

# Albert Lea Family Y Tigersharks

## Parent and Swimmer Handbook 2011-2012

### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Albert Lea Tigersharks is to foster the development of a sound body, mind and spirit through the setting and attaining of personal goals via participation in competitive swimming, emphasis on physical wellness, personal accountability, and personal character. Strong emphasis is placed on the four core values of the Family Y: Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility.

The Family Y, coaches and the parent's organization will work to nurture a quality competitive swim team, thereby achieving the goals of swimmers and parents. Participation is the paramount goal developed through team building. The program also stresses sportsmanship and building of community spirit among swimmers, parents, coaches and Family Y staff.

### YMCA OF THE U.S.A. MISSION STATEMENT

To put Christian Principles into practice through programs which build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

### YMCA CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The YMCA of the USA has introduced a recommitment to character development. YMCA character development is not a new initiative. In fact, it dates back to the origins of the YMCA. It is not a program, manual or training. It is a method of making sure our programs deliver what we promise in our mission by challenging our participants to accept and demonstrate positive values. The four values that the YMCA has chosen to concentrate its teaching on are Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. What staff, parents and coaches are asked to do is simply "Walk the Talk". Support, demonstrate, model and teach these four values to the youth and families in our programs every available opportunity.

### MEMBERSHIP AND FEES

To be a member of the Albert Lea Family Y Swim Team, each swimmer MUST have an annual membership to the Albert Lea Family Y. It must remain current during the entire swim season. This is a rule imposed by the YMCA of the USA. Cost: Preschool-6<sup>th</sup> grade=\$102. 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade=\$117. All 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in Freeborn County receive FREE memberships to the Albert Lea Family Y.

## **2011-2012 Swim Team Fees**

### **Ages 7 and Under**

First Swimmer: \$70

Second Swimmer: \$55

Third Swimmer and thereafter: \$45

### **Ages 8 and Older**

First Swimmer: \$140

Second Swimmer: \$125

Third Swimmer and thereafter: \$115

**High School Boys: \$55**

**High School Girls: \$95**

- Fees cover the coaches' salaries and expenses, equipment, all materials for running a home meet, as well as section, and state fees.
- Fees for the Regional meet are not included and are due by the date posted at the time of regionals.
- All membership and fees are to be paid in full two weeks after the first practice. Please contact the Program Director if payment arrangements need to be made.
- Optional fees include team suit, cap and team pictures.

## **SWIM TEAM OBJECTIVES**

The Albert Lea Tigershark Swim Team Program believes that youth competitive swimming offers an exciting and worthwhile experience in a young person's life. It can be learned and enjoyed by those with little ability and by those who are of Olympic caliber, and its values go far

beyond that of learning proficiency in the water. It must be understood that not every child can become a great swimmer. Some children, no matter how deeply motivated or how hard they are prodded, can achieve only limited competitive success. However, if the program is well planned and directed every participant can gain from the experience whether or not they ever win a single race. The Albert Lea Family Y Swim Team will help:

- Provide opportunities for social and emotional development
- Furnish a wholesome physical and recreational outlet
- Provide opportunities to learn sportsmanship and team cooperation
- Provide training and competition to all swimmers who desire it
- Provide a foundation of swimming experience in order to contribute to the increased skills and knowledge needed at the high school, college, and advanced levels of competition
- Develop swimmers who are self-reliant, intelligent, mature, and who will present a good personal and team image in competition
- The success of any competitive swimming program is not an accident. It is the result of careful planning and organizing toward a clear set of objectives.

