

FREDERICK COUNTY YMCA TIDAL FORCE SWIM TEAM

GENERAL HANDBOOK

Revised 4/10



Frederick County YMCA
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WELCOME!

Welcome to the YMCA Youth Swim Team. We hope that you will find being a member of our organization a great experience. We work hard to develop the abilities of all our swimmers, not just those of a few. Our coaches recognize that swimming constitutes only a portion of a child's life, and although each swimmer is encouraged to achieve his or her maximum potential, our ultimate goal is to help develop happy, emotionally and physically healthy children with diverse interests.

PHILOSOPHY

To provide an environment which allows each individual to reach his or her maximum potential consistent with his or her own goals;

To encourage swimmers to set challenging goals;

To sponsor a positive team environment;

To produce good swimmers and good kids;

To have fun!

Swimming for the YMCA has many rewards. We wish you all a terrific swim season!

NATIONAL YMCA COMPETITIVE SWIMMING MOTTO:

"Everyone swims, everyone wins!"

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1. Introduction

1.1 A Note to Parents of Prospective Swimmers

Thank you for your interest in the Frederick County YMCA Tidal Force Swim Team. In the following pages, you will find important information about the team. Please read **all** information carefully.

Some important things to remember:

1. To compete on the winter swim team (September to March), all swimmers **must be members of the YMCA!** This is a league rule; there are no exceptions. If you cannot afford a membership, scholarships are available. YMCA membership is not required to swim on the summer team. There is a league fee, required by the League, for each summer swimmer. If you choose to participate in the YMCA summer specialty meets, you must be a YMCA Member.
2. There are program fees that pay for pool time and staff, associated with each season. The practice group determines the amount. Fees are based on the number of practices offered for each group within the season. We also charge an administrative fee to help offset the cost of running the team.
3. Practice times will be given out at the start of each month and posted on our web page (www.frederickymca.org). The practice times on the calendars are subject to change. You will be notified as quickly as possible of any changes.
4. Due to insurance regulations, all paperwork (i.e., registration forms, Health Waiver, membership if applicable) must be completed **prior** to the first practice.
5. There is a non-refundable Registration Fee that is due prior to the first practice. This will register your swimmer for their approved practice group. The first two weeks of the winter season and first three weeks of the summer season are your trial period. If you wish to withdraw from the team after this period you will need to inform the Swim Team Administrator in writing of your intention. If no written withdrawal is received, the balance due plus any League (summer) and Administrative Fees will be due - payable in installments according to your invoice. The Registration Fee will be applied to the balance due. If the Group fee has

not been paid by the date due listed on your invoice, the following will occur: First, contact will be made to remind you to make the payment. If, within a week, payment has not been made in full, a reminder letter will be sent out. If another week goes by without full payment being made, you will be informed that your swimmer may not practice or participate in any swim team practice, activity or event until full payment has been made.

6. While team suits are not required, it is strongly recommended that a good quality competition suit be worn for all swim meets. If you choose to purchase a non-team suit, please keep in mind that our team colors are purple and black. Besides showing team spirit, wearing our team colors in the water really helps the team photographers to identify our swimmers. Team suits will be available for purchase from a retailer chosen by the Team. The representative will be available, at least once per season, at the YMCA for sizing and orders. After that time, suits may or may not be available for order until the next swim season, depending on the supplier. Team caps are available through the Team. Goggles can be purchased at the Courtesy Counter. Other swim team apparel will also be available for sale through a team-selected distributor.

1.2 About the YMCA Swim Team - Our History

The Frederick County YMCA Swim Team was formed many years ago with a few children and parents eager to work towards enriching bodies, minds and spirits by participating in a competitive swimming environment.

Since then, many coaches, swimmers and parents have benefited from the YMCA Swim Team's competitive spirit and their emphasis on improving swimming skills, as well as teaching good sportsmanship and improving "Body, Mind and Spirit." This is the ultimate mission of the Frederick County YMCA Swim Team and the FCY coaching staff.

1.3 The Swim Team...How It Works!

The swim team participates and competes in both a summer and a winter league. We compete as a team in scored, dual meets (required) as well as optional invitational meets throughout both seasons. In between seasons, the Team offers a competitive stroke clinic to help swimmers get ready for summer competition.

Any child can join the YMCA swim team upon proving the ability to swim at least one length of the pool (25yds) without a flotation device. The swimmer must demonstrate at the minimum, a rudimentary freestyle (utilizing recognizable rotary breathing and over water arm recovery) and backstroke

(good body position and over water arm recovery). The YMCA does not discriminate based on race, economic situation, religious beliefs or disability.

Practices

Practices are held selected afternoons and evenings at the YMCA and Frederick High School. Practice groups and times will be based on the child's swimming ability. There are no minimum practice requirements. For optimal progression, it is suggested that the minimum number of practices recommended by the coaches for that level be attended. To help the swimmers concentrate on the coaches, parents are discouraged from remaining on the deck during practices.

