

McGaw YMCA Swim Team



Parent Handbook

Last Revised 07/10/24

Team Philosophy

MYST is a competitive swimming program that's oriented toward developing the whole swimmer.

We believe that there's more to competition than just collecting trophies.

The guiding philosophy of YMCA swimming is "Everyone swims; everyone wins." That means we value participation as much as performance.

We work hard to become tough and fair competitors, and want our swimmers to learn what they can accomplish as individuals and as members of a team as well.

At MYST, we feel the best measure of our success is not the number of ribbons we bring home so much as the number of young people we turn out who love to swim, continue swimming, and do it well.

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Getting Ready to Swim

What is MYST?

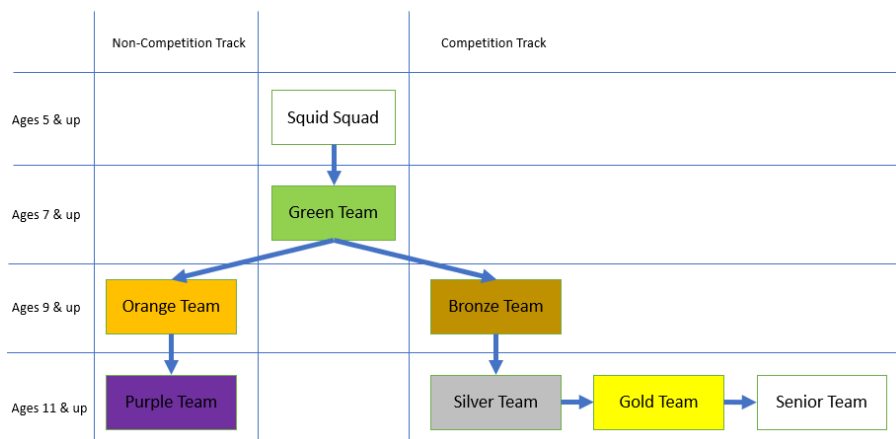
The McGaw YMCA Swim Team (MYST) is a competitive youth swimming program for kids aged five and up. The program emphasizes skill development, fitness, and fun. MYST offers both competitive and non-competitive swim team programs throughout the year, with the goal of teaching, training, and motivating young people to achieve their potential both in and out of the pool. The competition teams participate in both YMCA dual meets and sanctioned USA Swimming meets.

How we're Organized

The team is organized into "teams", based on age, experience, and expectations. Swimmers are placed into a group by coaches during the placement to join our team. The criteria for moving up to the next level have been defined by coaches and is explained below and on our website.

Apart from Squid Squad, all teams practice in the 6-lane Murdough Pool, while the Squid Squad works out in the 4-lane pool. All practices are supervised and led by the MYST coaching staff. Parents are always welcome to come and watch.

Information about adjustments to the schedule will always be included in the weekly swim team newsletter. Generally, we *do* conduct practices during school holidays. A good rule of thumb is that, if the Y is open, we practice.



Squid Squad - New swimmers, typically 5 to 7 years old. We provide a low-key introduction to competitive strokes for the young swimmer. The focus is more on developing proper stroke mechanics than on competition. Swimmers must be able to complete one length of the pool in freestyle or backstroke and be water safe.

Expectations: 2 practices a week. Members of the Squid Squad are encouraged to participate in our intrasquad meets, but not required.

Green Team - Swimmers aged 7 to 9 years old. Swimmers may be new to

competitive swimming or have had some swim team experience. This group will focus on proper stroke mechanics and begin to develop more endurance. Competition in meets is encouraged as the swimmers become ready. Swimmers must be able to complete one length of the pool in freestyle and backstroke.

Expectations: 2 practices per week (out of 3 offered). Competition in YMCA dual meets, and the District Championships is encouraged and recommended.

Orange Group - Swimmers age 9 and up who are new to swim team or not as interested in competition. Swimmers must be able to swim at least two lengths of the pool in freestyle and backstroke proficiently. This group will continue to refine stroke mechanics, developing all four strokes and moving towards longer swims in practice.

