



SWIM TEAM

PARENTS

HANDBOOK



YMCA of the Brandywine Valley BCY Competitive Swim Team

Introduction

YMCA Mission

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. *Financial Assistance is available.*

Purpose of Handbook

This handbook provides information on the philosophy of the BCY Swim Team, outlines the requirements and expectations of swimmers and their parents/guardians and provides general information about the Parents' Aquatic Club (PAC).

History

The Brandywine YMCA Swim Team, also known as BCY, was established in the late 20th century. The team colors are black and gold. The team mascot is the Tiger Shark.

Philosophy

The YMCA actively supports a comprehensive swimming program as a vehicle for instilling character values, ideas and behavior that are consistent with YMCA goals. YMCA sports are an avenue for participants to pursue physical activity while learning important life skills. Teaching fundamental skills, encouraging lifetime involvement in physical activity, strengthening the values of fitness, health and self-respect for others are central themes in the YMCA sports philosophy.

Facility Use

The YMCA provides the swim team with the pool to use for practices and meets. The swim team is obligated to use the facilities and equipment with care and to respect the rights of others. Please remember the following points:

- Leave the pool deck and locker room neat and clean.
- Keep the noise level to a minimum in the locker room.
- Never enter the water without the coach's permission.
- Be courteous to others using the facility.
- Never run in or abuse any part of the facility during practice or meets.

Program Information

The BCY Swim Team is a year-round competitive program with both winter and summer seasons.

Team Requirements

Membership – The YMCA of the USA requires that all swimmers be full members in the YMCA branch in which they swim.

Entry Level Requirements –To be eligible for the swim team, swimmers must be able to swim one lap (25 meters) of freestyle using the rotary breathing technique and one lap (25 meters) of backstroke. Coaches will place swimmers at the appropriate level.

Junior National and National Team – Participation on the Junior National and National swim teams is by invitation only from the head coach. The BCY swim team has a strong, diverse swim team that successfully competes at the national level.

Winter Season

The winter season may begin for some swimmers with Stroke Clinic. Stroke Clinic concentrates on stroke development and refinement. The winter season begins in early October with practice sessions. League meets are held from October through February with championships, districts and states following through March. There are four levels for swimmers – Mini, Levels 1, 2, and 3. In addition, BCY has Junior National and National Swim Teams; the head coach appoints members of the National and Junior National teams.

Summer Season

The summer season also may begin with Stroke Clinic in April. The Summer Swim Team has four levels like the winter team – Mini, Levels 1, 2 and 3, as well as Junior National and National. League meets are held in June and July, with championships held at the end of July.

Swimmer Responsibilities

Attendance Policies

Practice – Practice is the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is required to progress through the team levels. The BCY coaching staff will assign swimmers to teams and swim levels based on age, ability and experience. More than one practice level may share the pool at the same time.

In order to get the most out of every practice session, please follow these guidelines:

- Be on deck and ready at least five minutes before practice. Have your goggles and swim cap on.
- Attend the designated number of practices for your level, as follows:
 - Mini 2 Practices per week
 - Mini 4 days 4 Practices per week
 - Level 1 4 Practices per week
 - Level 2 & 3 5 Practices per week
 - Junior National 5/6 Practices per week
 - National Team 5/6 Practices per week
- Please do not attend any more practices than designated by your swim level.
- Plan to stay for the entire practice.
- In the event of inclement weather please call ahead and listen to the announcements on the YMCA phone recording.
- Only leave practice with the coach's permission.
- Focus on the practice and follow the coach's instructions.
- Listen when the coach is speaking.
- Ask questions if you do not understand the coach's instructions.

What to Bring to Practice

Please bring an extra suit, goggles and cap to practice. The YMCA does not have items to loan swimmers. Please clearly label all items with your name as many swimmers have the same equipment.

- Practice suit
- Goggles
- Swim cap
- Towel
- Flippers – Level 1 and up
- Lock for the locker
- YMCA membership card
- Flip flops or deck shoes
- Water or sports drink
- Swim bag (for all of the above)

Team Suits

The team suit is a black suit with team logo. Swimmers will be able to try on suits and purchase suits prior to ordering. Suits are purchased from Blazin' Inc.

Meet Attendance – All swimmers are expected to attend meets. It is important to be on time (arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time) and ready to swim.

In the event a swimmer must miss a meet, please notify the coaching staff in advance by signing the Swim Team Meet Book at the front desk at the YMCA. In the event of a last minute illness or emergency on the day of the meet, please notify the coaching staff by telephone at (610) 380-9622 ext 203.