Meets

During the winter season (September to March), we swim in the Chesapeake & Potomac (C&P) Swim League. We compete in invitational meets (many teams against each other, optional), 4 to 5 dual meets (our team against one other team, required) and a championship meet (all teams, swimmers qualify by swimming in at least three dual meets, required). For all the 8 & under swimmers, there is an annual Mini-Meet held at the end of the winter season (no time qualifications, required) in place of the championship meet. The East Field South Districts, Short Course YMCA National Championships and Long Course YMCA National Championships are open to all swimmers from age 9-18 that attain qualifying times during the regular swim season. We require every swimmer to participate in all dual meets and the C&P Championships and/or Mini-Meet.

USA swimming is available for all swimmers. Many YMCA swim teams do both YMCA and USA swimming, but only participate in a few USA meets during the season. Some of the meets we swim are also USA sanctioned meets. If your swimmer wants to take advantage of USA swimming, information will be provided. However, these will be individual competitions with limited or no coach present. USA swimming requires additional joining fees.

During the summer season (May to July), the team participates in the Frederick Summer Swim League (FSSL). As a team, we compete in 4 dual meets, at least one large, multi-team meet and the All-Star meet (all swimmers who attain a qualifying time at an FSSL meet during the season, regardless of age).

In the summer, we offer specialty YMCA swim meets. These meets are usually in Pennsylvania and Maryland. You must be a YMCA member and have only swum in closed YMCA meets since September 1st to compete in these meets. High School swimmers who compete in school meets are the exception to this rule.

Other Programs

A weight-training/dry land program designed for swimmers may be available for team members age 13 and up throughout the year. This program, when offered, is exclusively for Frederick County YMCA members who are also members of the Tidal Force swim team.

Spring Stroke Clinic (end of March to middle of May), is 6 to 8 weeks of intense instruction on all the elements of competitive swimming, broken down and rebuilt through demonstration, instruction, drills and practice. Each clinic meets 2 to 3 times a week for 1 to 1 ½ hours with low instructor to swimmer ratios. We offer three levels: Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced. During this time we also offer a Spring Training session for our upper level swimmers. This focuses on conditioning and cross training.

1.4 Practice Groups

The Team is divided into five practice groups. For swimmers that are YMCA members and 13 and older, cross training practices are available at no extra cost. These groups are based on swimmer skill level. All swimmers, regardless of level, are required to participate in all dual swim meets and the C&P Championship or Mini-Meet. The coaches must approve any exceptions before the start of the season.

The Ripples Group

The Ripples practice group is comprised of children who are new to the sport of swimming. The children in this group are 8 years of age or younger. For the winter team they are required to swim at least one length of the pool (25 yds) without using a floatation device, utilizing recognizable rotary breathing and over water recovery of the arms, with the basic mechanics of a flutter kick, and are able to swim 25 yards on their back in a good body position (head back, hips up). Major emphasis will be on the development of freestyle and backstroke. For the summer team, these swimmers must be able to swim one length of the pool in any style. Participation on the summer team, at this level, does not automatically put them on the winter team. They must be able to pass the winter team requirements as listed above. These swimmers will be introduced to butterfly and breaststroke, when appropriate. Ripples practice two times per week for 45 minutes each. Ripple swimmers will either age-up (at 9) or become legal in at least three strokes to move up to the Waves group.

The Waves Group

The Waves practice group is made up of swimmers who have solid freestyle and backstroke technique and may be legal in butterfly OR breaststroke. This group will have swimmers who are totally new to swimming but are too old for the

Ripples. In this group, freestyle and backstroke techniques are refined through the use of drills. The butterfly and breaststroke are introduced utilizing drills. This group has three 1-hour practices per week. When legal in all four competitive strokes and deemed ready by the Level Coach, the Wave swimmer will move up to the Low Tide group.

The Low Tide Group

The Low Tide group will work on more advanced freestyle and backstroke technique, and will develop the butterfly and breaststroke to a higher level. This group will have a greater emphasis on building endurance than the Waves group. The Low Tides will work on competitive and relay starts. They will work on turns for all strokes, including medley events. Swimmers in this group practice 3 times per week.

The Force Prep Group

Swimmers in this group are more mature and ready for a more challenging workout than the Low Tide group will get. Swimmers in this group have a greater understanding of stroke techniques for all four strokes. They are able to use an effective competitive dive, relay start and consistently apply appropriate turns. The swimmers in this group must have the endurance to consistently complete repeated 50s during practice. These swimmers will practice at least 3 times per week.

The Force Group

These swimmers must be adept at the proper performance of all four strokes. Swimmers must have a high degree of endurance. They must be able to do multiple repetitions of 100s and be able to compete in the 200 IM and 500 Free. All strokes, turns and starts will be refined using a variety of coaching techniques, as well as continued building of endurance further. Swimmers in the Force group may attend 5 - 6 practices a week, 13 and over may attend additional practices with coach approval. EXCEPTION: Swimmers 10 and under that have reached this level are limited to four practices per week. These swimmers are encouraged to work toward achieving the goals they have set for themselves for the season.

2. Swim Meets

2.1 General Information

At swim meets, each swimmer will be entered into events in accordance with league rules as well as their ability. This may include individual as well as relay events. Events must be swum in the swimmer's age group. General age groups are:

| | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 8 and under; | 13 and 14 years; and |
| 9 and 10 years; | 15 through 18 years. |
| 11 and 12 years; | |

These groups are based on age at the beginning of the season (winter team - December 1st, summer team - June 1st). The coaches have the final decision regarding which events (individual and relay) your swimmer will swim in dual meets. At times, last minute changes, due to illness or injury, may have to be made to relays that may exclude or include other swimmers. It is the coach's job to select the best relay to represent the team. We will not put a child in an event which they do not have a reasonable chance of completing successfully (without disqualifying). Swim meets are for fun competition in an organized, healthy environment.