Expectations: Attend 2 practices a week (out of 3 offered). Participation in dual meets is encouraged, but not required.

Bronze Group - Swimmers aged 9 and older who have knowledge of all four strokes. The group is designed for those who are beginning to swim competitively at large invitational meets, and getting used to the level of training required of the Silver, Gold, and Senior groups.

Expectations: Attend 3 practices per week (out of 4 offered). Participation in YMCA meets is required and USA meets expected.

Purple Group – Swimmers aged 11 and old who have achieved proficiency at all 4 strokes as well as starts and turns. The group is ideally suited for those swimmers who may not want to swim at competitively at large invitational meets but wish to continue to refine stroke mechanics, developing all four strokes and moving towards longer swims in practice.

Expectations: Attend 3 practices a week is required. Competition in YMCA dual meets, and the District Championships is encouraged and recommended.

Silver and Gold Groups – Swimmers aged 11 and up who wish to train at the highest level and aspire to qualify for competition at the national and senior level. These individuals compete in YMCA & USA swim meets in an effort to achieve the highest levels of the sport. Swimmers are required to be proficient at all 4 competitive strokes, as well as starts and turns.

Expectations: Practice 3-4 days a week (out of 6 offered). Competition

at dual, invitational, and championship meets, for both YMCA and USA swimming.

Senior Group - Targeted at swimmers age 12 and higher who wish to compete at an elite level. It provides the highest level of training MYST offers and includes strenuous practices. While there is a focus on technique, there is also one on conditioning and training. Participation in the Senior Group is by invitation of the senior coach only.

Expectations: Swimmers must demonstrate a desire to train at a committed, strenuous level. This includes attending 60% of practices (out of 8 offered/week), competing at the YMCA nationals, closed YMCA competition meets including the Chicago District Championships.

Intrasquad Activities

Every group is an important part of the team, and we encourage all swimmers to participate in team activities, regardless of what group they're in. This include some or all of the following, many of which have become hallowed traditions:

- Season Kickoff and Parents Meeting
- Team Outings
- Team Pool Party
- End of Year MYST Banquet

In addition, there are other fun events that held throughout the year, to give swimmers a chance to have fun together, and engage socially with coaches and parents.

The Official MYST Season

Swim Practice

Our regular season runs from September to March, with practice running continually during that period. Practice is an important part of any swim team. MYST swimmers are encouraged to attend practices regularly each week throughout the season — even during vacations and holiday periods, when we run an adjusted schedule.

If you have questions as far as the placement of your swimmer, please feel free to speak with the Head Coach about what would be best. It is important for your swimmer to attend the correct practice for developmental reasons: a novice swimmer attending a practice that is too advanced may feel overwhelmed and not enjoy the sport, and the opposite may occur for a more advanced swimmer practicing with others at lesser ability and commitment.

What is “Stroke Clinic”?

In September and April, our MYST coaching staff runs a stroke improvement clinic. This is a YMCA class that focuses on good swimming mechanics and technique.

The clinic’s emphasis is more on swimming well than on swimming fast — although the two usually go hand-in-hand.

You do not have to be a member of the team to attend stroke improvement clinic. Many team members attend to work on their technique and improve their conditioning.

Swim Team Fees

All swimmers must be members of the McGaw YMCA. On top of the membership dues, the Y charges for participation in the swim team program. These fees depend upon the level at which your swimmer is participating, with Squid Squad fees the lowest increasing from there. Fee assistance is available for families who qualify. Families with more than one swimmer can receive a discount for each child enrolled beyond the original team member.

Swim team fees cover the following:

- Cost of practices
- Fees for all YMCA dual meets
- Fees for up to two YMCA invitational meets

- Fees for YMCA district and state championship meets

For more information about fees for the current season, please check the swim team registration form, which is included in the parent information packet and available from the MYST website.

Competitions

YMCA and USA Swimming

MYST competes in two competitive swimming organizations: YMCA and USA Swimming (formerly USS -- and before that, AAU). Our dual charters allows us to swim in meets organized by both organizations.

