

YMCA of Coastal Georgia

2026 Swim Team Parent Handbook

YMCA Mission:

“To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.”

Swim Team Philosophy

The YMCA Swim Team is dedicated to providing a quality youth program for kids of all ages that adheres to the philosophy of fun and fairness.

Our swim program is for youth ages 5 to 17.

Our goal is to encourage the following principles:

- Safety First
- Everyone Participates
- Character Development
- Positive Competition
- Family Involvement
- Having Fun!

We believe swimming is a great way to keep your kids active while they have fun!

All participants will be taught:

- The fundamentals of each stroke
- How to improve skills
- The value of teamwork and sportsmanship

In addition, participants will develop:

- Self-esteem
- Confidence
- Time management skills
- Regards for others
- ...and much more!

To make the program as stress-free as possible for the parents, we have created this handbook as a tool to help guide you and to keep you educated with information such as contacts, swim meet schedules, pool locations, event breakdowns, organizational structures, and other helpful pieces.

Parent Participation in Swim Team

Purpose: The goal of the swim team parent should be to encourage their swimmer to perform their best. Involvement of the parents in swim practices is not allowed. Any concerns of the parent with respect to their swimmer should be directed to the coaches at the appropriate times (such as before or after, but not during practice). Parents should be encouraging to their swimmer regardless of “winning” or “losing”. Please allow coaches to give your swimmer constructive instructions to improve their next race.

*****Parents are encouraged to volunteer at a minimum of 2 meets throughout the season to ensure quality experience for their child(ren).*****

Volunteering Duties:

Timers:

-12 timers are required per meet to time each lane, there shall be two timers per lane, each time will be written on the timers' sheets for accuracy.

-The timers will stand at the finishing side of the lane; they will start the timer when the start whistle is blown and stop the timer when the swimmer finishes the heat.

-The timers will write all information on a score card, First and Last name of the swimmer, team, gender, age, event number, event type, and time. Accuracy is critical for scoring.

-A runner will pick up score cards and bring them to the scorers.

Bull Pen:

-Bull pen volunteer is responsible for gathering the swimmers for each event and heat.

-They will be provided either with a bullhorn or a PA system to call for swimmers; a heat sheet will be provided so they know swimmers' names and teams.

Runner:

-The runner is responsible for gathering all the score cards from the times after each event/heat and bringing it to the scorer to be placed.

Meet Information

Home Team:

Provide 1 runner, 6 timers, 1 stroke/turn judge, 2 scorers

Enter away team line-up

Provide a PA system

Away Teams:

Provide 6 timers, 2 scorers

Line-up will be sent to home team 24 hours before meet

Meet Set-Up

Season runs 8 weeks: June 1st– July 25th (off 7/4)

Age Groups:

5 & 6

7 & 8

9 & 10

11 & 12

13 and up (to 17 years of age)

Point Score:

Individual:

1st – 7 pts

2nd – 5 pts

3rd – 3 pts

Relays:

1st – 5 pts

2nd – 3 pts

3rd – 1 pt

Meets are held on Saturday mornings. Pool deck access begins at 6:30 AM. Warm-ups begin at 7:00 AM. Each team is allotted a 10-minute warm-up period; home team will go first.

A swimmer's age group will be determined by the swimmer's age at each meet.

Age groups for meets include:

- 6 & under
- 7 & 8
- 9 & 10
- 11 & 12
- 13 & Up (through age 17)

-Swimmers aged 13 and up as of the meet date will swim in the Open division.

-Parents, swim coaches, and assistant coaches will not be permitted to compete in swim meets.

-A swimmer may swim up in division for relay events.

-A swimmer may also swim up for individual events but will be required to swim up in the age bracket for all events in the meet if they do so.

-Each swimmer may swim up to two relay events as specified in the meet information.

-Each participant may swim up to three (3) individual events.

-All YMCA of Coastal Georgia meets require in-water starts. (Diving permitted only for deep end starts.)

-Scratches are due no later than 30 minutes prior to meet start.

-Entries are due NO LATER THAN MONDAY of the meet.