Optional invitational meets follow the same age group event restrictions; however, the swimmer chooses which events to enter, based on the meet specifications.

All dual meets are required in order to participate on the team and for the team to have a consistent pool of swimmers. Participation in meets is the best way for swimmers to gauge where they are in meeting their personal goals as well as for the coaches to determine individual development. If you have prior engagements, you must see a coach before committing your child to the team. In case of illness, please contact a coach as soon as possible. "Line-ups" are made well in advance of the meet, and much thought and strategy go into where swimmers are placed. Changes must be made before the start of the meet. If we know your child is ill, it may be possible to put another swimmer in the event, especially in the case of relays. Unless you have a pressing engagement after the meet, please stay until the last event to support the rest of the team.

Parents are *not* allowed on the pool deck at any time, at any meet, unless in an official capacity (i.e., timer, scorer, official, judge, runner, etc.). Parental coaching on the deck during practice or the meets is *not* allowed. No swimmer may be touched or assisted from the water until the entire race is over. This could result in disqualification (DQ) of that swimmer. If a parent disagrees with an official's decision concerning their child's event, they must talk to the coach - and do so prior to the end of the meet. Only a coach may approach an official concerning a DQ. Keep in mind, however, that usually the judgment of the official stands, and changes in a call are RARELY made. Officials are human, and can make mistakes, but they are also trained in the rules of competitive swimming, which most parents aren't. What looks good to you may be illegal.

Place ribbons can be earned at all meets. Our team gives "Best Time" ribbons to swimmers who have improved in the events they swam.

2.2 Paperwork

To ensure that every swimmer is entered into a meet correctly, prior to each meet, the Attendance Confirmation and Job Selection sheet will be posted on the team bulletin board. You must confirm your child's attendance and indicate job preference on this sheet by the date indicated for each dual meet. These dates can be found on the Specials calendar which will be emailed out monthly, posted on the web site and will also be stated on the actual Confirmation sheet posted on the board.

A response on the Attendance Confirmation and Job Selection sheet is required for all dual meets.

For the optional invitational meets, Meet Notice and Response forms will be emailed out in advance of the due date and must be returned to the Red Folder in the swim team file cabinet by the date indicated on the form. Meet fees will be paid at the Front Desk and the receipt attached to the form. Entries to these meets are done anywhere between 5 to 14 days prior to the meet. Since the swimmer is responsible for choosing which events to swim as well as the cost of each individual event, the Competitive Coordinator cannot enter a swimmer into an invitational without this form and receipt of payment.

The YMCA Health Waiver and must be completed and turned in prior to the first practice. We are required to have this information at all practices and meets, even if you plan on driving your child. Your child's form and all information

contained on it will be kept confidential and will only be used in the case of an emergency.

2.3 Transportation to Swim Meets

Transportation to meets is provided by the swimmer's parent(s). If a parent cannot provide transportation to a meet, try to arrange a ride with a teammate. If you can take additional swimmers to a meet, please tell the coaches so we can inform parents looking for rides. If your child needs a ride to a meet, please see a coach as he or she may know of a possible driver. We will help as much as possible, but it is your responsibility to arrange a ride for your child.

If your child will be carpooling without you, there is a waiver that must be signed and kept on file in the Swim Team office. Please see the Team Administrator for this form.

2.4 Warm-Ups

Members of the coaching staff will conduct warm-ups at the assigned time prior to each meet. Swimmers are NOT allowed in the pool before or after the assigned warm-up time. In order to take advantage of this, every swimmer is expected to be present at the meet location 30 minutes before warm-ups begin. **Swimmers must enter the water feet first for all warm-ups.** The only exception to this rule is during the 25-yard sprints conducted under the coach's supervision.

2.5 Team Area

All Tidal Force swimmers are expected to sit together at every meet in the designated team area. All swimmers must abide by the rules, policies and procedures set forth by the YMCA and the coaching staff. All swimmers must obey the rules of the pool hosting the meet. No swimmer may leave the team area without checking in with the team Clerk in charge of that area. Many swimmers have missed races because the Clerks did not know where they were. Do not expect the Clerks to look outside the team area in order to line your swimmer up for an event. There will be no running or rough play allowed in the team area. All swimmers are responsible for making sure that the team area is clean and litter/spill free before leaving the meet.

2.6 Race Finish

At the conclusion of each race, the swimmer should remain in the water until all other swimmers in that heat have finished. Shaking hands and saying something nice to a swimmer in the next lane shows good sportsmanship. Once out of the water, the swimmer should ask the timers for his or her unofficial race time and

thank them. After getting this time, the swimmer is to go directly to the coach to discuss the race and receive the coach's feedback. If a swimmer is disqualified, he or she is to listen to the official, thank them and then go speak with the coach. Remember that a DQ is to be viewed as a learning experience.

2.7 Items to Bring to Each Swim Meet

Swim Suits Not only is it nice to change into a dry team suit after a warm-up, suits have ripped at meets. Having a second on hand can be essential.