Competitive Events

BCY Age Divisions

Swimming events are organized by age. Winter team age groups are determined by the swimmer's age as of December 1st. Summer team age groups are determined by the swimmer's age as of June 1st.

The age groups are as follows:

8 & under

9 & 10

11 & 12

13 & 14

15 - 18

Swim Meet Competition

Competition falls into the following categories: Dual Meets, League Championships, Districts (Winter only), States (Winter only), Nationals and Invitational meets.

Dual Meets

Dual swim meets are the basic competitive events. Winter season dual meets run from November through January. Summer season dual meets run from June through July. A dual meet is a competitive event between two teams. Coaches will establish all entries for the dual meets and try to enter all swimmers in the meet. Swimmers are entered in the meet based on their age and compete against swimmers of their own age.

Winter Season

Dual meets are held at participating YMCAs on Saturdays during the winter season. Each swimmer is eligible to swim a maximum of two individual events and one relay event. Coaches make all decisions on what events swimmers will swim. Eligibility for post-season competition depends on team and individual performance during the season. The age group a swimmer will compete in during the winter season is determined based on the swimmer's age on December 1.

Swimmers swim as a team and scoring is done on a team basis. Points are tallied by age group. The age group with the greatest number of points wins. The overall winning team is the club that wins the most age groups.

Summer Season

Dual meets are held at member team facilities on Wednesday night or Saturday mornings during the summer season. Each swimmer may swim up to three events - two individual events and one relay event. The age group for the summer dual meet season is determined based on the swimmer's age on June 1.

Swimmers swim as a team and scoring is done on a team basis. Points are tallied by age group. The age group with the greatest number of points wins. The overall winning team is the club that won the most age groups.

Relay Policy

Coaches determine all entries and the coaches' decision is final. The decision on who will swim on a relay team is determined based on several factors, including the following:

- Individual times
- Past performance in meets
- Practice attendance

Championships

Championships are held at the end of each season - winter and summer.

Winter championships are held at the end of the swim season and include the teams that BCY competes against during the dual meet season. Summer championships include all teams in the summer swim league.

To be eligible for championships, a swimmer must do the following:

Winter Championships

A swimmer must participate in the required number of YMCA meets (3) to be eligible to compete in championships. Championship information will be distributed to each qualifying swimmer. Each swimmer may swim a maximum of three individual events and two relay events.

Medals are awarded for 1st through 6th place for individual events and 1st through 3rd for relays. Ribbons are awarded for 7th through 12th place for individual events and 4th through 6th for relays.

Summer Championships

A swimmer must participate in the required number of dual meets (3) to be eligible to compete in the Brandywine League Championships. Championship information will be distributed to each qualifying swimmer. Each swimmer may swim a maximum of two individual events and two relay events.

Medals are awarded for 1st through 6th place for individual events, and 1st through 3rd for relays. Ribbons are awarded for 7th through 12th place for individual events and 4th through 6th for relays

District Championships

The YMCA Eastern Districts are held each March. Long distance events are held at the Upper Main Line YMCA on Friday; the remaining events are held at LaSalle University on Saturday and Sunday. The YMCA Eastern Districts are divided into sessions based on age groups. Sessions are held in the morning and afternoon.

To qualify for Districts, a swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Swim a qualifying time in the current season in open, league, dual, or high school competition with three official timers or electronic timing. Qualifying times are posted on the team bulletin board.
- Be a full member of the Brandywine YMCA for a minimum of 90 days prior to the YMCA Eastern Districts.
- Represent only the Brandywine YMCA, excluding school swimming, in any open or closed competition during the current season, September 1 through April 30.
- Have represented the BCY Swim Team at three separate meets during the current season.

A swimmer may swim a maximum of three events in his or her age group, of which one event must be a relay. The relays will be determined by the coaching staff based on the relay policies as defined in this handbook.

Swimmers who participate in Districts are required to attend the scheduled practice sessions for Districts. A YMCA Eastern Districts practice schedule and the session dates and times will be given to each qualifying swimmer. The schedule also is posted on the team bulletin board and website.

The top twelve places in individual events and relays events advance to the YMCA State Competition (East West Championships).

States (East-West)

The YMCA Pennsylvania State Championship Meet is held after the YMCA Eastern District Meet. The YMCA Pennsylvania State meet is held at Pennsylvania State University in State College, PA, and is divided into sessions based on age groups.