We are primarily a YMCA team, meaning we fill out much of our schedule with meets against other YMCA teams and our focus at the end of the season is on the YMCA championship meets.

We participate in a few USA Swimming-sponsored meets each year. These meets provide our swimmers with exposure to swimmers from more teams and allow them to participate in some particularly interesting meets.

On the meet sign-up forms, each meet is designated as a “Y” meet or a “USA” meet. Generally, USA meets involve multiple teams in large swimming venues, often happening over several days. For example, several of them are held at the UIC Natatorium downtown.

While some Y meets are also large, most of them are smaller, 2- and 3- team competitions held at the local YMCA. MYST generally hosts 3-4 of these a year at our pool throughout the regular swim season.

Types of Meets

MYST swimmers can compete in various types of meets.

Intrasquad Meets

Intrasquad meets race MYST team members against each other in our home pool at the McGaw YMCA. We typically have one or two intrasquad meets each season. These are fun events designed primarily to introduce swimmers to meet mechanics and the basic race components of clean starts, turns, finishes and relays. An intrasquad meet usually lasts one to three hours.

All MYST team members are encouraged to participate in these meets, including members of the Squid Squad.

Dual Meets

Dual meets are competitions between MYST and one other YMCA team, swimming either in our pool or theirs. MYST usually competes in about six dual meets per season. Most dual meets are on Saturday afternoons, and last three to four hours.

Tri- Meets

Tri-meets are like dual meets but held with two other YMCA teams.

Invitational Meets

Invitational meets pull together a half-dozen or more teams in a much larger competition that can involve hundreds of swimmers. Invitational meets are held on either Saturdays or Sundays (often both), and last several hours.

To participate, swimmers must sign up well in advance. The swim team schedule always contains several invitational meets. Sponsors of invitational meets charge an entry fee for each swimmer. Meet sponsors do not offer refunds for no-shows, so swimmers must understand that turning in their meet entry represents a commitment to participate.

USA Swimming Meets

USA Swimming is a national organization of age-group swimmers and swim teams. MYST maintains a USA Swimming charter, which allows us to supplement our normal schedule of YMCA events

Generally, these events are more like invitational meets, involving multiple teams and there are fees for participate.

Championship Meets (“Districts,” “Districts Classic,” “State Championships”)

Each swimmer who has competed in at least two dual meets is eligible for one of the season-ending championship meets sponsored by the Chicago District.

We encourage swimmers at all age levels to print out the qualifying times for the district and state meets, and use them as a motivation throughout the year: this is a great motivator, and will encourage goal-setting skills, which are valuable throughout life.

Swimmers who achieve a state qualifying time during the regular season advance to the Illinois Area YMCA Swimming Championships. This meet is typically held on a weekend in mid-March. Recently, this meet has been held and Lake Central High School in St. John, IN.

Does a swimmer have to compete?

This depends on the group a swimmer is in. Some of our groups do require participation in meets to join. This is because our space is limited, and we want all of the swimmers in a particular group to have similar goals.

Preparation for your Swimmer

Basic Equipment

We strongly recommend that your swimmer have the following equipment:

- Team swim suit
- Swim cap
- Practice suit
- Goggles — at least 2 pairs
- Towel
- Swim bag to carry gear
- Combination lock

Your swimmer's name should be clearly marked on all items.

MYST Team Gear

At the beginning of the season, MYST members can purchase suits, sweats and swim bags emblazoned with the team logo. Team suits are required for all members in levels Green and higher and to be worn at swim meets.

Replacement gear with the team logo may be purchased through the team store.