Swim Caps Bring an extra cap, in case one rips.

Goggles A spare pair or spare strap is a good idea.

Towels Bring at least two; the larger the better.

Clothes In an effort to keep from getting chilled between events wear a sweat suit, tee shirt, socks and shoes. If outdoors, bring a hat, sunglasses and an umbrella or canopy to protect you from the sun, and sunscreen is a must.

Toiletries After the meet you may want to shower. Don't forget the shampoo, conditioner and lotion. For safety reasons, use plastic bottles only.

Lock To keep your belongings safe in a locker.

Water Dehydration can adversely affect a swimmer's performance.

Other items you may want to have along are a pencil, log book, stop watch, folding chair, cooler, snack food, and cash. Since there may be long waits between races, it is important to bring games and other items to occupy your spare time in the team area. Do not bring things such as balls or frisbees, etc., as the team areas are often crowded and accidents can happen. Adults may want to bring pain medication (in case of headaches). Only parents may give medication to their children. Coaches and lifeguards are not allowed to dispense medications.

** No glass is permitted in the pool area or locker rooms. Food can be eaten only where allowed.*

2.8 Tips for Successful Swim Meets

1. Plan on arriving at the pool at least 30 minutes prior to the warm-up. Sometimes members of the team caravan to the meet, leaving from the YMCA.

2. Make sure you have a meet information sheet containing directions, warm up times, phone number of a coach, etc. This will be e-mailed the week of the meet.
3. At your first meet, you might feel unsure of yourself. Almost everyone gets the jitters, so don't be surprised if you feel a few "butterflies in your stomach" or you have trouble falling asleep the night before.
4. Check in with the coaches as soon as you arrive at the meet. **STAY IN THE TEAM AREA. NOTIFY THE CLERK OR TEAM MONITOR IF YOU LEAVE THE TEAM AREA FOR ANY REASON.** Swimmers who do not follow this rule miss events!
5. Check events and event numbers. Some swimmers like to write them on their hand to help them to remember. Pay attention to which events are being called to report to the Clerk of Course. Event sheets will be posted in the team area during the meet.
6. Before your event, see a coach for pointers.
7. *All* swimmers must stay back from the edge of the pool when cheering for teammates during a race. This means nothing can be in the water, such as hands, feet, goggles, caps, etc. *No* swimmer may be touched or assisted from the water until the entire race is finished. This action could result in the disqualification of the swimmer in the water.
8. **Check with a COACH or OUR team's Head Clerk before you leave the meet.** Sometimes last minute substitutions are necessary for the end of meet relays. The coaches also need to account for everyone.
9. **Nutrition is important at swim meets.** Be sure to bring a water bottle to keep yourself hydrated. Sport drinks are ok, but water is the best. Stay away from drinks that are high in sugar. Caffeine is a big no-no! Swimmers should eat light snacks high in carbohydrates, like crackers, rice, bagels and noodles. Vegetables and fruits are good choices, too. Swimmers should not eat too much protein before swimming and sugar is off the menu! Carbohydrates are a good choice in the days leading up to a meet.
10. **MOST IMPORTANTLY ... HAVE FUN!!!** Be a good sport, encourage your teammates, and congratulate your opponents regardless of the race results, and help watch over younger swimmers.

3. Parental Responsibilities

3.1 General

Parent workers help the coaches with the day to day operations of the swim team. This allows the staff to concentrate on coaching and leave many of the other aspects of managing the team to the parents. These parent workers help by running the concession stands, working various jobs at the swim meets, soliciting help for swim meets and other team events, typing, copying and compiling paper work, making phone calls, organizing fund raisers, and social activities. Due to the growing number of swimmers, it has become impossible for a handful of people to complete all the work needed to run our swim team. For this reason, we ask that at least one parent from each family give their time and energy to work on one of our committees.

All YMCA volunteers, youth and adult, must have a background check. This is to insure the safety of all our swimmers. It is an easy and secure process. You will be given a volunteer application, a Code of Conduct form and a blank envelope. Fill the forms out, place them in the envelope, seal it and put Kim Hart's name on the front. You may put the sealed envelope into the Red folder and a coach will deliver it to Kim Hart; you can give the sealed envelope to the front desk and ask that they deliver it to Kim Hart; or you can give it directly to Ms. Hart yourself. The only information that is given to the coaches is your name once you have been approved. Any questions pertaining to the volunteer application or the background check should be directed to Kim Hart at 301-663-5131 ext 1222.

Fundraiser Committee

This committee is in charge of and establishes all fund raising (concession stand, car washes, sale of merchandise, etc.), including those activities sponsored by the "Y."

Communication Committee

This committee assists the coaching staff in getting information out to the team families in a variety of ways. There are tasks that can be done by either a group of parents or by just an individual. The following are the big ones:

- **Media Contact** - Individual or Group led by a Media Chair. Contacts the newspapers after each meet to report the results.
- **Family Folder and Ribbon Boxes** - Sets up the folders at the beginning of the season and helps to maintain them throughout the season. Files

meet ribbons when they become available into individual swimmer folders.