Meet Locations

Habersham YMCA

6400 Habersham St, Savannah, GA 31405

West Chatham YMCA

165 Isaac G Laroche Dr, Pooler, GA 31322

Effingham YMCA

1224 Patriot Dr, Rincon, GA 31326

Islands Family YMCA

66 Johnny Mercer Blvd, Savannah, Ga, 31410

Liberty County ASYMCA

201 Marylou Dr, Hinesville, GA 31313

Day of the Meet Procedures

-All swimmers must arrive by 7:00 AM and be ready to enter the water. Swimmers changing on-site must arrive earlier.

-Swimmers must wear their team uniform (suit, cap, goggles).

-Parents should print event sheets in advance and write event numbers on the swimmer's arm with Sharpie.

-There will be 10 minutes of warm-ups designated by the host YMCA. Late arrivals may miss warm-ups.

-If unable to attend a registered meet, notify the head coach ASAP.

-Swimmers must stay alert to announcements and arrive at the bull pen on time. Missing an event results in disqualification for that event.

YMCA Coach & Player Youth Sports Creed

I will play fair and by the rules.

I will respect and support my teammates, opponents, officials, and YMCA staff.

I will be an example of good sportsmanship.

I will follow the values of HONESTY, CARING, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY.

Swim Meet Etiquette

Parents:

- Supervise children at all times

- Stay out of starting areas unless volunteering
- Direct questions to coaches, not meet officials
- Do not sit in roped-off areas
- Do not allow siblings near the water

Swimmers:

- Report to bullpen on time
- Report to coach after races
- Stay out of pool wells

All Participants:

- Do not distract lifeguards
- No abusive language, running, or rough play
- Chairs must remain 5 feet from pool edge
- Food only in designated areas

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS ARE NOT PERMITTED

Pool Closures / Meet Delays

Lightning:

At the first sight of lightning, the pool will close for 30 minutes. It will remain closed for 30 minutes after each strike.

Thunder:

At the first sound of thunder, the pool will close for 30 minutes. It will remain closed for 30 minutes after each sound of thunder.

DURING THUNDER OR LIGHTING EVERYONE MUST CLEAR THE POOL DECK AND SEEK SHELTER.

Rain:

If rain compromises visibility, the pool will close. Lifeguards must be able to clearly see lap lanes, and all drains clearly.

Contamination:

In the event the pool becomes contaminated with feces, vomit, or blood the pool will be evacuated immediately. Depending on the situation the pool could be closed from 2 – 24 hours.

What to Bring to the Meet

- Sunscreen
- Water (NO GLASS)
- Towels
- Chairs
- Shade / Canopies
- Healthy snacks
- Extra goggles & swim cap
- Sharpie marker & highlighter

Awards

Awards will be given at the following places:

Individual Events: 1st – 6th place

Relay Events: 1st – 6th place

All swimmers receive a participation award at the end of the season

Association-Wide Championship Meet

Swimmers must participate in 2 of 3 regular season meets.

Awards will be given to the following places:

Individual Events: 1st through 6th places

Relay Events: 1st through 3rd place

Events:

Up to 3 individual events

1 medley relay

1 freestyle relay

Relays must be same gender.

Swimmers may swim up, never down.

Disqualifications

Disqualifications will occur at every meet. Disqualifications will be determined by the team provided stroke judge. DQs will occur for the 9-10 and older age groups.

Examples include:

- Wrong stroke
- Walking or touching bottom
- Incorrect kick or pull (ex: freestyle kick for breaststroke)
- One-hand touch in Breaststroke/Butterfly

General USA swim rules and regulations will be loosely followed for stroke proficiency (proper pull/kick and correct stroke). Attached is the complete set of disqualifications and stroke rules from USA swimming for your reference.

102.21 DISQUALIFICATIONS.

1. Disqualification can be made only by the official within whose jurisdiction the infraction has been committed. Except for the Relay Take-off Judges when dual confirmation relay take-off judging, as provided in 102.13.6B, is used, the Referee, Stroke, Turn, or Relay Take-off Judge upon observing an infraction, shall immediately raise one hand overhead. If the official does not do so, there shall be

no disqualification unless the meet is being conducted under World Aquatics procedures.

2. The Referee or designated official making a disqualification shall make every reasonable effort to seek out the swimmer or his/her coach and inform him/her as to the reason for the disqualification. Failure to notify does not negate the disqualification.