## **DISCIPLINE AND RULES**

- Feet first entries – enter in deep end of pool – enter when told by coaches.
- No diving in shallow end – diving in deep end only when supervised by coach
- No gum, candy or food of any kind in the pool, or locker rooms. (Except water)
- Bring water bottle to practice to have at end of lane. PLEASE DO NOT SHARE WATER BOTTLES WITH OTHER SWIMMERS.
- Take rest when told. If you are very tired, make sure to let coach know, if they don't realize it.
- No sitting on pool edge during rest – no bobbing or playing in water, swimmer can hurt themselves.
- If sick, please do not come to practice. Being in the water shares germs with everyone.
- Pay attention and give full cooperation to ALL coaches when they are giving directions.
- No foul language is accepted anywhere in Y or on the road at away meets.
- Swimmers must conduct themselves respectfully to each other in the locker rooms.
- Try to use the restrooms before or after practice.
- Swim full lengths of your workout – what you skip hurts you and your performance.
- Show respect for fellow swimmers – we are a TEAM.
- If you are disruptive in practice and don't show respect to your coaches or fellow swimmers, we will contact your parents and you can't return to practice until you visit with the Head Coach.
- Minnesota state law requires that a shower be taken prior to entering the pool.
- Make sure you have everything you need for practice (swimsuit, cap, goggles, water bottle).

- Please be on the pool deck and ready to go when practice starts. It is distracting to the team and makes it difficult to keep the routine together if swimmers are coming in late. Swimmers who are tardy may be required to make up the time after practice.
- Please uphold the YMCA core (caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility) values during practice and meets. During practices a 1-2-out policy will be followed. Swimmers will receive two cues with the second cue resulting in a time out of the water. If the issue is not corrected, the swimmer will be dismissed from practice.
- Please bring a water bottle to practice. It is very important that swimmers stay hydrated during practice. Please have the swimmers name on water bottles. Pop will not be allowed. Please be aware that there is no longer a functioning water fountain on the pool deck.
- All equipment should be put away at the end of practice. This includes kickboards, pull buoys, fins and paddles. The goal is always to leave an area nicer than when we found it. This also applies to crash areas at meets, both home and away.
- Use of inappropriate language is not allowed by swimmers, coaching staff, parent volunteers or advisors at any time.
- If you must wear street shoes on the pool deck, please make sure they are clean. Wiping the soles of shoes off on the mat outside the pool before entering can do wonders to help keep the deck free of dirt and other small particles that could hurt or injure swimmer's bare feet.
- No horseplay is allowed in the locker rooms.
- Please be respectful of the Y facilities and other people that may be using the Y. This includes making sure that the locker rooms are cleaned up after practice.

## **SWIM TEAM PRACTICE OBJECTIVES**

In many respects, youth competitive swimming can be a preparation for life. The hardest worker in the pool does not always win the race any more often than the hardest worker in a job earns the most money. Every swimmer will learn, however, that to reach their potential they must work intelligently and diligently. The practices are planned with the following thoughts in mind:

- Swimmers should learn to swim all four recognized competitive strokes.
- The Y program is centered around the development of swimmers who will be able to compete in all strokes within their own physical abilities. By doing so, the swimmers are constantly challenged to develop versatility and to contribute to the team effort.
- Swimming competition should be fun.
- Swimmers are not cut from the team, we need everyone to make up the team.
- Workouts are individualized as much as possible to motivate and challenge everyone regardless of skill level.
- The success of a workout should not be measured in terms of hours or yards but in terms of intensity and enthusiasm, improvement, and personal growth.
- Lastly, PRACTICE DOES NOT MAKE PERFECT.....PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

## **PRACTICE SCHEDULE**

The Tigersharks are divided into two groups. Swimmers age 7 and younger will participate in the Jr. Program, and swimmers age 8 and over will participate in the standard program. Junior swimmers who would like to be in the standard program may discuss moving up to the standard program with the team coach. The purpose of this system is two-fold. First, it will provide a greater emphasis on the fundamental skills necessary to competitive swimming. Second, it will diminish the time commitment needed to participate in the program through a lighter practice schedule and not requiring attendance at away meets. Competition will be at home meets and among other swimmers in the junior program. The Senior program will reinforce the fundamentals already learned, and work on developing stroke technique, learning new strokes, and building endurance and stamina.

