

USA Swimming FAQ

What is USA Swimming?

USA Swimming was established by Congress as the National Governing Body for competitive swimming in the United States. USA-S is a federation member of the international governing body of swimming, the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA).

Middle Atlantic Swimming is an administrative arm of USA Swimming -- called a Local Swimming Committee (LSC) -- which supervises competitive swimming within established geographic boundaries. There are 59 LSCs with over 286,000 swimmers in the United States.

The Middle Atlantic LSC includes New Jersey, south of Mercer and Monmouth Counties; Delaware; and Pennsylvania east of and including Potter, Clinton, Centre, Huntingdon, and Bedford Counties.

There are 62+ swim clubs and over 9,000 swimmers in the Middle Atlantic LSC.

Why is the BCY swim team a member of USA Swimming?

BCY swim team is a competitive swim club, not a recreational swim club, and has been a member of USA Swimming for over 25 years. USA swimming offers different kinds of meets to further challenge all swimmers. Colleges use the USA Swimming results databases for recruiting.

What kind of meet formats does USA Swimming have?

There are "ABC" meets where swimmers are grouped according to their skill level (for example, AAA has the fastest seed times, followed by AA, A, BB, B, and C). The meet results are compiled with swimmers being placed only against swimmers within the same skill level group. There are other meets that have minimum time requirements for eligibility. These meets are championship-style meets and attract the fastest swimmers from the LSC. Some meets are "Closed" meaning that only predetermined swim clubs may participate.

Is my swimmer a member of USA Swimming?

All swimmers 9 years old and older are automatically members of USA Swimming.

Is participation at USA Swimming meets required?

No, participation is voluntary. Swimmers must sign up for any USA meet they wish to compete at.

Do USA Swimming certified coaches need to be present at each meet session having swimmers from their swim club?

Yes, a USA Swimming certified coach must be present. Currently, BCY has one USA Swimming certified coach.

How many USA swim meets will BCY attend?

We try to attend 2-3 USA meets per season.

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Who selects the meets that BCY swim team will attend?

The head coach selects the meets at the beginning of the season. However, there is no guarantee that our team will be able to participate in the meets initially chosen and another meet may need to be substituted during the season. The term for being denied participation in a meet by the host team is called being "Locked-Out" of a meet.

Why do swim teams get Locked-Out of a meet?

Parents must understand that all USA meets must be run in strict accordance with USA swimming rules and protocols. A meet session must be completed within 4-hours from the start. Naturally, this limits the number of swimmers. The host swim club's meet director will receive entries and entry fees from the teams wishing to attend (yes, this is after parents signed up and paid for their swimmers). The meet director then decides which teams can participate. There are no rules or guidelines for this selection. They could give preference to: large teams; teams that host USA meets [*quid pro quo*]; teams that submitted their applications early; teams that participated in previous years; personal reasons like being friends with a team's coach; or, no reason at all. In addition, the meet director could grant participation of certain age groups of a swim club, while Locking-Out others (typically, certain age groups have more swimmers than others). There is never any certainty and parents need to have some empathy. Example: BCY participated at a particular USA meet for ten consecutive years and was Locked-Out in the eleventh and twelfth years for no apparent reason. No one can deny that this is inconvenient, but it is out of BCY's, or any other swim club's, control. Lastly, it is impossible to please everyone all of the time.

If BCY was Locked-Out of a meet last year, why did we select to attend the same meet this year?

First, the pools where the meets are held are in close proximity to our area. There have been numerous complaints received when meets are at pools that require two hours or more of travel.

Second, the head coach was informed that we were locked out of last year's meet because our entries were submitted a week prior to the deadline. This year, we submitted entries four weeks prior to the deadline, but still were Locked-Out of two age groups. Splitting the team by age groups to go to different meets is not feasible, so a substitute meet has been selected.

Third, three of the four USA meets were purposely scheduled for November specifically because Lock-Outs were expected and there would still be a reasonable amount of time to reschedule.

Why doesn't BCY host a USA meet?

In order to host a USA meet, we would need the following USA certified officials: Meet Director, Referee, Starter, Chief Judge, and four Stroke & Turn judges. Currently, only one BCY parent is a USA certified official. We would have to hire the previously mentioned officials.

At best, our facility is suited to host a small meet. We would have to rent a different pool, e.g., Coatesville Area High School. There would also be a small risk that normal meet entry fees would not cover our costs for the first year or two.

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The fact is that many more parents would need to volunteer to help plan a meet of this magnitude and every parent would need to work at the meet. While volunteering to set-up, time, work the snack bar, etc. for a meet or two per season is appreciated, more parents are needed to take on tasks such as officiating, scoring, and directing meets. It takes many meets over many seasons to attain the experience required to run a USA Swim Meet. Relying on a few individuals is not a practical approach because there is no one to back them up should unforeseen circumstances arise.