3. For swimwear disqualifications, refer to 102.8.

4. Any swimmer who acts in an unsportsmanlike or unsafe manner within the swimming venue may be considered for appropriate action or penalty by the Referee.

5. A swimmer must start and finish the race in the same lane.

6. Standing on the bottom during a freestyle race shall not disqualify a swimmer, but a swimmer must not leave the pool, or walk, or spring from the bottom. Standing on the bottom during any other stroke shall result in disqualification.

7. Obstructing or otherwise interfering with another swimmer shall disqualify the offender, subject to the discretion of the Referee.

8. Any swimmer not entered in a race who enters the pool or course in the area in which said race is being conducted before all swimmers therein have completed the race shall be barred from the next individual event in which that swimmer is entered on that day or the next meet day, whichever is first.

9. Dipping goggles in the water or splashing water on the swimmer's face or body prior to an event shall not be considered as entering the pool unless the Referee finds that such action is interfering with the competition.

10. Should a foul endanger the chance of success of a swimmer(s), the Referee may allow the affected swimmer(s) to reswim the event. In case of collusion to foul another swimmer, the Referee may, at his/her discretion, disqualify the swimmer for whose aid the foul was committed, as well as the swimmer committing the foul.

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11. Grasping lane dividers to assist forward motion is not permitted.

12. For relay disqualifications, refer to 101.7.4.

13. The time and/or place of any swimmer or relay team disqualified either during or following an event shall not be recorded in the results of that event. If awards have been made prior to the decision to disqualify, they shall be returned and made to the proper recipient(s) and if points have been scored by those disqualified, the event shall be rescored.

14. Time and/or place officially recorded for a swimmer shall not be nullified for violations occurring subsequent to such performance.

15. Video replay footage from cameras approved in writing in advance of the competition by the Program & Events Coordinator (or his/her designee) may be used to ensure that the rules related to the style of swimming designated for the event are being observed, and to observe the starts, turns and finishes

101.1 STARTS.

1. Equipment — A loudspeaker start system conforming to 103.18, with or without an underwater recall device, and an electronic strobe signal visible to all manual timers for forward and backstroke starts, shall be the preferred starting device.

2. The Start

A. Once all swimmers have removed their clothing, except for swimwear, the Referee shall signal the commencement of an event by a short series of whistles inviting them to get ready at the starting end, followed by a long whistle indicating that they should take and maintain their positions on the starting platform, the deck, or in the water. In backstroke and medley relay events, at the Referee's first long whistle, the swimmers shall immediately enter the water and at the second long whistle shall return without undue delay to the starting position.

B. When the swimmers and officials are ready, the Referee shall signal with an outstretched arm to the Starter that the swimmers are under the Starter's control.

C. On the Starter's command "take your marks," the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position, in the forward start, with at least one foot at the front of the starting platform or the deck. Swimmers starting in the water

must have at least one hand in contact with the wall or starting platform. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.

D. When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your marks," the Starter shall immediately release all swimmers with a "stand" command upon which the swimmers may stand up or step off the blocks.

E. A swimmer shall not be disqualified for an illegal starting position at the start if the race is permitted to proceed. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the Starter.

3. False Starts

A. Any swimmer initiating a start before the signal may be disqualified if the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation that a violation occurred. Swimmers remaining on the starting blocks shall be relieved from their starting positions with a "stand" command and may step off the blocks.

B. If the starting signal has been given before the disqualification is declared, the race shall continue without recall. If the Referee independently observes and confirms the Starter's observation that a violation occurred, the swimmer or swimmers who have false started shall be disqualified upon completion of the race.

C. If the recall signal is activated, no swimmer shall be charged with a false start and the Starter shall restart the race upon signal by the Referee.

D. A swimmer who would otherwise be charged with a false start may be relieved of the charge if the false start was caused by the swimmer's reaction to a "stand" command.

E. Declared false start: swimmers reporting to the Referee prior to the start of their race and declaring their intent not to compete shall be disqualified except as noted in 207.11.6D(1).

101.2 BREASTSTROKE

1. **Start** — The forward start shall be used.