### **Expectations for Junior swimmers:**

- Attend practice twice each week
  - **Tuesday 3:30 – 5:00**
  - **Thursday 3:30 – 5:00**
- Attend and participate in home swim meets
- Participate in team fundraisers

### **Expectations for Senior swimmers:**

- Attend daily practice.
  - Practices on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays will be structured with the emphasis on individual coaching. Tuesday and Thursday practices will consist of working on technique (starts, turns, etc.).
  - **Monday 3:30 – 5:00**
  - **Wednesday 3:30 – 5:00**
  - **Friday 3:30 – 5:00**
- Attend and participate in at least three closed meets (at least one meet must be away). A closed meet is defined as a meet consisting of a minimum of two YMCA teams. A meet between us and a YWCA does not qualify unless another YMCA is also competing. Please remember that just because you swim in three league meets may not mean that your time will qualify you to advance into post-season competition.
- Exhibit age-appropriate and skill-appropriate leadership to younger swimmers and model the core values of the Albert Lea Family Y and the Tigersharks.
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## **HOW OFTEN DO WE HAVE TO BE AT PRACTICE?**

You must attend at least one practice the week before a swim meet. Do keep in mind the amount of time you practice will be reflected in your race times and improvement. How hard you work at practice also has a bearing on how well you will swim a race. So a great deal of your success is totally dependent on you – not the coach.

## HOW DOES A SWIM MEET WORK?

Girls compete against girls and boys compete against boys. Everyone swims in their own age bracket, ex. 8 and under, 10 and under, and so on. Events are numbered and alternate Boy, Girl and go through all age brackets before we swim a different event.

There are four competitive strokes: freestyle, which can be anything but generally front crawl is swum; Backstroke, any type of stroke and kick on back but we generally see back crawl; Breast stroke; and Butterfly. All strokes have set rules for starts, performance of stroke, turns and finishes. When a swimmer has an infraction of one of these rules he/she is disqualified from the event and will receive no placement. There is the Individual Medley (I.M.) which consists of all four strokes. There are also two relay events, the Medley Relay and the Freestyle Relay. All relays have four swimmers. In the Medley relay each of the four swimmers swim one of the four strokes (back, breast, butterfly, and front crawl). In relays, if one of the swimmers has an infraction of the rules for that relay, the whole relay team will be disqualified.

At a meet each swimmer may enter up to three individual events and two relays. Deadline for entries are posted on season schedule – if you have not entered your child by the deadline you will miss that meet. The coaches will place swimmers in relays – the relays are what the TEAM is about and swimmers will be placed in relays and expected to swim. Parents are asked to never just leave a swim meet with your child unless contacting one of the coaches. If you are entered in a meet and your swimmer becomes ill the evening before, please call the Head Coach or assistant coach. Entry forms will have directions (or directions will follow before the meet – with start time and warm-up time). Please have your swimmers at a meet in time for warm-ups.

Swimmers have a seating area. The TEAM will sit together whenever possible. Swimmers can bring sleeping bags, deck sandals, extra towels, clothing to wear over wet suits, drinks (water, power aid, Gatorade, juice or fruit drinks). Make sure drinks are in non-breakable containers. Most meets run about 3-4 hours so a snack after swimming is ALL over is a good idea to have along. Most meets have a food concession stand available. We encourage you to discourage your swimmer from eating before they are done competing. A stomach full of food will make them swim slower, and possibly make them feel sick.

Once we are at the meet the swimmers can have their event numbers written on their hand or check the entry sheet posted on the wall in the seating area. There is a warm-up period in the pool. It is very important for the swimmer to have a warm-up. It stretches their muscles to prevent injuries; it also gives them a chance to get used to walls and starting blocks at pools in which they are not familiar with.

When the meet is ready to start, they play the National Anthem. The swimmers then begin gathering at the “Clerk of Course” area by the event numbers. They are then placed in their heats and are taken into the pool area by an escort. They will be placed by their swimming lane. In dual meets, not all events have entries so the meet will run quickly – swimmers need to

watch what event numbers are being called. Because we are a TEAM, swimmers are expected to cheer for all their teammates, not just for their friends. Our swimmers are also expected to show good sportsmanship. As part of this, they are to remain in the pool after they swim until every swimmer in their event has completed the race. They are also to congratulate swimmers in lanes on either side of them whether they beat them or not.

