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# Otters Team Handbook

2009-2010



Welcome to the 2009-2010 YWCA Otters swim team season! Our handbook has been designed to provide you with thorough information, schedules, contacts, and answers to our most common questions. **Please make sure that both you and your swimmer take the time to read over the handbook.** If you have any questions, or if you feel we have left something out, please let us know! Thank you for being a part of the YWCA, where it is our mission to Empower Women and Girls and Eliminate Racism.

## CONTACTS

**Dave Cameron** - *Head Coach*

**Rachel VanScoy**- *Assistant Head Coach*

Office: (612) 215-4224

Email: [ywcaotters@gmail.com](mailto:ywcaotters@gmail.com)

Web site- Updates, meet information, calendars, and much more are on our website at [www.ywcamps.org/otters](http://www.ywcamps.org/otters)

## YWCA LOCATIONS

Uptown

2808 Hennepin Ave S  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Front Desk  
(612) 874-7131

Coaching Office  
(612) 215-4224

Midtown

2121 E Lake St  
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Front Desk  
(612) 215-4333

Aquatics Office  
(612) 215-4342



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## COMMUNICATION

- I. **Email** - is the primary method of direct communication with swimmer and their families/guardians. Notifications via email will include meet updates, practice changes and team events. Please choose an email that you check frequently. If you are not on the team list, send a note to [ywcaotters@gmail.com](mailto:ywcaotters@gmail.com) to be added.
  
- II. **Parent meetings** - Please mark these in your calendar and plan to attend. Meetings take place at the beginning and midway through the season. **October 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>** - outlines the season, introduces coaches, previews the meet schedule and answers season questions that come up. **January 13<sup>th</sup>** – continues discussion about competition, volunteering, and also a good opportunity for parents whose children decide to join later in the season.
  
- III. **Team meetings** – take place before each meet. In order to participate in the meet, it is required that you attend the meeting for check-in, event announcements and relay assembly. Anyone *not* at the meeting will not take part at the meet. While building team unity between locations, these meetings will also help us improve communication between coaches and swimmers about the most important issues that we will be dealing with at the time.
  
- IV. **Calendar**- practices are held according to our published calendar which includes no-school days, late practices, meets, meetings, and everything else a parent needs to know. A PDF version of the calendar will be available on the Otters web page, and a hard copy to take home will be available upon request.
  
- V. **Web Site**- Results, meet sign-ups and practice schedules will be available on our new website. Please take a look at [www.ywcamps.org/otters](http://www.ywcamps.org/otters).



## YWCA of Minneapolis

Our mission “to **empower women and girls and eliminate racism**”

The YWCA of Minneapolis was founded in 1891 by a group of women pushing the boundaries of social acceptability: women working outside of the home. The YWCA has been at the forefront of social change ever since. Throughout the early part of the century members fought against the social conventions and prejudices of their day—working for women’s suffrage throughout the early 1900s; promoting racial equality and integration in the ‘40s; and organizing support and advocacy for single parents and welfare recipients in the early ‘60s.

Today, the YWCA of Minneapolis serves over 25,000 people annually with hundreds of programs, classes and support groups. As part of a worldwide women’s movement in over 70 countries, the YWCA strives every day to achieve:

**Race and gender equity**

**Economic independence for women**

**Respect for diverse cultures**

**A place where children and youth thrive**

**A community that is vibrant and healthy**



## PRACTICE AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS

### Swim team entry requirements for the Otters Swim Team

- 50 continuous Freestyle
- 50 continuous Backstroke
- 50 Individual Medley (half length of Fly, Back, Breast, and Free)

*If a swimmer cannot yet swim these strokes or distances, please look into our swim lesson program offered at all three YWCA locations.*

### Practice groups

Practice groups are flexible from session to session but a swimmer will, most likely, stay in the same practice group over the course of a single session. Practice groups are based on skill level, and not necessarily based on age. Coaches will place a swimmer depending on skill and speed.