2. **Stroke** — After the start and after each turn when the swimmer leaves the wall, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any

time except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order.

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All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water.

The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer's head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke. .

3. Kick — After the start and each turn, at any time prior to the first breaststroke kick, a single butterfly kick is permitted. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous without alternating movement.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. Scissors, alternating movements or downward butterfly kicks are not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

4. Turns and Finish — At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. At the last stroke before the turn and at the finish, an arm stroke not followed by a leg kick is permitted. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

101.3 BUTTERFLY

1. **Start** — The forward start shall be used.
2. **Stroke** — After the start and after each turn, the swimmer's body must be on the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast except at the turn after the touch of the wall where it is permissible to turn in any manner as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. Both arms must be brought forward simultaneously over the water and pulled back simultaneously under the water throughout the race.
3. **Kick** — All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.
4. **Turns** — At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired as long as the body is on the breast when leaving the wall. 101.2 24 2025 Rules & Regulations
5. **Finish** — At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands separated and simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

101.4 BACKSTROKE

1. **Start** — The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, before or after the start, is prohibited. When using a backstroke ledge at the start, at least one toe of both feet must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. Bending the toes over the top of the touchpad is prohibited.

2. **Stroke** — The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it is permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water. Additionally, once some part of the head of the swimmer has passed the final 5-meter mark (long course and short course meters) or 5-yard mark (short course yards), immediately prior to reaching for the finish, the swimmer may be completely submerged prior to the touch.

3. **Turns** — Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which an immediate continuous single arm pull or immediate continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

4. **Finish** — Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

101.5 FREESTYLE

1. **Start** — The forward start shall be used.

2. **Stroke** — In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

3. **Turns** — Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.

4. **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

101.6 INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle.

1. **Start** — The forward start shall be used.

2. **Stroke** — The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke, except in the freestyle, the swimmer must be on the breast except when executing a turn. 101.3 2025 Rules & Regulations 25 1

3. **Turns**

A. Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke, except that in the freestyle turn, the swimmer must return to the breast before any kick or stroke.

B. The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed.

4. **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.

101.7 RELAYS

1. **Freestyle Relay** — Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance using any desired stroke(s). Freestyle finish rules apply.

2. **Medley Relay** — Four swimmers on each team, each to swim one-fourth of the prescribed distance in the following order: first, backstroke; second, breaststroke; third, butterfly; and fourth, freestyle. Rules pertaining to each stroke used as described in 101.6 (Individual Medley) shall govern where applicable. At the end of each leg, the finish rule for each stroke applies in each case.

3. **Mixed Competition Category Relays** — must consist of two (2) males and two (2) females. Exception: at meets below the LSC championship level, mixed relays consisting of compositions other than two (2) male swimmers and two (2) female swimmers may be permitted if stated in the meet announcement. Times for the mixed relays with compositions other than two (2) males and two (2) females shall not be loaded into the SWIMS database, but eligible lead-off times shall be loaded.

4. **Rules Pertaining to Relay Races**

A. No swimmer shall swim more than one leg in any relay event.

B. When automatic relay take-off judging is used, each swimmer must touch the touchplate or pad in his/her lane at the end of the course to have finished his/her leg of the relay race.

C. In relay races a swimmer other than the first swimmer shall not start until his/her teammate has concluded his/her leg.

D. Any relay team member and his/her relay team shall be disqualified from a race if a team member other than the swimmer designated to swim that leg enters the pool in the area where the race is being conducted before all swimmers of all teams have finished the race. Exception: When an in-the-water start is required or such start is approved by the Referee.

E. Each relay team member shall leave the water immediately upon finishing his/her leg, except the last member.

F. In relay races, the team of a swimmer whose feet have lost touch with the starting platform (ground or deck) before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified.

G. In relay races involving in-the-water starts, the team of a swimmer who has lost touch with the end of the course before his/her preceding teammate touches the wall shall be disqualified, unless the swimmer in default returns to the original starting point at the wall.

H. On relays, the second, third and fourth swimmers are prohibited from starting from the top of the adjustable back plate. A swimmer must have at least part of one foot in contact with the starting platform in front of the adjustable back plate during a relay exchange.