*When can I leave the meet?* A parent cannot take a swimmer from the meet unless they notify one of the coaches – your swimmer may be needed in a relay. Remember, in relays, three other swimmers are involved, not just your swimmer.

## SWIM MEET PROCEDURES

- Swimmers are expected to participate in home events. Members of the Sr. team must attend at least one away meet. **Remember-** if we don't attend meets at other team's pools, they will not be so willing to come to our pool, and every team relies heavily on their concessions for team fundraising. We all need to help and support each other.
- The Y does not have the means to transport participants to away meets, so parents will need to help with transportation. The team may rent a motor coach to ride to meets that are father away.
- Swimmers need to be signed up for their events by the posted deadline. All meet information is posted on the team information board. There are NO LATE ENTRIES accepted! If there are questions about what events to swim please see the coach. Requests for events will be honored if possible but is up to coach's discretion.
- During meets, the team will have a designated "crash room." Signs will be posted at every meet. If there is no crash room, this information will be posted on the information board.
- Bring: an extra towel, a sleeping bag or blanket, books to read or homework to help pass time between events. You might have quite a while between races. Understand that there is no security available so try to leave expensive electronics at home. The Y is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- Many swimmers like to bring a cooler with healthy snacks as well. Please note that at some facilities you cannot have beverages in the hang out areas. Usually the host team will have concessions available and would appreciate you buying items from them as this is usually a huge fundraiser for the team.
- Some of our larger meets will have vendors selling suits, goggles, t- shirts, etc. This is a good place to get unique swimming items.
- The schedule for each meet will include an arrival time, warm-up time and meet start.
- Programs are usually available for sale at meets. This is where parents can find who their swimmer is swimming against, when each race is, and how swimmers are seeded.
- It is the swimmer's responsibility to be at the starting block for the beginning of your race. If you are not there, the race may start without you.
- There are various ways that events will be called; each host has their own method. This will be gone over with the swimmers before the start of the meet. Usually, within sight

of the staging area, there is a large white board that will list the events being called. It is imperative to pay attention to what event is being called so you do not miss your event!

- YMCA swim meets generally follow the same format and event list. Some events may be combined into one heat or even eliminated based on participation.
- A lot of swimmers wear Grandma Pants/ warm-ups, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and some type of footwear to keep warm. **Please wear flip flops or some type of shoe outside the pool area. This is a twofold safety concern: First, the floors will be very wet and slick. Second, the swimmers may be walking on the same floors as people who have been walking outside and may have sand and small stones on their feet. These can hurt your feet or be taken into the pool.**
- The crash room needs to be picked up before the team is allowed to leave. We always want to leave an area better than we found it.
- Swimmers should not be wandering around buildings during meets. It's never a bad idea to be in the pool cheering on your teammates.
- Each facility and host team will have their own rules to follow. All spectators, swimmers and Y staff are expected to follow these rules.
- **NO GLASS IS ALLOWED AT ANY POOL! NO EXCEPTIONS!!**

## HOW DO WE ENTER MEETS?

You will receive a team calendar with important team dates and all meet deadlines. Because changes may occur, check your swimmer's mailbox for information and changes. Your swimmer should come home with meet information and sign-up forms (in this handbook), which need to be filled out. These forms have a deadline. They must be filled out and returned by the deadline (no exceptions) or your swimmer will not be able to attend the meet. Each swimmer may swim up to three individual events, with relays determined by coaches. Even though a swimmer selects an event, as coaches, we may change the event to get your swimmer to try something else, or because they can't legally swim that stroke yet. Parents, please help us as coaches, by encouraging your swimmer to swim where they are asked. All swimmers will be entered in a minimum of one relay. The relays teach us team work and team caring.