What to Bring to a Meet

Swimmers should bring all of their basic swim gear (see above) to a meet, plus these few additional items:

- Deck shoes or sandals
- T-shirt or sweatshirt to wear between events
- Several towels – remember, swimmers swim in several events and usually want to dry off after each
- Dry clothes to wear home
- Healthy snacks or up to \$10 to buy food at the meet (please note: Food is never allowed on a pool deck - especially food or drinks in glass containers)

In addition to the above, for an invitational meet you may also want the following:

- Homework or books (especially for longer, invitational meets)
- Cards and quiet games to pass time between events
- Music player/radios with headphones
- Sleeping bag or large blanket for the gym floor
- Lunch and/or a cooler

Please do not bring balls, Frisbees or active games, as space for the swimmers is usually limited. Also, while meets are safe and well-supervised, thefts or misplacement can happen, so avoid bringing any items of value.

Nutrition for Competition

Swimmers like to eat at swim meets, and junk food is always for sale there. Bad nutrition, though, can hurt performance. Help your swimmer by making sure he or she eats well before and during competition.

Recommended foods are high in carbohydrates but low in fat, including:

- Pasta
- Pancakes or waffles (easy on the syrup)
- Cereal - whole grain
- Oatmeal
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Potatoes
- Sandwiches (lots of bread; easy on the mayo, meat and cheese)
- Popcorn

Please avoid:

- All fried foods
- Candy, cake and cookies
- Highly sweetened foods
- Carbonated beverages.

Swimmers also dehydrate very quickly. Make sure your swimmer drinks plenty of recommended fluids, including:

- Water
- Sports drinks, such as Power-Aid or Gatorade
- 100% fruit juice

General Conduct

The driving force behind the MYST program is to cultivate a positive, productive environment in which all swimmers feel welcome and supported.

To accomplish this, everyone involved with MYST, including the coaches, Y-staff, parents, and the swimmers themselves, must hold themselves and everyone else to exacting standards. The MYST program has zero-tolerance for negative or disruptive behavior, including vandalism, bullying, negative or ill-tempered language, or anything else that would blemish our relationship with the McGaw community or drive another swimmer away from the program. Infractions will be dealt with immediately and aggressively.

We encourage parents to keep an eye around the pool area and locker room and help us keep the environment safe and friendly. If you see someone behaving in a way that you would not tolerate from your own child, please tell the coaches about it. If you are informed that your child has had an infraction, please do not dismiss it or chalk it up to immaturity. We encourage discussing it and make sure they understand that the MYST program is all about mutual encouragement and positive interaction.

Swimmer's Code of Conduct

The purpose of a code of conduct for athletes is to establish a consistent expectation for athletes' behavior. As members of MYST, swimmers agree to the following:

- I will exercise proper sportsmanship. This includes refraining from the use of derogatory terms in relation to race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or gender expression. This also includes refraining from activity that could be considered as bullying, harassment, hazing and/or intimidation.
- I will set a good example of behavior and work ethic for my younger teammates.
- I will be respectful of my teammate's feelings and personal space.
- I will show respect for all facilities and other property (including locker rooms) used during practices, competitions, and team activities.
- I will refrain from foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest,

offensive, or illegal.

If I disagree with an official's call, I will talk with my coach and not approach the official directly.

I agree to hold my teammates accountable for following the Code of Conduct in order to ensure a safe, supportive and successful environment.

Working with Our Coaches

The coaching staff is responsible for the development and safety of the swimmers during practice and swim meets. Parents are encouraged to ask the coaches questions about their child's swimming. A good time to speak to the coaches face-to-face is at the end of practice sessions while the kids are showering and dressing.

Alternatively, you may leave questions for the head coach in the Y voicemail box: 847-475-7400, extension 219. It's also good to check this voicemail recording if you have questions about upcoming MYST activities, as the coaches will update the message to include the latest information on bus departures, warm-up times, etc.

Parent Responsibilities

The YMCA is a family-oriented institution, and its swim team is no exception. One of the most important ingredients in the swim program's success has been the involvement of swimmers' parents and guardians.

Parents' Most Important Role

Competitive swimming allows swimmers to experience both success and defeat. A positive, supportive environment at home encourages swimmers to continue pursuing their long-range goals. We encourage good sportsmanship and respectful behavior toward teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials at all times, and hope that you will support and demonstrate these values yourself. Parents can also support their swimmer by helping set short-term and long-term goals with them, which is a great way to keep them motivated and steadily increasing both their performance and their enthusiasm.