- **Junior Otters-** A practice group designed for new swimmers to teach stroke technique, confidence and introduce swimmers to the function of a swim team.
- **Otters-** A practice program for younger swimmers who perhaps aspire to eventual Senior Otters participation or older swimmers who are looking for a milder practice schedule in comparison to Seniors. Skill levels ranging from just beyond Junior Otters levels to comfort, form, and confidence in all strokes and races
- **Senior Otters-** our elite level program. Senior Otters are the only group with a required practice schedule and strength training program. Swimmers must be 13 years of age or older in order to participate in Senior Otters. This program runs year round, with practice schedules adjusted to each season.

### Attendance Policies

**Junior Otters and Otters** are invited to attend up to three practices per week at our Midtown and Uptown locations. There is no practice requirement at this level. Please let us know in advance if for some reason the child needs to come to a different practice than the regular time and we will easily accommodate them.

**Senior Otters** have made a commitment to swimming and are expected at a majority of designated Senior Otters practices. They will communicate with the Head Coach when they are unable to fulfill that commitment.



## PRACTICE SCHEDULES

September 1<sup>st</sup> - May 31<sup>st</sup>

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>Midtown</b>					
	2:30-4:00 pm or 4:00-5:30 pm or 4:30-6:00 pm		2:30-4:00 pm or 4:00-5:30 pm or 4:30-6:00 pm		8:30-10:00 am
<b>Uptown</b>					
2:30-4:00 pm or 3:30-5:00 pm or 4:30-6:00 pm	Seniors: 3:30- 5:30 pm	2:30-4:00 pm or 3:30-5:00 pm or 4:30-6:00 pm	Seniors: 3:30- 5:30 pm	2:30-4:00 pm or 3:30-5:00 pm or 4:30-6:00 pm	
Seniors: 3:30- 6:00 pm		Seniors: 3:30- 6:00 pm		Seniors: 3:30-6:00 pm	

Note the following exceptions to the regular practice schedule:

- When the Minneapolis school district does not have school, the Otters will only have **one practice option** (4:30 at Uptown or 4:00 at Midtown).
- When the YWCA pools or buildings are closed, the Otters will **not** have practices.
- When the Otters have a major meet on a Saturday (Home meets, Sections and States), or there is both a Y-league and USA Swimming meet scheduled for a weekend, there will be no Saturday practice.

Summer Practice (June 1<sup>st</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>)

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>Midtown</b>					
	4:00-5:30 pm		4:00-5:30 pm		
<b>Uptown</b>					
4:30-6:00 pm		4:30-6:00 pm		4:30-6:00 pm	



## PRACTICE BEHAVIOR

### Expectations of Swimmers

We want all swimmers to have the best experience with our team. The general atmosphere at practice is fun, but we do work hard. It is important to respect each other and other members of the YWCA who will be sharing the pool with us. In order for all team members, parents, and coaches to be on the same page, the following discipline policy shall be enforced each day.

### A FEW SIMPLE RULES FOR OTTERS PRACTICES

1. **Swimmers must show respect for coaches and listen to instructions.** In return, coaches will listen for constructive feedback from swimmers. Without an exchange of respect, there can be no trust, instruction, or cooperation.
2. **Swimmers must show respect for their teammates.** Swimmers may not interfere with other swimmers' workouts. It is never OK to touch, hit, or otherwise come into contact with another team member. Interference can include teasing and physical contact with intent to harm. If a swimmer makes it clear that contact (physical or verbal) is not wanted, and that contact continues beyond the warning, it is considered **harassment**. (see next page)
3. **Swimmers must respect the authority of the lifeguard on duty.** The lifeguard is in charge of the safety of every person on deck, including the coaches. Guards should not be distracted or have their vision blocked by activities of the swim team.
4. **All pool rules will be enforced.** Some of the most common rules broken are:
  1. No gum or candy allowed on deck
  2. Swimmers must take a shower before entering the pool.
  3. Hair beyond shoulder length should be tied or put in a cap. **The only caps allowed at practice are Otters team caps.**
5. **Swimmers must be out of the locker rooms at the start of practice.** Unexpected tardy swimmers slow down the start of the workout. Please let the coaches know if a swimmer has a late school end time, or will not be arriving on time for any reason.
6. **Swimmers will conduct themselves appropriately in the locker rooms and at away meets.** At any time that Otters are in the building or on team trips, they are not only required to follow facility rules, but they should hold themselves to a higher standard because they are representing the team.