## RELAY TEAMS

Relays are set up by the coaches based on who is swimming for that meet. If there are not enough swimmers, relays may be combined by mixed gender or mixed age groups. Relays are a fun way for the swimmers to get the "team experience" and an extra chance to swim. The swimmers will be placed on relays for championship meets based on attendance, meet participation, ability and attitude. Swimmers will take turns on relays if necessary. **ANY SWIMMER PARTICIPATING ON A RELAY WHICH MAKES IT INTO POST-SEASON COMPETITION WILL BE EXPECTED TO COMPETE WITH THE RELAY IN SECTIONAL, STATE, AND/ OR REGIONAL MEETS.**

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

- Make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do



their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life that they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.

- Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/her competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
- Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or at breakfast, etc. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the swimmer to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often, critical instruction.
- Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, learn from their successes and failures, and to work to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, trying hard and having fun.
- Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child. Let them make their own way and find what works for them in the athletic world. What was 'Right' for you may not be 'Right' for them.
- Don't compare the skill, courage or attitudes of your child with other members of the team.
- Get to know the coaches so that you can be comfortable addressing any needs of your child with them.
- Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting.
- Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened under different circumstances. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort.
- Remember that meets are about the swimmers; not about adults.
- Help your child enjoy the swim team experience by assisting with coaching (if requested), being a respectful fan, providing transportation or doing whatever you are able to do to help.
- Giving your swimmer the opportunity to participate in the team is an investment not just monetarily, but also of time. Parents are always invited to watch their swimmers during practice. Remember that it can mean a lot to your swimmer for you to take enough interest in them to stay and watch their practices from time to time.

## **HOW MUCH OF MY TIME AS A PARENT IS EXPECTED?**

We encourage swim team to be a family sport. We hope all families will become involved with the parent committee. We expect you to help get your swimmer to and from practice. Some families get together and car pool to practice or away meets. We expect you to be encouraging and supportive, don't compare your swimmer to others – they all have their special talents.

No successful meet can take place without the participation of the parents. Helping out beats sitting around for 2-3 hours for a minute race, and it's a great way to show your support for your child/ren and the team. You are much more than a chauffeur and a cheerleader. Your volunteerism is an essential part of the success of our swim program. Volunteering at meets gets the whole family involved, building camaraderie and strong relationships throughout the whole team. Our home meets are a money making enterprise. We do expect you to bring in your food concession assigned item and do your part working to help the meet run smoothly and successfully. You will have two different jobs during a meet – one assignment the first half of the meet, one assignment the second half of the meet. In some areas, if you work the first half of the meet you may have to be here for set-up and other areas, if you work the second half you will have to stay to tear down while your swimmer showers.

The Parent Advisory Committee will contact you before a meet. There are plenty of jobs for everyone. We have timers, food concession workers, computer workers, ribbon writers, clerk of course, greeters, escorts, stroke and turn officials, and starters. You'll have a great chance to meet all the other swimming parents. NONE of the jobs are too hard to learn. We coaches thank all those active parents for their continued support – and those who may be reluctant – step up now and get involved! You'll love it!

## **SWIM TEAM PARENT'S ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES**

- Swimmer's parents or guardians are strongly encouraged to be an active member of the Albert Lea Family Y Swim Team Parent's Association.
- The purpose of the association is to guide the swimmers in the positive attitudes of team fellowship, cooperation, sportsmanship and competition while assisting in swim team activities.
- Every effort is made to offer a wide variety of volunteer activities to enable participation. Without the participation of parents and family we cannot run meets or maintain the fundraising required to support the team.
- The Parent Association may be broken into committees that will benefit the team (i.e. a fundraising committee, a social committee, a concessions committee and any others the Parent's Association determines as necessary).
- The Swim Team Parent's Association consists of committee chair volunteers, parents and the executive committee.
- The Tigershark Executive Committee from the Albert Lea Family Y shall oversee the Swim
- Team Parent's Association. This committee consists of the Executive Director of the Y, the Sports/Fitness director, the Head Coach and a representative from the Parent's Association Board.