Responsibility of the Parents at Swim Meets

Attendance at meets shows your support. Swim meets are exciting events, and it takes the efforts of many volunteers to run a smooth and successful home meet. During a meet, the coaching staff is typically busy working with the swimmers, so it's the responsibility of the swim team parents to make everything else happen.

We need all parents to volunteer at least a couple of meets during the season.

Here are just some of the ways you can help.

Officials

Six to eight YMCA-certified officials are needed to run a swim meet. The referee has over-all responsibility for running the meet and calls each event. The starter directs the swimmers to their starting positions and signals the start of each race. The stroke and turn judges assure that swimmers use the proper techniques for each of the competitive strokes.

Each year, we like to have a few new parents go through the certification process (typically a few hours of classroom training followed by a brief written exam) to assure that we have enough officials for each home meet.

Timers

Our pool is equipped with electronic timing equipment. The starter has a trigger that both signals the start and starts a clock at the beginning of each race, and touchpads record each individual's time as swimmers contact the touch-pad at the end of their lanes. The timing equipment coordinators are responsible for operating the timing console and passing the electronic results of each event to the scorer and the ribbon writers.

Occasionally, the electronic timing system fails. This can occur for many reasons — the most common being when a swimmer somehow fails to hit the touch-pad correctly at the end of a race. Therefore, two back-up timers must stand in each lane, operating stopwatches. So, in our six-lane pool, we need a minimum of twelve timers for each meet. We strive to have at least 24 timers, so people have to work only half of the meet.

Timing is easy: click the stopwatch when the light flashes, and again when the swimmer finishes, then write down the time on a sheet. Officials will go over this at a race, and people are always on hand.

If you are at a meet and meet officials call for timers, please volunteer. It's not fair to have the same parents time again and again. Besides, it's actually fun: it helps pass the time, you'll be on hand to encourage your swimmer before a race, and you'll have a ring-side seat!

Logistics

There are many more volunteers needed to run the meet smoothly. The *set-up crew* prepares the pool area for competition. The *bullpen coordinators* organize swimmers in the waiting area before their events. After each race, *runners* collect time cards from the lanes and deliver them to the scorer's table. The *scorer* reviews the results of each event — both electronic and hand-recorded times — and confirms each swimmer's place and official time. *Ribbon writers* then prepare the appropriate awards. The *take-down crew* helps put away the equipment and chairs after the meet.

Concessions

Concessions are typically in the Skydeck overlooking the pool.

Parent Committee

Our parent volunteer efforts are organized by our team's Parent Committee. Parent Council members attend a monthly one-hour meeting on second Wednesday of the month at the McGaw YMCA to discuss and plan upcoming events and the status of work underway for the team. There are often a few emails and some materials to read in between. This group works with the Head Coach to plan events for the team and coordinate support for meets. Many of these members often also volunteer for other roles as well.

Competitive swimming glossary

Alternate: In a prelims/finals meet, after the finalists are decided, the next fastest swimmers other than the finalists are designated as alternates. The fastest of the two being the first alternate and the next be the second. Alternates are placed in finals in the event of a scratch of one of the main finalists.

Backstroke: One of the four competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. It is also sometimes called the **Back Crawl**. Backstroke is swum as the first stroke of the Medley Relay and the second stroke of the Individual Medley. This stroke is offered at 25, 50, 100, and 200 yard/meter distances.

Backstroke Start: Swimmers begin in the water, usually with their hands gripping the starting block but with their feet underwater.

Block: The starting platform located at the end of each lane.

Breaststroke: One of the four competitive racing strokes. It is a frog-like stroke with a whip kick. Breaststroke is swum as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the Individual Medley. Racing distances are usually 25, 50, 100, and 200 yards/meters (depending on type of pool).

Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50m pool into two 25m pools.