Any swimmer who finishes in the top twelve positions at the YMCA Eastern Districts competes at States. Coaches will determine who will swim on the relay teams at States. The entry fee is included in program fee.

Medals are awarded for the 1st through 6th place and ribbons for 7th through 12th place. Some families choose to stay overnight at a hotel while attending States. The head coach will reserve a block of rooms for this purpose. Please communicate with him if you plan to stay. Information regarding hotel reservations will be distributed to potential state qualifiers. The BCY Swim Team does not take the responsibility of swimmers during this overnight meet.

Nationals

The YMCA holds a Short Course (25 meters or yards) National Meet in April and a Long Course (50 meters or yards) National Meet in late July of each year. These meets consist of swimmers from around the United States that have made a national qualifying time. The qualifying times for these meets will be distributed at the beginning of the season and posted on the BCY Swim Team bulletin board. BCY qualifies swimmers for both events annually.

To qualify for the YMCA Short Course National meet, the swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Swim a YMCA Short Course National qualifying time.
- Provide a proof of time for any qualifying time made at a High School or USA Swimming meet. The proof of time must have a meet official's signature. Proof of time is an official copy of the meet, signed by one of the officials at the meet. The name and time must be clearly visible. Swimmers who make National cuts are responsible for getting their proof of times to the Head Coach.
- Compete in at least three dual meets.
- Compete in at least one nationally sanctioned meet (YMCA Eastern Districts or YMCA Pennsylvania States).
- Be a full annual member of the Brandywine YMCA for a minimum of ninety-days (90) prior to the National meet.
- Represent only the Brandywine YMCA, excluding school swimming, in any open or closed competition during the current season, September 1st through April 30th.
- Be at least twelve (12) years of age.

To qualify for the YMCA Long Course National meet, the swimmer must meet the following criteria:

- Swim YMCA Long Course National qualifying time between September 1st and the meet entry submission date.
- Provide a proof of time for any qualifying time made at a High School or USA Swimming meet. The proof of time must have a meet official's signature. Proof of time is an official copy of the meet, signed by one of the officials at the meet. The name and time must be clearly visible. Swimmers who make National cuts are responsible for getting their proof of times to the Head Coach.
- Be a full annual member of the Brandywine YMCA by May 1st.
- Represent only the Brandywine YMCA in any open competition during the current season, May 1st to August 31st.
- Represent BCY in at least three swim meets including YMCA Eastern Districts or YMCA Pennsylvania States from September 1st.
- Participate in at least two long course meets during the current summer season.
- Be at least twelve (12) years of age.

Invitational Meets

Participation is optional (non-refundable entry fees are paid by each swimmer)

Invitational meets are hosted throughout the year. Information on these meets is posted on the bulletin board. A fee is required for each event entered and must accompany the entry. Watch for information on the invitational meets. Swimmers usually can choose the events they want to swim at an invitational meet, while the coaches determine the relay teams. ***Swimmers may not attend an invitational meet without a BCY coach.***

USA Swimming

Non-refundable entry fees paid by swimmer – USA Registration is included in the BCY Swim Team program fee.

The Brandywine YMCA Swim Team offers United States swimming membership for swimmers in Levels 1 through National. The one-year membership entitles swimmers to additional USA swimming competition and experience. Our coaches will determine which USA meets swimmers will attend and YMCA meets take priority over USA meets.

USA Swimming requirements state that BCY swimmers must be current members of USA Swimming. If you currently are a member of USA Swimming but you represent another swim team, you must transfer your USA Swimming membership to BCY before you can attend any USA Swim meets with BCY. ***Swimmers may not attend an invitational meet without a BCY coach.***

Parent Responsibilities

Parents should not talk to their children or the coach during practice.

Please keep the following in mind as you watch your child develop.

- Each child learns at a different rate and responds differently to instruction. Some swimmers take longer to learn and this requires more patience on the part of the parents.
- It is not unusual for a swimmer to turn in slower times as they begin the process of mastering proper stroke technique. Good initial habits become the foundation for future success.
- Swimmers under the age of 10 can be inconsistent swimmers. Please be patient and allow these young swimmers to learn to love the sport.
- Encourage your child to swim because he or she wants to. Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.
- The Brandywine YMCA Swim Team is comprised of well over 100 swimmers. The coaches must balance what is best for each with the needs of the team. Remember that coaches have the best interests of each swimmer at heart.

Parents MUST volunteer to work at a meet and will be assigned a responsibility.

Meets can only run when parents are involved. Many volunteers are needed to run a successful meet. Parents will be timers, runners, officials, starters, place judges, timing console operators, scorers and snack bar volunteers. It is expected that every family volunteer at a minimum of 2 meets.