7. **Swimmers must show respect for swim practice.** Swimmers must come prepared with goggles. If a swimmer does not come prepared to swim with the necessary equipment, they will be asked to sit out. During practice swimmers must not stop in the middle of the pool, unless the set calls for it.
8. **Swimmers should remain in the lobby until they are picked up after practice.** Swimmers will not be allowed in the gym or any other recreational area of the facility.
9. **The hot tub will be off limits at all times at both facilities after practice.** After a workout where the heart rate increases and the body sweats, the hot tub is a hazardous environment where the young swimmer's body temperature can rise to a dangerous level rapidly. Children do not have the lower surface area to body mass ratio that adults have, and they can take on temperatures much faster than adults.

## Expectations of Parents

Parents have the most important supporting role in a child's life. At meets, after practice, they should help highlight the effort and commitment that every child gives to the team. Parents can show their interest in their child's activity by attending and volunteering for meets. Parents at meets are not there to coach- they are in attendance to help their child and support their team, but conflicting messages should not be coming from coaches and parents about actual racing and preparation. For similar reasons, **parents are asked to observe practices from designated areas of the pool deck.**



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## **VIOLATIONS OF THE OTTERS CODE OF CONDUCT WILL BE DEALT WITH IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER AT A COACH'S DISCRETION:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Warning** A verbal warning is issued to the misbehaving swimmer.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Warning** If any coach has to approach that swimmer a second time, she/he will receive a time-out on the deck.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Warning** A third warning will be documented and the swimmer's parents will be contacted. Swimmer will be removed from practice area for remainder of practice. Swimmer will not be readmitted until parents have met with the coach in the swimmer's presence and the swimmer has served a week of suspension from the team, including any meets during that time

**Follow-up** If the disruptive behavior continues, there will be a meeting with the swimmer, coaches and parents in which we'll discuss the possibility of the swimmer not being invited back to swim with the team for the remainder of the year.

**Depending on the severity of the issue at hand, coaches may choose to jump straight to the second or third warning.**

### **Harassment**

The YWCA takes every complaint of harassment seriously. The following process defines harassment at the YWCA.

1. Contact or words are made that an individual is uncomfortable with.
2. Said individual makes clear that this contact or words are unwanted attention.
3. In addition, the individual makes clear that this attention must stop.
4. If the attention continues, the victim must bring the incident to a staff member. At this point, the incident is considered harassment.

**Issues of harassment will be dealt with immediately by staff.**



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## YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team Participant & Guest Code of Conduct and Waiver

### PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

**Code of Conduct** - The YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment to all members and participants. To ensure the safety and comfort of all, we have set forth the following expectations for all individuals who use our facilities: Each person will respect the rights, dignity and cultures of others; Individuals will be considerate of the safety and comfort of others and responsible for their own behavior. The YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team has ZERO TOLERANCE for acts of violence. Behaviors that violate the YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team expectations and Code of Conduct include:

- Disrespecting others through the use of vulgar language, swearing, name-calling, or shouting,
- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body movement or menacing behavior;
- Careless or destructive treatment of property.