Butterfly: One of the four competitive racing strokes. It is a stroke in which both arms rotate together on either side of the body while the legs performed a dolphin kick (held together). Butterfly (nicknamed fly) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and the first stroke in the Individual Medley. Racing distances are usually 25, 50, 100, and 200 yards/meters (depending on type of pool).

Cap/Swim Cap: The latex or lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers.

District Meet: The meet held at the end of the season, attended by swimmers from Y's in the Chicago area.

Check In: The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host or they will be scratched from entering

Chlorine: The chemical used by most pools to kill the bacteria in water and keep it clear and safe to swim in.

Circle Seeding: A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes.

Circle Swimming: Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

Closed Competition: Swim meet which is open to a specific number of invitees.

Club: A registered group of swimmers, pretty much synonymous with “team”

Coach: A person who trains and teaches athletes in the sport of swimming.

Consolation Finals: After the fastest 8 or 10 swimmers, the next 8 or 10 swimmers in a prelims/finals meet who, after the prelims swim, qualify to return to the finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the championship heat.

Course: Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. Long course is 50 yards or meters, short course is 25 yards or meters.

Cut: Slang for qualifying time. A time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

Deadline: The date meet entries must be postmarked by, to be accepted by the meet host. Making the meet deadline does not guarantee entry into a meet since many meets are full prior to the deadline.

Deck: The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but authorized persons may be on deck during a swim meet or practice.

DQ (Disqualified): This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind (e.g. one-handed touch in breaststroke). A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive an award, nor will there be an official time in that event.

Dive: Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warm up except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmers coach.

Drill: An exercise involving a part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

Dry-land Training: Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics, and/or weight training.

Dual Meet: Type of meet where two teams compete against each other.

Entry: An individual, relay teams roster event list into a swim competition.

Entry Fees: The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged to compete.

Entry Limit: Each meet will have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they can not exceed. Once an entry limit is reached a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Electronic Timing: Timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, button for backup timing, and a computer console that prints out the results of each race. Some timing systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers times.

Eligible to compete: The status of a member swimmer that means they are registered and have met all the requirements.

Event: A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals one preliminary with final or one timed final.

False Start: Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start prior to the signal.

Fastest to Slowest: A seeding method used on the longer events at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events alternate one female heat and one male heat until all swimmers have competed.

Final: The championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight swimmers from the preliminaries compete for awards, depending on the number of lanes in the pool.

Final Results: The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.

Flags: Backstroke flags placed 5 meters from the end of the pool. They enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently through being able to count the number of strokes into each wall.

Flip Turn: In freestyle and backstroke only, when a swimmer turns by completing a partial somersault and twisting underwater before pushing off the wall to resume swimming. In backstroke, the swimmer rotates onto his/her stomach with one continuous arm strike and pushes off the wall on his/her back to resume swimming.

Freestyle: One of the four competitive racing events. It can be virtually any stroke (there are not specific rules about the form to use), though it is typically the front crawl, with arms moving in circles parallel to the direction of the swim and feet alternating kicks. Freestyle is swam as the forth stroke in the Medley Relay and in the Individual Medley. Distances are typically 25, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800, and 1500 yards/meters.

Goggles: Glasses type devices worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by the chlorine in the water.

Heats: A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swam after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Sheet: The pre-meet printing listings of swimmers seed times in events at a competition. These sheets vary in accuracy since coaches submit swimmers times many weeks before the meet. Heat sheets are usually sold at the admissions table and are used to mainly make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seedings prior to the race plus swimmers can tell the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.

Horn: A sounding device, sometimes used in place of a gun. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system.

I.M. or Individual Medley. An event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle. Typically, there are 100-yard medleys (1 length of the pool per stroke) and 200-yard medleys (2-lengths per stroke).

Invitational: Type of meet that requires a club to request an invitation to attend.

Kick: The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to yell to encourage swimmers during a race.

Lane: The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. Lanes are numbered from right (lane 1) to left (Lane 6).

Lane Ropes: Continuous floating markers attached to a cable attached from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting waves caused by racing swimmers.