Several swim meet volunteer positions require certification before a person can volunteer for that position. More information will be announced about training clinics for officials, scorers and console operators. No experience is required to be a timer, or runner or to help as parent patrol or at the snack bar.

PAC **Parent's Aquatic Committee**

The success of the swim team and the swim season depends on parents. BCY established a PAC to help organize parent volunteers. The PAC enables the swim team to function by organizing parent support at each swim event.

The YMCA Aquatic Director sanctions the PAC annually. All parents and coaches are members of the PAC. The PAC elects officers and raises funds as needed for the team.

The PAC Board includes co-leaders, recording and corresponding secretary, treasurer, the head coach, the YMCA Aquatic Director, a swim league representative, national team coordinator, invitational coordinator, team coordinators, a meet coordinator, officials' coordinator; district and state competition coordinator, newsletter coordinator, publicity coordinator; social chairperson, snack bar coordinator, team apparel coordinator, team record coordinator and website coordinator.

If you have a somewhat more limited time to help, you may be interested in volunteering in a position that does not involve attending the monthly meetings but will still keep you very involved in the team.

Please note that these positions are in addition to the volunteering all parents must do at the individual dual meets.

Communication

There are many dates and events for swimmers and their families to remember. These dates and events are communicated as follows:

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| 1. The swim team web site www.bcyswim.org | 5. PAC Board Members |
| 2. Bulletin boards in the hall by the pool | 6. Coaches |
| 3. Email | 7. Swim Meet Book |
| 4. Team Coordinators | 8. Direction Sheets |

Swim team web site– www.bcyswim.org and YMCA web site www.ymcabwv.org are available to all families and include updates and schedules.

Bulletin Board – Meet schedules and results, a social calendar and informational handouts are posted on the Swim Team Bulletin Board located in the hallway by the pool. Please do not remove any items posted on the bulletin board.

Email – All families who include their email address on the registration form will receive information via email. E-mail is used primarily for updates, weather-related cancellations and reminders about practices, meets and social events.

Team Coordinator – each team has a coordinator who helps organize volunteers for each meet. The Team Coordinators' names and contact information is posted on the bulletin board.

PAC – The PAC elects officers each year. Contact information is posted on the bulletin board.

Coaches – Please do not have conferences with the coaches during practice times. If you have a question for the coach, you can email the head coach at release@ymcabwv.org or leave a voicemail message for the head coach by calling 610-380-622 ext 203.

Swim Team Meet Book – A binder is kept at the front desk at the YMCA for you to “sign out” your swimmer from a meet. If you know your swimmer will not swim in a meet it is important to sign your swimmer out of the meet in the Swim Meet Book. The binder is set up with the meet schedule, just find the meet your swimmer will miss and enter their name. The coaches set meet entries in advance of each meet and they include all swimmers in each meet, unless the swimmer is listed in the binder.

If your swimmer becomes ill on the day of a meet, or if you must miss a meet at the last minute, please call the head coach at the YMCA at 610-380-9622 ext. 203 and leave a voicemail message.

Directions – Directions to all meets are found in the entry form packets; on the website; on or under the bulletin board or on the hosting club's web site

Frequently Asked Questions About Dual Meets

- **When should we arrive for meets?**

It is important for the swimmers to **be on time** for meets. Swimmers must be on the deck, ready to swim 15 minutes before warm-ups. Meet warm-up times are posted on the bulletin board and web page at www.bcyswim.org.

- **Is there transportation to the away meets?**

It is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to get all swimmers to/from and meets. Swimmers may not ride with coaches to or from meets.

- **How do I let the coaches know my swimmer(s) will not be at a meet?**

You must sign your swimmer(s) out of the meet using the BCY Swim Team Meet Book at the YMCA Front desk.

- **How long are dual meets?**

YMCA Dual Meets last approximately 3 - 4 hours. Championships and Invitational Meets can last all day. All parents are required to work home meets and may be asked to volunteer at away meets. Please make necessary arrangements for younger children.

- **Will there be food available at the meets?**

The YMCA hosts a snack bar at all home meets. Parents are responsible for donating food and their time to run the snack bar.

- **How should I dress for the swim meets?**

Dress comfortably for warm, humid conditions. Pool areas are usually quite warm regardless of the weather outside. Dress in layers that can be removed based on your comfort level at the pool. Summer meets are held outdoors. Please dress accordingly.