- **Team Bulletin Board** – Creates a new look at the beginning of the season (at a minimum). Maintains the board by posting any current articles about our swimmers (past or present), as well as keeping all information posted current.
- **Team Roster** – Produces a complete team roster at the beginning of the season and updates it after the Opening Gun meet.
- **Team Photographer** – Individual or Group. Takes pictures at meets, both from on deck as well as in the team area. Takes pictures at team social events.

Social Activities Committee

This group is responsible for creating, planning and executing all social events, such as the end of season banquet, sleepovers and holiday parties.

Apparel & Awards Committee

This committee works with the Team Administrator to arrange for the purchase of ribbons, caps, trophies, team swim suits, T-shirts and incentive prizes.

It is the responsibility of every swim team family to support the team through team jobs. Without the continued support of parents, the swim team cannot function. As more people pitch in and help, there is less for each person to do. Meet organization and team management relies heavily on the efforts of the parents in coordination with the coaches. To paraphrase an old saying, *if you see a problem and do nothing to help solve it (other than to point it out to others); you are more than likely part of the problem.*

3.2 Swim Meet Parent Worker Position Descriptions

IT TAKES 30 - 40+ WORKERS FROM EACH TEAM TO SUCCESSFULLY RUN A SWIM MEET! EXPECT TO WORK AT THE MEETS!

The following positions must be filled each swim meet in order for the meet to take place. In most cases, multiple parents are needed for each position. For example, three timers are needed for each lane of the pool.

Scorer

Scoring the swim meet involves verifying and resolving any discrepancy when necessary. The computer does the actual scoring of the meet.

Ribbon Writer

Ribbons are awarded for top finishers (the meet will dictate how many place ribbons are awarded), and for swimmers recording a "best time." At most meets, the computer will print out labels, which are then double-checked and placed on the proper ribbon. In the event of computer problems, ribbon writers handwrite the necessary information on the back of the appropriate ribbons.

Official

Stroke & Turn Judges watch swimmers to make sure strokes and turns are performed legally. The starter announces and starts each event with an electronic starting system. The referee runs the meet, oversees stroke and turn officials and timers, and combines events when necessary. These positions require special training. Training opportunities are announced at the beginning of each season.

Timer

Timers time the events using digital stopwatches. Timing starts as soon as the starting signal sounds and stops when the swimmer touches the wall on the final lap. It is important to know how many laps are to be swum for each event. The recording timer in each lane records each timer's results on the event sheet for that lane. The head timer oversees all lanes and ensures that all timing sheets are collected by the runner after the race. He or she also serves as a backup timer in case a watch is not started correctly or malfunctions in one of the lanes.

Runner

The runner collects the timer sheets from each lane after every event and delivers them to the scoring table.

Clerk of Course

The Clerk of Course lines swimmers up prior to each event. It is a great way to get to know all the swimmers, and to stay in the team area with your child.

Assistant Clerks

The Clerks aid the Clerk of Course by getting the swimmers to the proper event, heat and lane.

Hospitality (home meets only)

Sets up and maintains the concession stand for swimmers and guests. Help is also needed bringing complimentary beverages to officials, timers, scorers, ribbon writers and other parents working the meet who cannot leave their positions to get refreshments.

3.3 Social Activities

In addition to practicing and swimming in meets, the swimmers enjoy taking part in team-based social events each season. Parent workers are needed to organize and conduct these events.

Swim Team Banquets

At the end of a season, all team members and parents are invited to a banquet to celebrate the fine accomplishments of all the swimmers. Each swimmer gets an award, and special awards are also given out.

Sleepovers

The team tries to have at least one sleep-over each winter season for all the team members. Before falling asleep, participants get to take part in supervised activities including, but not always limited to: swimming, dinner, games, snacks and movies. Boys and girls sleep in different rooms, and at least one adult is awake at all times.

Caroling

Sometime during the Christmas season, the team goes caroling through the YMCA neighborhood and/or at a local nursing home. Afterwards, there are snacks and activities at the Y. This activity is often combined with the team holiday party.

Parties

The team occasionally hosts parties. In the past, we have had Halloween and Christmas parties.

Character Counts Activities

We try to demonstrate to swimmers the philosophy of Character Counts, and therefore try to perform at least one service project a season. In the past, we have brought Christmas gifts to the patients at the Odd Fellows home and have caroled at nearby nursing homes. The swimmers have a great time singing and socializing with the seniors. We have also been

involved with the Frederick County YMCA Corporate Cup, the Bill Hudak Swim-a-thon, and Special Olympics.

Other Activities

In the past, we have had a day ski trip, an afternoon at Kid Zone, the 13 and ups went to a movie and dinner together, and had a laser tag night.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

The following are answers to questions frequently asked by our parents:

- Q. Our child has just joined the team and his times are worse than when he started. What's going on?*
- A. When a child starts a swimming program, stroke techniques are often in need of refinement. It takes a great deal of the swimmer's concentration to make these corrections. As the swimmer becomes more comfortable with the new techniques, his or her times will start to improve. It is important to remember that these new techniques are the basis for later improvement.
- Q. My swimmer's times have not gone down for a long time. Why?*
- A. Plateaus occur from time to time in every swimmer's career. It is important to explain to your swimmer that plateaus occur in all fields of physical learning and by working through them, he or she can go on to achieve his or her own maximum potential.
- Q. My child is losing enthusiasm. What can be done about this?*
- A. A parent's attitude and actions often shape those of their child. Be enthusiastic about taking your swimmer to practices and meets. Do not force your child to swim. Be sure that your child swims because they want to. No one gets excited about doing something they don't want to do.
- Q. When can I talk to the coach?*
- A. Coaches are available before and after practice if you should have any questions or concerns. Communication between the coach, swimmer and parent is very important. Remember that everyone's behavior, attitude and outlook on the sport have an important effect on your child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can win or succeed all of the time. It is important not to

place the emphasis on your child's placement but rather on their self-improvement. They should always strive to improve.