Lap: One length of the course (sometimes means down and back).

Lap Counter: A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. The person, who counts for the swimmer, is stationed at the opposite end from the start.

Leg: The part of a relay event swam by a single team member or a single stroke in the IM.

Length: The extent of the competitive course from end to end.

Long Course or LC: A 50 meter long pool

Marshall: The official who controls the crowd and swimmer flow at the swim meet.

Meet: Competition designed to be a measure of progress and a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmers test themselves against the clock to see how they are progressing.

Meet Chair: The person in charge of the administration of the meet.

Meters: The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the metric system. Long course is 50 meters and short course is 25 meters.

Negative Split: Swimming the second half of the race faster than the first half.

No Time (NT): The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.

Official: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces SNC rules.

Official Time: A time achieved in a race during a duly sanctioned competition.

Open Competition: Competition which any qualified club or swimmer may enter.

Pool: The facility in which swimming competitions and practices are conducted.

Positive Check In: The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded or pre seeded meet. The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

Practice: The scheduled workouts a swimmer attends with their club/team.

Prelim: Slang for preliminaries, also called heats – those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

Prelim/Final: Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session.

Pre-seeded: A meet conducted without a bull pen in which a swimmer knows what lane and heat they are in by looking at the heat sheet or meet program.

Proof of Time: An official meet result. Swimmers/Coaches must present proof of time with some entries.

Psych Sheet: An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event. Sometimes referred to as a heat sheet or meet program.

Qualifying Time: Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

Race: A single swimming competition event.

Registered: Enrolled and paid member of a team.

Relay: An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Relay Start: Beginning one's leg of a relay by diving as soon as the incoming relay member touches the wall.

Rules: YMCA swimming is governed by the swimming rules adopted by the NCAA. USA Swimming is governed by separate rules. There are just a few, minor differences between the two sets of rules.

Safety Procedure: Safety procedures are designed to prevent accidents, and must be followed to the letter.

Sanctioned Meet: All competitions in which records may be set and official times may be obtained, must be officially approved by a body such as Illinois Swim or the Area Y.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event in a competition.

Seed: Assign the swimmers to heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.

Session: Portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by time.

Short Course or SC: A 25 meter long pool in which most competitions during the winter are held.

Starter: The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

Stand up: The command given by the starter or referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.

Step down: The command given by the starter or referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication that everything is not right for the race to start.

Stroke: There are four competitive strokes, butterfly, backstroke, freestyle, breaststroke.

Suit: The racing uniform worn by the swimmer, in the water, during competition. The four most popular types of suits worn are Nylon, Lycra, Paper, and Fastskin.

Swim-off: In a prelims/finals type competition a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise the tie stands.

Team: Swimmers with a particular Y. McGaw is a swim team.

Timed Final: Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times.

Time Standard: A time set by a provincial association that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.

Time Trial: A practice race which is not part of a regular competition. Time trials may be sanctioned and used to qualify for specific meets.

Timer: The volunteers sitting behind the starting block/finish end of the pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.

Touch Pad: A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

Tri-meet: A meet with three teams competing for points.

Unofficial Time: The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after a race. After the time has been checked, it will become official.

USA, USA Meet, USA Swimming: USA Swimming is the national governing body for the sport of swimming, located at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

Among the many things they do (including train and support Olympic swimmers), USA Swimming sanctions swim meets, which you will see listed as a “USA Meet.” Many swim clubs, such as the YWCA of Evanston, swim only in USA meets. MYST can compete in both Y-sanctioned events as well as USA events. USA Swim meets are generally held at 50-meter (also known as Long Course) university pools and involve dozens of swim clubs from the region and hundreds of swimmers.

Warm-down: Low intensity swimming used by swimmer after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

Warm-up: Low-intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or a race to get muscles loose and warm, and to gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

Watches: Stopwatches used to time swimmers during a competition. When totally automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.

Y Meet: A swim meet sanctioned by the YMCA, and involving Y teams. Most of our dual and tri meets are Y me

