sanctioned competition; includes timers, stroke and turn judges, across-the-board judges, starter, referee etc. Most of these positions require at least Level 1 officials certification for YMCA and/or USS competition.

Warm Up - Pre-meet (or pre-practice) swimming, which enables swimmer to acclimate to the pool and allow them to loosen up their muscles. For most swimmers, it is a moderate paced swim incorporating those strokes to be used in the meet followed by some sprints from the blocks. Along with stretching, warm-ups are essential for optimal performance.

Open Competition - Is that competition in which any qualified club, organization or individual may enter. In this type of competition the swimmer enters the meet on the basis of his/her attained age the first day of the meet. In order to enter open type competition, the swimmer must be registered with U.S. Swimming (USS) through the local association- in our case, New Jersey Swimming. USS swimmers may only swim in OPEN competition when the meet has been sanctioned by LSC. All such competition must be in accordance with USS Rules. The age group category "open" is also used to indicate that there is no particular age group involved (usually 12 years and older compete).

Closed Competition - Is that which is open only to the members of one organization or group. Meets conducted in the YMCA league are closed competitions. NCAA rules are used for YMCA competition since they are conducted similarly. In addition to the National YMCA organization which conducts closed meets for "Y" members, the NCAA conducts closed competition for various colleges. High school competition is controlled by the National Federation of High School Associations (this is also a category of closed competition) and they have their own rulebook which sometimes differs from NCAA and USS rules.

Invitational - Are meets hosted by USS or YMCA's as fundraisers to which particular teams are invited. Some of these meets are sanctioned, others are not.

LSC - Local Swimming Committee (our is New Jersey Swimming) which is the governing body at the local level of United States Swimming.

Short Course - A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. Most meets in the winter season are conducted in short course yards.

Long Course - A pool 50 meters in length. Most US summer competitions are conducted in long course meters.

Streamline - The position used by swimmer when starting or pushing off the walls designed to reduce water resistance.

USS Number - A unique set of letters and numbers assigned to a swimmer upon joining United States Swimming.

Set - Specific regiment of practice, e.g., 10x200's free on 2:20. Types of sets include:

Aerobic - In presence of oxygen, moderate (pace) speed to develop endurance

Anaerobic - In the absence of oxygen, high intensity training utilizing energy stored in the muscles, thereby producing lactic acid.

Descending Set - Set in which repeat times of specified distance gets progressively faster

Broken Swims - Interval training in which a specific race is broken into smaller segments with rest in between to simulate race pace