5. Team Practice

5.1 Practice Schedules

Once your swimmer has been placed into a practice group, he or she may only swim practices with that level. If your swimmer cannot make a practice one week and there are no other practices for that level, then the practice is missed. There are no make-ups for missed practices by the swimmer.

The team does not penalize swimmers if they miss some practices. We do encourage all swimmers to try to attend the recommended number of practices for their level in order to see consistent improvement and gain confidence in their abilities.

Total number of practices, per week, by level:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| The Ripples | 2 practices per week |
| The Waves | 2-3 practices per week |
| The Low Tide | 3 practices per week |
| The Force Prep | 3 - 4 practices per week |
| The Force | 5 practices per week (recommended minimum) |

The monthly practice calendar will be posted on the Team bulletin board, emailed out and posted on our web site. A few hard copies will be put into the information drawer of the team filing cabinet.

5.2 Behavior of Swimmers Before, During and After Practice

While we want practice to be fun, we also need to realize that it is work which will help our children achieve their swimming goals. In order to have practices run smoothly, we ask your help with the following:

- Please accompany your child into the building to ensure that he or she is going directly to practice. Children are not allowed to roam around. If you must drop your child off at the curb, please remind them that they are to go directly to the locker room to change and then immediately on deck to await practice. Members have the option of going to the Youth Center until it is time to go to practice. Parents will be called if their child is

having problems in regards to this. A swimmer should NEVER be left at FHS unless a coach is present.

- Please be at the YMCA or FHS on time to pick up your child. This will help control the child's behavior in the building and will keep the coaches from having to stay late waiting for swimmers to be picked up.
- Please talk to your child about his or her behavior before practice, at practice, in the locker room and after practice. Our coaches are there to help all swimmers achieve their best. It is hard on them and other swimmers when part of the team sees practice as just another free swim time. The YMCA has members who are not part of the swim team. When team members misbehave in front of other YMCA members, it reflects badly on the rest of the team. Remember that our coaches deserve our respect, as do our fellow teammates. Please ask your child to listen to the coaches and to save the playtime and extended conversation for times outside of practice.

To help control the above-mentioned problems, we have come up with a 3 strikes system, a late arrival policy and a locker room policy.

Late Arrivals

No swimmer will be permitted to come into practice after warm-ups unless they have a written parental excuse or the parent informs the coach that the swimmer is legitimately late and has not been just hanging around as mentioned above. If your child will be consistently late due to schedule conflicts, please inform the coaches so that your child will be allowed into practice. The parents of any child who is turned away from practice will be called. Any child not permitted to practice will be asked to sit quietly on deck until practice is over.

Three Strikes

During practice, swimmers will be given three strikes. A strike is any kind of behavior not appropriate at swim practice or which is disruptive to the coaches or swimmers (e.g., talking back to the coaches, horseplay, purposely ignoring coach's instructions, fighting, inappropriate language, etc.). On the third strike, the swimmer will be removed from the pool and asked to sit quietly on deck. If the child receives three outs, the parent is called.

Locker Room Policy (applicable at all pools)

The locker room is the place to dress for practice, shower before and after practice, and to dress to go home. Socializing in the locker room is not discouraged unless a swimmer is habitually late for practice or going home, is yelling or screaming, is involved in horseplay, etc. It will never be ok to have any

form of rough play, including towel snapping, while using the locker rooms. Dangerous, obnoxious and loud behavior will not be tolerated. If a swimmer is found misbehaving in the locker room three times in a row, disciplinary action will be taken. The swimmer(s) involved may be asked to use only the parent-child changing rooms or they could lose locker room privileges completely.

5.3 What to Bring to Practice

1. Swim bag with towel, shampoo and conditioner for showering after practice. Chlorine will dry the hair & skin.
2. A practice suit. It does not have to be a competitive suit and but it should not be see-through or full of holes. Having an extra suit in your bag is a good idea for when a suit develops a rip or tear.
3. Auro-dri for getting water out of ears and preventing swimmer's ear is good to keep in your bag for after practice. Auro-dri can be purchased in a drug store or you can make your own (1:1 white vinegar/alcohol).
4. A good pair of goggles and a spare should come to every practice. A swimmer should learn to swim in a race without goggles, but for practice, goggles are a must. The water in the pool will irritate the eyes. Swimmers often have problems finding goggles that fit properly. You may have to try several different kinds before you find the ones that your swimmer likes best.
5. Bring a plastic bottle of water to every practice. It is important to stay hydrated when exercising.
6. Good attitude and sportsmanship. Use the water to pound out your daily frustrations. Respect the coaches and other swimmers in your lane. Swimmers who interfere with other swimmers' practices will be removed from the lane and/or the pool.
7. Swimming caps are a good idea for swimmers. It helps keep hair from going into your eyes and it provides some protection against chlorine.
8. Before practice starts, besides a kickboard, find out what other equipment will be needed for the practice. Get all of these items together prior to warming up. Be sure to put all equipment away after practice.
9. Remove all jewelry before practice and leave it at home. The coaches do not want to be responsible for these valuable items. Contacts are also a source of problems. Make sure you have a place to keep them or wear your glasses to practice. Prescription goggles are available through various vendors both locally and on-line.
10. Make sure your swimmer is at practice on time and that he or she is picked up promptly.