- Parent Association Meetings are open and all are welcomed and invited to attend. Meetings will be scheduled as needed. Dates and times will be posted on the swim team information board.

## **PARENT- SWIMMER-COACH RELATIONSHIP**

*Adapted from the Dynamo Swim Club Handbook*

- Parents: 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 coaching staffs experience has found that the proper guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective.
- Every individual learns at a rate and responds to the various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner takes more time to learn, and this requires more patience on the parts of the parents and coaches, who must remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great or greater than that of the faster learner.
- When an athlete first comes out for the team and starts practicing, it is possible for him/her to worsen rather than improve. This is likely due to the emphasis placed on stroke technique in these groups. The new habits are the basis for future improvement.
- Plateaus can occur at one time or another in any swimmer's career. Plateaus can occur both in competition and in training. A plateau indicates the swimmer has mastered lower-ordered skills, but they are not sufficiently ready to attack newer, higher-ordered skills. It is important to explain to athletes that plateaus occur in all fields of physical learning. 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.
- 10 and unders are the most inconsistent swimmers, and this can be frustrating for the coach, parent and swimmer. We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.
- 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 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.
- 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 the young athletes feel good about themselves.
- Parents' attitudes and actions often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires, Be enthusiastic about taking your child to

practices and meets, fundraising projects, meetings etc. Don't look on these functions as chores.

- If you have questions about your child's training contact your child's coach directly outside of practice time away from any swimmers. Criticizing the coach in front of the youngsters undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.
- No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team or competitive swimming. As a parent involved with the Y swim team, you are functioning as a representative of the Y, it is imperative to keep the Y principles in mind.
- Be sure that your youngster swims because he/she wants to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do". Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.
- Avoid playing your child off against their nearest competitors, thereby creating vendettas within the team and swimming community. Close competition provides two great services for the athletes: it brings out the best in them, and it shows where improvement is needed.
- 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 have the swimmer's attention at all times.
- Remember: The attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can 'win' or succeed all the time - there will always be some disappointment. Every youngster can gain from his experience whether or not he ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time. The secret is not necessarily to produce great swimmers, but rather to produce great, young people who swim

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are sections?**

Sections are the qualifying meet for the Minnesota YMCA State Meet. All teams in Minnesota are divided up into four sections. Every year one team in each section hosts a championship meet to determine who qualifies for the state meet. To swim at sections a swimmer must have swam in three meets which included other YMCA's and one sanctioned meet, such as Pumpkin Relays.

### **How do the swimmers make it to state?**

At the section meet, the top three in each event qualify automatically. Since the state meet runs two heats of every event, there are spots for 16 swimmers. With each section sending the top three that leaves four open lanes at state; the state chair will then go through all the results from the four sections and the swimmers with the next fastest four times in the state will be "called up" to state. There are times when a section does not have three swimmers in an event and there will be more open spots to fill with swimmers from other sections. Waiting for 'call ups' is a very tense time for the swimmers. Swimmers can qualify for state in individual events

and/or relays. The state meet is always held at the University of Minnesota Aquatics Center on the Minneapolis campus.

### **What is a Regional Meet?**

Midwest Regionals is a meet that takes place at the end of March or the beginning of April. To qualify for this meet, a swimmer needs to attain a time standard, which will be posted on the information board and will be printed on most meet programs. There are teams from all over the Midwest competing and it is a lot of fun. This meet is not a Y meet or a USA meet, it is a MYAS run meet and is held at the Aquatic Center at the U of M.