*Concerns about other participants or about employees should be brought to a coach's attention for resolution.*

**Waiver** - I understand that the YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team assumes no responsibility for injuries or illness which I may sustain as a result of my physical condition from my participation in any athletic activities, sports programs, the use of any equipment, exercise, or other activities. I expressly acknowledge on behalf of myself and my heirs that I assume the risk for any and all injuries and illnesses which may result from my participation in these activities. I hereby release and discharge the YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team, its agents, servants, and employees from any and all claims for injury, illness, death, loss, or damage in which I may suffer as a result of my participation in these activities. I understand that the YWCA of Minneapolis/YWCA Otters Swim Team is not responsible for personal property lost or stolen while members, guests, and/or program participants are using the YWCA of Minneapolis facilities or Swim Meet locations. By signing this form, I agree to abide by all YWCA of Minneapolis /YWCA Otters Swim Team policies.

Name of Minor Child - Please Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Minor Child - Please Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Minor Child - Please Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adult/Name of Parent or Legal Guardian - Please Print:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**



# Otters Publicity Consent Release

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant voluntarily and without monetary compensation the YWCA of Minneapolis permission to:

- Make video and audio recordings of me and/or my voice.
- Take and use photographs of me and/or my family.
- Record, use, display and disclose in a video and/or other media intended for public consumption statements and/or information provided by me concerning myself and/or my family.
- Use the activities listed above for direct mail, advertising, public relations and/or website efforts related to the YWCA of Minneapolis.
- Use my name and the names of members of my family in conjunction with the activities listed above. I agree to relinquish to the YWCA of Minneapolis all rights, title and interest I may have in the finished recording, reproduction and copies of the original video and/or audio recording(s), or in prints, negatives, digital images reproductions and copies of the original photograph(s) and negative(s).

I also irrevocably grant the YWCA of Minneapolis permission to put any or all such recordings, photographs, statements and information to any and all legitimate uses the YWCA of Minneapolis may deem proper, including the right to use the same for purposes of advertising or trade.

Name of Minor Child - Please Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Minor Child - Please Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Minor Child - Please Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adult/Name of Parent or Legal Guardian - Please Print:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*NOTE: If you should no longer like the YWCA of Minneapolis to use your image in its awareness and education materials and activities, please contact the YWCA of Minneapolis. Due to the distribution and printing timelines, some of the materials the YWCA of Minneapolis may not be able to remove your image immediately from its pieces, but will do so as soon as those print pieces are scheduled for reprinting or new production. Print materials that are distributed to public audiences may not be recalled once distributed.*





## RATES AND REGISTRATION

### Registration

Program registration for Otters is performed on a monthly basis for ease of planning. Enrollment allows a swimmer to swim from the first to last date of the month. There are no individual discounts offered for partial participation. Swimmers can register for the current month prior to the start of that month. *Only the first practice of the month at each facility will permit an unregistered Otter.*

Please check that all contact information including mailing address, phone numbers and email addresses are current in the YWCA's computer system.

**Option 1: Automatic Debit** This is our preferred method of registration for the obvious benefits of price and a timely registration. The automatic debit program allows you to select the months that you would like to have automatically deducted from your checking/savings account for your participation in the Otters Swim Team. Forms are available at all Hospitality Desks.

- Debits take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month for the current month. In order to sign up for an October debit, you must submit the form prior to September 15<sup>th</sup> to Membership Accounts.
- To cancel a debit, written requests must go to Membership Accounts before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month. After that, debit refunds will not be processed until the following month, and an administration fee of **\$20** will be applied.

**Option 2: Registration through the Hospitality Desk** can be done either in person or over the phone. It is a participant's responsibility to register in a timely matter. Early bird discounts will *only* be available before the start of the month, no exceptions.

Members of the YWCA may also take advantage of the online program registration offered through [ywcamps.org](http://ywcamps.org)

YWCA Youth/Family Members*:		
Participant	Fee/month	Monthly Debit
Participant	\$90.00	\$75.00
Additional Family Participant	\$76.50	\$63.75
Senior Otters	\$135.00	\$110.00
Non-Members:		
Participant	Fee/month	Monthly Debit
Participant	\$110.00	\$85.00
Additional Family Participant	\$93.50	\$72.25
Senior Otters	\$150.00	\$120.00

\*Note, to get the member rate, the participant must be a YWCA Health & Fitness member as part of an *Adult/Child membership* or a *Youth membership*.