11. Make sure you or your swimmer checks the family folder at every practice. Check their ribbon folder after each meet!
12. A lock for your locker (*see #9 above*). Consider nothing to be safe in a locker that is not locked. There is no safe hiding place for an unlocked item.

5.4 Parents at Practice

While the YMCA has an open door policy towards parents being on the deck during practice, please realize that this can be very distracting for both the coaches and the swimmers. If you choose to remain on the deck, please be considerate and ...

- Do not approach the coaches during practice. They will be happy to discuss your child with you before or after practice.
- Try to sit in a spot away from the lane in which your child is swimming. Children are often torn between paying attention to the coach and checking on mom or dad. If you are not readily visible, the coach has a better chance of keeping your child's attention.
- Do not coach your child at practice. The coaches have a skill progression plan for each swimmer, and while you may think your child is ready for another skill, it is the coaches who need to make the decision. Please feel free to discuss your child's progress with the coach before or after practice.
- While we realize that practice time is a great opportunity to socialize with other parents, please do this outside of the pool area. If you are on the deck observing practice, please keep conversation to a minimum and speak quietly so as not to be a distraction to our swimmers and coaches. Any parent disrupting practice will be asked to leave the pool area.

5.5 Questions

If you have a quick question for a coach, most are available immediately after practice. If you feel that more time is needed, please contact the coach you wish to speak with and schedule a meeting. Contacting a coach by way of her/her personal home or cell phone should be limited to emergency tardiness or absences from a meet. All of the coaches have email that you should use. These addresses are listed in Section 6. If you have questions concerning a meet, swim team event, or anything else, call the Tidal Force Hotline or check our web site first, as directed in Section 6 of this handbook.

6. Information Sources

6.1 YMCA Tidal Force Phone Numbers and YMCA Website

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Tidal Force Office | (301) 663-5131 x 1259 (<i>Direct line & messages</i>) |
| Asst. Aquatics Director | (301) 663-5131 x 1283 (<i>Direct line & messages</i>) |
| Aquatics Director | (301) 663-5131 x 1277 (<i>Direct line & messages</i>) |

E-mails will also be sent out as quickly as possible with any changes in schedules. If you have any questions regarding swim team activities occurring the day of inclement weather, please check your email or the website before calling a member of the coaching staff.

You can find our web site by clicking on the Aquatics link from the YMCA homepage (www.frederickymca.org). Once on the Aquatics homepage, the Team's link is on the left-hand side of the page. Please check it regularly as we are in the process of updating it and will continue to add useful content throughout the season.

6.2 E-mail

The general swim team email box is swimteam@frederickymca.org. This email will be checked daily by the coaches and either answered immediately or redirected to the appropriate staff member.

6.3 Web sites

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| FCY Tidal Force | www.frederickymca.org |
| C&P League (winter) | www.cpsl.info |
| FSSL (summer) | www.swimfssl.org |

7. Frederick County YMCA Pool Rules

1. All persons must obey the instructions of the lifeguard.
2. Children with flotation devices must be accompanied by a parent or adult in swimming attire who must remain within arm's reach of the non-swimmer/child.
3. Non-swimmers using any form of flotation devices are not permitted in the deep water.

4. Free-floating swimming supports are prohibited. Only YMCA instructional flotation devices or Coast Guard approved life vests are allowed.
5. All swimmers **MUST** take a shower prior to using the pool.
6. Spectators must remove shoes **BEFORE** entering the pool area.
7. Swimmers must wear bathing suits. Cutoffs or underwear are prohibited.
8. Persons in bathing suits are restricted to the pool and locker room areas.
9. Glass, food, gum, drinking, and smoking are not permitted in the entire pool area.
10. Persons unable to demonstrate to the lifeguard their ability to swim one length of the pool will not be permitted in the deep water.
11. Running, rough play, dunking, splashing, pushing, and other objectionable conduct is prohibited. Standing or sitting on the back or shoulders of another swimmer is not permitted.
12. Balls, toys, or other free-floating objects are not allowed for safety reasons.
13. Diving is not permitted in the shallow end of the pool.
14. No hanging on or diving over any life or lane lines.
15. No one is to play on or around ladders or steps. They are for getting in and out of the pool only.
16. Swimmers must circle swim in designated lap lanes.

8. Parents and Swimmers

8.1 Ten Commandments for Swimming Parents

1. Don't impose your ambitions on your child.

Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push them based on what you think they could be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do their personal best.

2. Do be supportive no matter what.

There is only one question to ask your child: "Did you have fun?" Your child should not be forced to participate.

3. Don't coach your child.

You have taken your child to a professional coach. Do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. This is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.