- **Where should I park at home meets?**

For home meets, drop off swimmers at the door and park in the YMCA parking lots. Parking along Hurley Road and in the Handicap spaces will result in tickets. For away meets, follow the directions of the host YMCA.

- **How can I show my support for our team?**

Be sure to exhibit your best sportsmanship and team spirit. Cheering for your team during a meet is great! At the end of the season the coaches vote on the team showing the most sportsmanship and team spirit. The winning teams are given a large banner to hang in their pool area.

Fundraising

Regular Team Fund Raising

All funds raised on behalf of Brandywine YMCA and/or its programs or program participants are the property of the YMCA. With the coaches' input and the Aquatic Director's approval, the PAC will identify swim team needs and raise funds for that purchase only. Purchases made by the PAC are the property of the Brandywine YMCA.

National Team Fundraising

Funds raised on behalf of YMCA National Swim Team are deposited into the Brandywine YMCA National Team PAC Custodial Account. This account is separate from the PAC account.

A YMCA staff person administers the National PAC account in conjunction with a National Team Parent. All transactions and balances are reconciled to National PAC records on a regular basis.

All funds raised for YMCA programs are the property of the Brandywine YMCA. Money allocated to each swimmer remains allocated to the swimmer as long as the swimmer maintains a YMCA full membership AND enrollment in the National or Junior National Team (winter and/or summer).

Individual account funds may be used to pay for costs associated with National YMCA Swim Championships, including meals, lodging, transportation and other assessed team expenses. If a swimmer leaves the BCY National Swim Team, the funds in that swimmers account are divided equally among all other current swimmers' accounts.

In the event a national swimmer has a younger sibling, the remaining funds in an account may be transferred to the sibling, as long as that sibling maintains a full YMCA membership AND is a member of the national swim team.

Information on an individual swimmers' balance is available to that swimmer's parents upon request.

Funds that are raised by the National Team will be allocated to swimmers in direct proportion to the amount of time the swimmer or the parents invested in the fund raising project. Each fundraising event will be assigned a "share" value. The net proceeds are then divided by the total number of shares earned by the swimmer's participation.

Examples: One share of a car wash = one hour of participation.

One share of Joe Corbi's Pizza = one box sold.

Funds that are raised on behalf of the National team by a third party (i.e. fundraising that does not require participation of team members or their families): will be applied equally among all members of the team.

Funds that are raised by the coaches, swimmers and families for the express purpose of purchasing items for all swimmers attending Nationals will be applied to a general funds line and will be used only for said purchases (examples include snacks and Gatorade while at Nationals, bus fees, etc.) This general funds line was eliminated previously but reinstated as a useful tool for group purchases.

Funds that are raised on behalf of the team and specifically designated for either summer or winter nationals will be divided equally among all swimmers attending that event.

Summer Q Meet proceeds are allocated to summer nationals only. Winter Q Meet proceeds are allocated to winter nationals only. By agreement of the PAC, proceeds of the Q Meet will be credited in equal shares to the swimmers attending Nationals whose parent(s) worked the Q Meet. Swimmers of parents who do not work the Q Meets will not receive any portion of the proceeds. Please note: all National and Junior National parents are needed to run a successful Q Meet.

Swimmers funds will be distributed to the parents or applied to the swimmers' National expenses according to the following terms:

- The distributed portion may not exceed the total swimmer's expense for attending the National event (airfare, hotel fees, meal expenses and miscellaneous expenses billed to the group). See next paragraph for examples of the latter.
- Money left over from a winter or summer national trip can be refunded to the parents only up to the amount that they paid from personal funds for that event.
- Balances over and above the actual cost of the trip remain in the swimmers' individual accounts because it is fundraised money.

Miscellaneous National Expenses

As the General Fund is limited, parents will be billed for any expenses that exceed the general fund balance, including but not limited to: snacks, drinks, social activities, additional vehicles not covered in the YMCA budget, etc. Parents may use the balances in their individual accounts toward these expenses.

BCY Coaching Staff

Head Coach

Ray Lease: Ray became head coach in 1991. His formal association with the team began in 1988. Ray and his wife Annette have four children; two are graduates of the BCY swim program. Under Ray's direction, the competitive swim team has grown to more than 100 members. Ray is responsible for the overall coordination of the competitive swim team and the coaching staff. Contact Ray at rlease@ymcabwv.org.

Assistant Coaches

Fred Kenworthy

Sarah Callaway

Ray Lease Jr.

Karen Cichewicz

Jenne Schroeder

Kari Gallagher