**Coaches cannot accept registration payments in person.** All financial transactions must go directly through accounting, or via the front desk.



## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

The Otters swim team receives funding to help individuals manage the cost of our team through a scholarship based off of household income and size. All scholarship recipients receive a suit and cap for the season. Scholarships must be renewed each season with a new application.

Application forms can be found online or at the Uptown and Midtown Hospitality Desks. Forms are green and require specific documented financial information. Please be aware that applications take up to three weeks to process.

For more information you can contact the Scholarship Specialist, at (612) 215-4323.

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## TEAM GEAR

Team suits, caps and towels are available to purchase at the Uptown hospitality desk. Other team wear is available through pure blue during team/parents meetings. No swimmer is required to purchase team gear for competition, but it is recommended. All team gear is screen printed with our team logo:



Otters will receive one free **team cap** each season. After that, they are available to purchase at both UT and MT hospitality desks for \$4.50. Silicon caps are available for \$12.00. Only **team caps** are allowed at practice.

**Team Suits** are available at the membership services desk, and Otters pay 10% off retail price. Mention swim team participation to be eligible for the discount.



Alliance Team Splice Maxback - \$54.00 retail price



Boys Alliance Team Splice Jammer - \$37.00 retail price



Boys Alliance Team Splice Racer - \$30.00 retail price

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## SWIM MEETS

Competition is encouraged; however, regular participation in meets is not mandatory on our team. We ask each swimmer to explore competition at least once per season. The Otters Swim team competes in two different leagues:

### YMCA Swim League

The Otters are part of the Minnesota YMCA Swim league. There are over twenty participating YMCA and YWCA facilities, spread throughout the Metro, outstate Minnesota in all directions, and Western Wisconsin. **Since the actual meet schedule is not set until late September, we will publish the final meet calendar in early October.** It will be available at the parent meeting and online.

Competition begins in late October and is comprised of meets with two or three teams at a time. The season ends with Sectional and State meets in February. Hosts for Sectional meets rotate every year, and the State meet is hosted by the North Community YMCA at the University of Minnesota.

#### Sectional and State Meets

- The sectional meet is open to all swimmers who have competed in at least three meets during the season. Unlike other YMCA league meets, registering for this meet requires a fee. Swimmers may compete in up to three individual events and two relays at the Sectional Meet.
- The top three swimmers in each Sectional event, along with the next four fastest swimmers remaining from all four state sections, continue on to the YMCA league state meet. The YMCA State Meet is held at the University of Minnesota Natatorium in late February. Registration for this meet is covered by the Sectional Meet fee. All swimmers must qualify through the Sectional meet to participate.

#### Entry policy for dual meets

- For all dual meets, entries are due by 5 p.m. on the preceding Tuesday. **A parent signature, call, or e-mail is required to process the entry.**

#### Entry policy for Sectional Meet

- Entries are due in January. We will mail an invoice to the participant's household.

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## USA Swimming

“USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. We administer competitive swimming in accordance with the Amateur Sports Act. We provide programs and services for our members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. We value these members of the swimming community, and the staff and volunteers who serve them. We are committed to excellence and the improvement of our sport.”

The Otters have been a sanctioned USA Swimming Club since March of 2003. Otters compete in USA-S meets throughout the year. To participate, Otters must register with USA Swimming annually - registration always expires on January 1 of the New Year. We recommend that new swimmers compete in Y-League for their first year, and speak to a coach about USA-S competition after they gain competition experience.