4. Do have positive things to say at a swim meet.

If you are going to attend a swim meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.

5. Do acknowledge your child's fears.

The first time a swimmer competes in new events can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have entered him/her in the event if he/she was not ready to compete in it.

6. Don't criticize the officials.

If you do not have the time or desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can.

7. Do honor your child's coach.

The bond between swimmer and coach is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as enjoyment. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child. It will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.

8. Don't jump from team to team.

The water isn't necessarily bluer at the other team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by teammates they leave behind. Often swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

9. Do have goals besides winning.

Giving an honest effort, regardless of the outcome, is much more important than winning.

10. Don't expect your child to become an Olympian.

Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are about 1 in 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Swimming

teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.

Adapted from: "Ten Commandments for Swimming Parents," By Rose Snyder

8.2 The Swimmer's Pledge

1. I will listen to the coaches and strive to do my very best in everything I do.
2. I will always put the Team ahead of myself and will strive to know all my teammates and always look for the positives in their abilities.
3. I will have a quiet confidence in my abilities and strive to constantly improve.
4. I will show commitment to my teammates and coaches by arriving on time for practices and by being in attendance for both home and away meets.
5. I will exercise good sportsmanship towards my fellow teammates as well as to members of the teams which I am competing against.
6. I will pursue being strong mentally, physically and spiritually.

9. Nutrition

After heredity and training, the factor of nutrition plays the largest role in the quality of a swimmer's performance. Most every person involved in competitive swimming knows that nutrition is important. Poor dietary habits are widespread among the US population and swimmers are not remarkably different than their non-swimming peers. In some cases, reliance is placed solely on special diets, supplements and fads. The fact is that certain supplements can assist in completing dietary needs, but they can not replace the simple need for good food. Unfortunately, the coaches cannot follow your swimmer around and make sure they eat properly. This means nutrition can be a parent's job to help your swimmer improve at practice and at meets.

Carbohydrates, fats and protein supply energy. They are fuels that we burn in exercise. It is necessary to have an adequate supply of fuel in order to function efficiently.

Carbohydrates include food such as breads, cereals, pastas, fruit and vegetables. Swimmers get most of their fuel from these foods.

Fats are also a source of fuel for swimmers but it takes 20-30 minutes from the time the swimmer begins to exercise for fat to be available to help fuel the muscles. Fat will help a swimmer in practice but not in a meet.

Proteins are found throughout the body and are a necessity to build all body cells. Only during severe malnutrition or starvation does the body use protein for energy.

FACTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Consuming excess protein will not build muscle faster. A normal diet gives you plenty of protein.
2. Sugar is poor substitute for carbohydrates and will cause a decrease in energy and performance if taken shortly before an event. Athletes should avoid sugar, especially in the 24 hours before swimming at a meet.
3. Energy for specific events is provided by food eaten several days before competitions, not in the minutes just before a race.
4. Drinking adequate water is vital to nutrition and performance. This is especially so in hot, humid environments.
5. Pre-competition meals should be low in fat, high in carbohydrates.
6. Most fast food menus provide the exact opposite of the above.
7. Foods that are mainly carbohydrates take the least time to be digested and leave the stomach, making them ideal pre-competition choices.

Information above provided by YMCA Advanced Swimming Coaches Manual

10. Goals

Every swimmer at every level should set a goal for the season. It should be attainable, but not so easy that it is achieved mid-season. It should also not be unattainable within the season. Long term goals are great, but they need to be put into perspective.

Ideas for Setting Goals

1. Set a goal for each swim meet, a goal for mid-season, and a goal to be reached by the end of the season.
2. Re-evaluate your goals every few weeks to see if they need to be changed.
3. Making goals harder can be a positive, but lowering goals should not be looked at as a negative. Change is always a positive in swimming. For example, you may have wanted to go faster in a stroke, and in working

toward this goal you made many improvements in your stroke technique. Going faster in that stroke is going to take more time than you anticipated while you adjust to all the stroke changes you have made. Look at the positive - you now have a better stroke!

4. Go over your goals with your parents and your coaches to make sure they are realistic.
5. No one but you needs to know what your goals are, but advice from parents and coaches is a good idea.
6. Come up with a way of rewarding yourself when a goal is met.
7. Make sure the goal is your goal and not someone else's. Achieving the goal will not feel as special if it is not yours.
8. Look for goals that will challenge you, and goals that are just plain fun!
9. Remember that speed is not the only goal you should have. Stroke technique, team spirit, advancing in swim level and endurance are also important.
10. Get involved in having a team goal as well as individual goals. Talk to team members, coaches and parents about what the team goals should be for the season.

Parental Agreement

This form is required for participation on the FCY Tidal Force swim team. Once you have read through the General Handbook, complete this agreement form and return it to the red folder found in the Swim Team filing cabinet.

By signing below, I/we acknowledge that I/we have read the General Handbook (revised 4/10) and agree to abide by all the rules as stated. I/We understand that at least one parent from each Tidal Force family will be available and prepared to work at least half of each dual meet. I/We understand that dual meet attendance is required and failure to attend these meets may result in dismissal from the team.

Swimmer's name(s) (please print)

Parent #1 (please print)

Parent #1 (signature)

Parent #2 (please print)

Parent #2 (signature)

Date