### **How do the kids get on relays?**

Relays are set up by the coaches based on who is swimming for that meet. If there are not enough swimmers, relays may be combined by mixed gender or mixed age groups. Relays are a fun way for the swimmers to get the "team experience" and an extra chance to swim. The swimmers will be placed on relays for championship meets based on attendance, meet participation, ability and attitude. Swimmers will take turns on relays if necessary. **ANY SWIMMER PARTICIPATING ON A RELAY WHICH MAKES IT INTO POST-SEASON COMPETITION WILL BE EXPECTED TO COMPETE WITH THE RELAY IN SECTIONAL, STATE, AND/ OR REGIONAL MEETS.**

### **What happens in case of bad weather?**

In the event of bad weather, the Family Y will determine whether or not to cancel practice at least one hour before the scheduled start time. In the event of school closings, practice will be cancelled as well. Cancellations will be broadcast on am KATE 1450 and Power 96 (96.10) FM radio. Information will also be posted on the team website, [www.altigersharks.org](http://www.altigersharks.org), and the YMCA youth website, [www.ymcaalkids.org](http://www.ymcaalkids.org). If you are unsure, call the YMCA. A parent always reserves the authority to determine whether or not their child will participate under certain weather conditions. In the case of inclement weather on a meet day, the visiting team is given the decision whether to attend. This decision will generally be made by the end of practice on Fridays since some meets require an early departure time on Saturdays.

### **Do we have to buy a team suit?**

No. The team suit is entirely optional. We will only order suits once, however, so it is important to have your order turned in on time. We do recommend if you do get a team suit, that you still have a separate practice suit for your swimmer as the daily practice is rough on the life of a suit. We highly recommend that all girls wear a swim cap for all practices and meets. Chlorine is very tough on hair and the swim caps prevent a lot of damage, not all, but quite a bit of it.

### **How do I find out what's going on?**

There is a Tigershark Information Board located by the Lifeguard's office. Some information will also be put in your swimmer's folder. It is very important that you check the board for all things swim team, and check your folder for any take home information. Meet registrations and deadlines will be posted on the board. It is the swimmer/ parent's responsibility to make sure a swimmer is registered on time for a meet. Host teams have deadlines set for entries, and we

must have time to prepare the computer file to send to the host team. Adding swimmers after the fact can be an inconvenience to host teams, and some teams will refuse to accept late entries. All team information and online meet registration is available at the team website: [www.albertleaswim.org](http://www.albertleaswim.org).

### **How is poor behavior handled?**

Kids will be kids and there will sometimes be cases of inappropriate behavior, either to one another, to coaches or lifeguards and sometimes property. If it is minor we will address the matter with the team - discussing right and wrong choices and incorporating our character development traits - honesty, caring, respect and responsibility. If the swimmer is showing disrespect to other swimmers, coaches or lifeguards, they will be asked to sit out of the pool for awhile. If the problem persists after the time-out, they will be asked to leave practice. If the problem is repetitive or more serious, there will be a talk with the parents and the swimmer. If the problem continues, there may be a dismissal from the team. We do ask all swimmers to be responsible; if they witness inappropriate behavior they are to report it to the coaches. We want swim team to be a positive, fun, growing experience in a safe environment.

### **What if I have concerns, who do I contact?**

Sometimes problems or questions arise that need to be addressed. Areas of concern can range from why a child isn't on a certain relay, to a child feeling a coach has picked on them or is mad at them, to just wondering why a the child is swimming certain events. Please don't overlook your concerns and don't get others unnecessarily involved. Concerns should be brought to the attention of the head coach. If the concern is regarding the head coach, or the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, please contact Susie Hulst, the Sports/Fitness Director.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

### **Swim Meets:**

November 5	Pumpkin Relays at Austin
November 12	Away meet at Austin
November 19	Home meet Worthington
December 3	Away meet at Mankato with Austin
December 10	Away meet at Austin
January 7	With Blaisdell TBD

### **Vacation Day Practice Schedule:**

October 20-21	No Practice (MEA break)
November 24-25	No Practice (Thanksgiving)
December 22-23	No Practice
December 29-30	No Practice
January 2	No Practice
January 27	last practice before Sectional meet

\*Adjustments to this schedule may be made in advance at the coach's discretion.

\*Practice schedule after sections will be determined a later date.