### Season Dates

- USA Swimming's year is divided up into two seasons.
- A fall/winter season extends from September through March, with ABC Finals and State Meets taking place in early to mid March. All competitions for this season take place in 25-yard pools.
- A spring/summer season runs from April through July, with ABC Finals and State Meets in July or the first week of August. Competitions in this season are split between 25 yard and 50-meter courses, and all finals meets are in 50 meter pools.

### Entries

- Each meet in the season has a final entry deadline that is at least eight days before the meet, many are even earlier. Meets often overfill, and because USA Swimming meets have time limits, extra teams will be rejected once the meet is full. Because of this, we like to get our entries in early. Following is our schedule and the last date on which entries may be submitted. Any changes will be sent out via email. We will send an invoice for all entry fees incurred.

### Meet information

- Meet information can be found online at [www.mnswim.org](http://www.mnswim.org). Check the meets area on a regular basis for updates- clubs usually post information within 2-4 weeks of a meet.



## PREPARING FOR A Y-LEAGUE SWIM MEET

<b>1-2 weeks before meet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check with your Otters if they want to swim in meet. If so, have they signed up? Meet entries are due to coaches the Tuesday prior to the meet, so plan ahead!</li> <li>• USA Swimming meets require registration at least one week before the start of a meet. Entries can be taken at least two weeks beforehand, so sign up early!</li> </ul>
<b>2-3 days before meet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that you have the correct directions. Coordinate carpooling, if possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Morning of meet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wake up early and have a healthy breakfast (feed your Otter, too!) Check their bag, have them check it to make sure they know where their things are, and make sure they don't take anything out - have some spare goggles and a cap on hand at the meet. Account for the usual delays and arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the warm-up START time</li> </ul>
<b>Pre-warm-up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in with the coach, attend the team meeting and have your child's event and lane numbers written on them by their events. Don't let your child delay in the lobby - get them to get changed</li> </ul>
<b>Warm-up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in with the coach to see if they need any meet helpers. If you've already signed up, make sure you stay in the area and know when your job starts.</li> </ul>
<b>During the meet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy yourself</li> <li>• Cheer for your child</li> <li>• Cheer for your team</li> <li>• Cheer for the other team</li> </ul>
<b>After the meet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check all belongings. If anything is missing, check on deck with your child. Remember that garbage is your child's responsibility until it gets into the trash or recycling can.</li> </ul>

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## 2009-2010 OTTERS SWIM MEET SCHEDULE

Date	Meet Type	Location	Host/Opponent
October 10	USA-S Invitational	U of M Aquatic	TWIN
<b>October 23</b>	<b>YWCA Time Trials</b>	<b>YWCA – Uptown</b>	<b>St. Paul YWCA</b>
October 24-25	USA-S ABC	Hudson MS	HASA
November 14	USA-S Invitational	Hastings MS	HASTINGS
<b>November 21</b>	<b>YMCA – League</b>	<b>YWCA – Uptown</b>	<b>Makato &amp; South</b>
<b>December 12</b>	<b>YMCA – League</b>	<b>YWCA – Midtown</b>	<b>St. Paul YWCA</b>
December 19-20	USA-S Invitational	Burnsville HS	BLACKDOG
<b>January 2</b>	<b>YMCA – League</b>	<b>South YMCA</b>	<b>South</b>
<b>January 8</b>	<b>YWCA Time Trials</b>	<b>St. Paul YWCA</b>	<b>St. Paul YWCA</b>
January 15-17	USA-S B+	U of M	FOXJET
<b>January 16</b>	<b>YMCA – League</b>	<b>New Hope YMCA</b>	<b>New Hope YMCA</b>
<b>January 31</b>	<b>YMCA Sections</b>	<b>Skyview MS</b>	<b>Section 2</b>
<b>February 14</b>	<b>YMCA States</b>	<b>U of M</b>	<b>MN YMCA</b>
February 20-21	USA-S Invitational	Woodbury HS	SEMS
March 5-7	USA-S ABC Finals	South View MS	EDINA
March 18-21???	USA-S Senior State	Olmstead Rec	ROCHESTER

Summer Schedule will be available Late April.

### Meet Participation Requirements:

- To participate in YMCA League meets, the swimmer must be a YWCA Health & Fitness member. Please contact a membership advisor or stop at the membership desk at your location to join.
- To participate in USA Swimming meets, the swimmer must be enrolled in USA Swimming. Please contact the coaches at [ywcaotters@gmail.com](mailto:ywcaotters@gmail.com) to enroll.

### Meet Registration (online):

- **To sign up for a meet:** Either click on the *Sign Up* link next to the meet to send an email, or email [ywcaotters@gmail.com](mailto:ywcaotters@gmail.com) with the swim meet name, date and location in the subject line. The swimmer's name and event preferences should be in the body of the email.
- **To volunteer for a YWCA home meet:** Either click on the *Volunteer* link next to the meet, or email [ywcaotters@gmail.com](mailto:ywcaotters@gmail.com) with the meet date and location for which you are volunteering, and your name and contact information in the body of the email.

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## MEET VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

We strongly encourage parents of swimmers to be involved with the team. Please read about these swim meet duties and see how you would like to help out. Parent volunteers are truly appreciated and allow Otters to host and participate in competition!

### **Lane Timers**

Start watch when starting beep sounds for every heat that a swimmer is in the lane  
Write down the time (to 1/100 second) on card or heat sheet,  
Be prepared to tell swimmer their time

### **Runner**

This person gathers times from each lane and brings them to meet manager.

### **Meet Manager**

Usually a coach, the meet manager enters the meet times into the Meet Manager program to sort results, print ribbon labels, and distribute results to coaches and parents.

### **Ribbon Table**

The ribbon table uses the above labels to get each team's ribbons labeled and sorted for the coaches. This can be completed the week following the meet.

### **Heat Marshals**

Heat marshals assist swimmers in getting to the right heat and lane on time

Call and write up event numbers at least two events in advance

Assemble athletes for event together and arrange them into heats four heats in advance

Assign each swimmer appropriate chair for their lane three heats in advance

Move swimmers through with heats and send them behind blocks one heat in advance

Make sure every swimmer or relay has their card on hand

### **Starter**

Announces event and heat number, then gender, age group, and distance

Calls start and sounds starting mechanism

### **Official Stroke and Turn Judge**

Similar to a referee, Officials are present at competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable.



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Does my child have to practice every day?**

No Otter is ever required at practice. Swimmers who have specific goals should choose to be more consistent in their attendance, but Otters practice should never be a priority over family life and schoolwork. If you feel that your child is “burning out”, please let the coach know and we can address the problem with a specific strategy. Please note that Junior Otters and Otters are allowed only to attend practice up to three times a week.

### **Does my child need sports drinks or water for practice?**

It is never a bad idea to have water on hand for practice. Sports drinks are most effective in activities lasting more than an hour, so they aren’t necessary for our practices, outside of the Senior Group.

### **What kind of workout is my child getting in swim practice?**

The best description would be a technique-focused aerobic and aerobic-threshold workout. We do some core strengthening with dryland, but most of our swimming is working on developing an aerobic base, one of the most important factor in developing healthy athletes for life.

### **What should my child eat before or after practice?**

It is important to maintain a well-balanced diet even as your school, work, and practice schedules become more hectic throughout the year. In addition to a healthy lunch, packing your swimmer a small snack to have before practice can make the difference between a mediocre and great practice. Most of the vending machine fare is not appropriate for this- have them bring something from home. Swimmers show it in mood and strength when they have skipped lunch, and we will notify parents when this affects practice.

### **I don’t know anything about the sport of swimming. Where can I learn about it?**

Ask your child about the drills and strokes they are doing in practice. Read their handouts and check out the suggested links. With these resources, you can quickly be brought up to date on what is going on in the worlds of youth sports and swimming.