### **Other**

- October 3- first practice
- October 21- All fees (annual membership and team fee) due if not already in.
- January 28- Section meet hosted by Albert Lea (At Albert Lea High School)
- February 12- State YMCA meet at the U of M. (This is a Sunday)
- March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11th- YMCA Regional at Rochester Rec. Center

### **Important Links**

[www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org](http://www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org) – National YMCA swimming and diving

[www.myas.org](http://www.myas.org) – Minnesota Youth Athletics Services

[www.albertleaswim.org](http://www.albertleaswim.org) – Official website of the Albert Lea Tigersharks.

### **PACKING LIST FOR SWIM MEET**

- Suit
- Goggles (extra pair in case one gets lost)
- Team swim cap
- Two towels (keep one dry for shower after meet)
- Footwear – deck sandals/slides to wear from gym to pool deck
- Blanket/sleeping bag for your swimmer to put on gym floor to sit on while waiting for their next event (you'll want to be able to easily wash this item)
- Cover-up to wear over wet suit to keep your swimmer warm in between events
- Playing cards, book to read, game (items to entertain your swimmer). We do not recommend electronics or expensive items as they could get stolen. Bring at your own risk.
- Beverages and snacks, ideally nutritious items.
- Toiletry items for shower after the meet
- Clothes to wear home from the meet

**My Swimmer and I have read the Handbook**

My swimmer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ and I \_\_\_\_\_ have read the entire handbook. We understand the expectations that have been set for both parents and swimmers and will abide by them.

Swimmer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

For safety reasons, all paperwork and registration forms must be completed and turned in to the Y by the second day of practice.

I agree to let pictures of my swimmer be used for advertising purposes for the Family Y (catalogs, brochures, facebook, website and any other online promotional channels). These pictures may also be used at the end of year for the banquet.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent name printed \_\_\_\_\_

Name of swimmer(s) \_\_\_\_\_





FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**PUMPKIN RELAYS Nov. 5**

**AWAY AUSTIN**

**Warm-ups TBA Start Time TBA**

**Entry deadline – October 29**

**Return bottom half by Oct. 29**

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**AWAY AUSTIN PUMPKIN RELAYS NOV. 5**

\_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Event & #

\_\_\_\_\_

Event & #

\_\_\_\_\_

Event & #

**Entry Deadline – October 29**

Coach will assign relay teams – do not list relay as an event



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**AUSTIN Nov. 12**

**AWAY**

**Warm-ups TBA Start Time TBA**

**Entry deadline – November 5**

**Return bottom half by Nov. 5**

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**AWAY AUSTIN NOV. 12**

\_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Event & #

Event & #

Event & #

**Entry Deadline – November 5**

Coach will assign relay teams – do not list relay as an event!



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**WORTHINGTON Nov. 19**

**HOME**

**Warm-ups TBA Start Time TBA**

**Entry deadline – November 12**

**Return bottom half by Nov. 12**

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**HOME WORTHINGTON NOV. 19**

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Swimmer's Name

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Event & #

Event & #

Event & #

**Entry Deadline – November 12**

Coach will assign relay teams – do not list relay as an event!



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**MANKATO Dec. 3**

**AWAY**

**Warm-ups TBA Start Time TBA**

**Entry deadline – November 26**

**Return bottom half by Nov. 26**

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**AWAY MANKATO Dec. 3**

\_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Event & #

Event & #

Event & #

**Entry Deadline – November 26**

Coach will assign relay teams – do not list relay as an event!



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**AUSTIN Dec. 10**

**AWAY**

**Warm-ups TBA Start Time TBA**

**Entry deadline – December 3**

**Return bottom half by Dec. 3**

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**AWAY AUSTIN CITY Dec. 10**

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Swimmer's Name

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Event & #

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Event & #

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Event & #

**Entry Deadline – December 3**

Coach will assign relay teams – do not list relay as an event!



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Blaisdell Jan. 7**

**TBD**

**Warm-ups TBA Start Time TBA**

**Entry deadline – Dec. 28**

**Return bottom half by Dec.28**

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**BLAISDELL Jan. 7**

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Swimmer's Name

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Event & #

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Event & #

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Event & #

**Entry Deadline – December 28**

Coach will assign relay teams – do not list relay as an event!