Also, parents are always welcome at YWCA Masters practices. Ask Dave for more information if you are interested-this is the best way to learn about swim practice.

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## **Does my child have to swim in meets?**

Otters are highly encouraged to try meets, but no swimmer is ever required to compete regularly. We publish the meet schedule in advance so that families can schedule their activities and choose which meets to attend without worrying about missing out on competition.

## **How does my child sign up for meets?**

Swimmers can sign up for individual events during or after practice 4 to 14 days before the meet (no later than the Tuesday prior for Y-league and ten days prior for USA-Swimming). Sign-ups should be done on our website under the meet calendar, or can be called in to Dave. Swimmers who sign up to attend a meet will be automatically placed in relays by the coaches unless they ask not to be. If a child signs up for a meet, s/he **must** attend it.

## **Why are swimmers required to attend meets for which they signed up?**

Missing a meet is not just about a swimmer missing his or her own events. When one swimmer does not attend, s/he lets down all the other members of her/his relay. All swimmers are scheduled for relays prior to the meet, and relays must have four swimmers to get a ribbon. Substitutions are difficult to arrange and are not legal in all meets. Late or absent swimmers also require coaches to spend time checking up on them instead of running warm-up. Please be on time according to the warm-up schedule.

*Swimmers who have not arrived by warm-up without giving prior notice will be scratched for the meet.*

## **How do the kids know when it's time for their events?**

There will be an event number board posted at each meet by the Caller or Clerk. Swimmers must watch for their numbers to come up. It is the swimmers' responsibility to make it to their events on time. Coaches and parents do help, especially with newer and younger swimmers.

## **What should swimmers bring to a meet?**

Swimmers should have a suit, cap, goggles, two towels, a sweatshirt and maybe sweatpants, and something healthy to eat. All meets have concessions, so swimmers can bring money if they want to buy something there. Swimmers sometimes lose these items during the busy meets, so it never hurts to bring extra suits, caps, or goggles.

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## Other Resources

Web links:

**YWCA Otters-** [www.ywcampis.org/otters](http://www.ywcampis.org/otters)

**USA Swimming-** [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States.

**Minnesota Swimming** (our LSC) [www.mnswim.org](http://www.mnswim.org)

Minnesota Swimming is our local branch of USA Swimming. All of our club meets are sanctioned by Minnesota Swimming, and results and meet information can be found at their web site.

**Total Immersion-** [www.totalimmersion.net](http://www.totalimmersion.net)

Much of our technique and practice planning is based upon Total Immersion's unique drills and technique analysis. This website is a resource for articles and video footage to better understand quality swimming.

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## The Basics

### Skills

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. The combination of all four strokes is called individual medley.

### Competition

Each swim meet offers a variety of events and distances, depending on the age group and classification. Each swimmer will have a limit to the number of events he or she may swim each day, depending on the meet rules.

In **freestyle** events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

**Backstroke** consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

The **breaststroke**, which is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

Some consider the **butterfly** to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. (The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.)

The **individual medley**, commonly referred to as the **I.M.**, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

In the **medley relay**, all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.

The **freestyle relay** events consist of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event.

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**Starts:** In the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the starting horn is sounded to start the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early or gotten an unfair advantage, the guilty swimmer may be disqualified after the race for a false start. Under USA Swimming rules, one false start disqualifies the swimmer.

## Rules

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

## The Course

Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or 25 meters), or long course (50 meters). The international standard (as used in the Olympics) is 50 meters. World records are accomplished in 25 and 50 meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yard, 25 meter and 50 meter pools.

## Teams

USA Swimming is made up of approximately 2,800 teams from all over the country. Of these clubs, nearly half have 80 swimmers or less, and a handful of teams have over 500 swimmers. A team may be comprised of any number of swimmers, parents and coaches.

Participants compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the first day of the meet. Traditionally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Many local meets feature 8 and under, single age groups, or senior events. Team practice groups are usually determined by age and/or ability.

## Officials

Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.