

Greenwood YMCA Gators



Team Handbook

Revised: August 29, 2017

www.greenwoodgators.org

HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Greenwood Family YMCA Swim Team. This handbook is intended to help you better understand our program and the role you play in making it a success.

This handbook has been designed for Greenwood Family YMCA families as a reference source for team philosophy, structure, policy, and helpful information. It is divided into sections and has an appendix for easy reference. The majority of the information in this handbook will be valid year after year. Current schedules, rosters, and other updates will be given to families as necessary. While this handbook contains a large amount of information, there will inevitably be questions not answered within its pages. Please contact one of the coaches or the Aquatics Director immediately if you have a question concerning the swim team program.

FROM THE COACH

Welcome to the Greenwood Family YMCA Swim Team. The goal of the swim team program is to develop responsible, caring, respectful and honest young adults through the sport of competitive swimming. Competitive swimming is the vehicle through which participants learn life lessons that will impact them forever. We focus on the values that will enable each participant to lead a fulfilling and productive life outside of swimming and we take pride in the strong leaders and role models who graduate from the program. Throughout the program, you will find constant examples of these traits in action from our coaches, swimmers and parents.

While there will be some experiences that are tougher than others, the coaches and parents comprise an important team in teaching the valuable lessons of a young person's life. We are excited that you are a part of our YMCA program and look forward to your family's involvement throughout the year. GO GATORS!

Tom Karel, Head Swim Coach

THE YMCA

The YMCA of the USA is a national organization, founded in 1844, which has evolved to promote our modern mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. As America's Oldest Swimming Instructor, the YMCA has long valued the importance of fitness activities in the development of young people. All YMCA programs, including the swim team, incorporate values education and character development through the promotion of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. We are bound by policies and procedures within the organization. For example, all swimmers must be a member of the Greenwood Family YMCA to swim for the Gators. Also, there are now detailed procedures for using the Y logo.

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach:

Tom Karel (All Group)

Assistant Coaches:

Kendrick Anderson (Silver Group)

Tyler Will (Green & Gold Group)

Coaches occupy a unique place in a swimmer's life - part parent, part teacher. Greenwood Family YMCA coaches take these roles seriously and strive to be good role models, leaders and listeners.

Coaches:

1. Instruct swimmers in all aspects of the sport: technique, training methods, mental preparation, competitive strategy, etc.
2. Offer encouragement, constructive criticism, and honest assessments with suggestions for improvement
3. Demonstrate and encourage values and behaviors consistent with the principles of the YMCA
4. Lead the team at competitions
5. Make decisions about group placement, meet opportunities, and events for swimmers (based on a number of factors and with the interest of the swimmer and the team in mind)
6. Communicate with swimmers and parents about plans, issues, and philosophy within the program

TEAM STRUCTURE

The Greenwood Gator Swim Team is divided into training groups based on age. As the team grows in the coming years, further group divisions will be structured to serve the developmental and competitive needs of a growing number of participants. The groups enable swimmers to progress at a constant rate while building strong team bonds with other team members in the same age range. Swimmers age twelve and under are encouraged to participate in other activities outside of swimming while they develop the technique, endurance and competitiveness that are the foundation for successful swimmers. Senior (13 and older) swimmers are asked to make a greater commitment to swimming and to the team by participating in more practices and competitions. Senior level swimming, in the YMCA, is more demanding, focused and competitive than the sport is for younger swimmers. The Greenwood Family YMCA program reflects that reality and aims to equip its swimmers to not only compete, but to succeed at each level of competitive swimming. Exceptions to training group assignments are made only with permission of the Head Coach. USA Swimming: For swimmers who want to make an extra effort and compete at a higher level of competition, our Y is also a USA Swim Club. If swimmers choose, they can participate in additional meets. For details, see Head Coach Tom Karel.

GREEN GATORS, AGES 4-8

Minimum requirements: Swimmers must be deep water safe and be able to swim at least 4 lengths of the pool. Knowledge of at least three of the competitive strokes is preferred. This introductory group practices 2-3 times a week; Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with emphasis on learning proper stroke technique in a fun, low pressure environment. Participation in at least 2 regular swim meets and the championship meet is encouraged.

SILVER GATORS, AGES 9-12

Minimum requirements: Green Gator requirements plus legal technique in 3 of the 4 competitive strokes. This group practices 2-4 times a week; Monday - Thursday and continues to focus on learning proper technique in the 4 competitive strokes plus starts and turns. It also introduces basic conditioning for competitions and some dryland training is introduced. Participation in at least 2 YMCA meets and the YMCA championship meet is encouraged. Participation in community service projects and team functions is also encouraged.

GOLD GATORS, AGES 13-19

Minimum requirement: Proficiency in all four competitive strokes, good physical condition, ability to train for up to two hours. Training groups at the senior level require greater commitment by parents and swimmers to the sport of swimming and to the Greenwood Family YMCA team. Proper technique is still stressed but the focus shifts to preparation for, and performance in competition. Senior swimmers should attend practices regularly, as well as meets, team functions and community service projects. Dryland and strength training will be included in the program and all swimmers will have seasonal goal sessions with their coach. Senior swimmers will be seen as the leaders of the team and will be held to the highest of behavioral standards while being expected to inspire and lead their younger teammates.

SEASONS AND BREAKS

The Greenwood Family YMCA Swim Team is a year round seasonal competitive program. All groups take a short break in the winter, spring, and summer. These are important periods of physical AND mental rest for swimmers. Please respect these breaks as they are important in preventing burnout and keeping swimmers excited about the sport and the team. The Greenwood Family YMCA Swim Team respects family time together, including vacation time. Parents should be aware, however, that extended time away from practice and competition in the middle of a season will affect a swimmer's performance. The effect becomes greater the older and more competitive a swimmer becomes. One option is to find a team in the town/area that you will be visiting and arrange for your child to practice with them during your stay. This can be a fun way to not only stay in shape, but to learn different training techniques and systems. To discuss time away from practice and meets and/or the effects it will have, please contact the swim coach.

PRACTICES

At all levels, practice sessions develop important athletic, personal and social skills. Regular, consistent attendance is necessary to build the abilities of the swimmer, enhance the coach-swimmer relationship, and strengthen the unity of the team as a whole. Swimmers will be picked up at the SIDE DOOR closest to the fields. Please park in the side lot and a Coach will bring your child out.

SCHEDULES

Practice schedules are distributed to all Greenwood Family YMCA families prior to the start of each season. Some updates and revisions may be necessary, especially during holidays. Every effort will be made to notify families of changes in the practice schedule. Please be attentive to all notices and announcements. **No practices will take place if Greenwood School District 50 does not have school on that day.** We encourage families to carpool to and from practice. Check the roster for swimmers in your area who are in your child's practice group.

WHAT TO BRING TO PRACTICE

Use a mesh bag for all of your equipment.

Green Gators– suit, goggles, cap, towel, lock, running shoes;

Silver Gators– suit, goggles, cap, towel, lock, running shoes, **fins, pull bouy;**

Gold Gators – suit, goggles, cap, towel, lock, running shoes, **fins, pull bouy, hand paddles.**

These are the necessities. We recommend that all swimmers carry an extra cap, suit, and pair of goggles - "just in case." Coaches do not carry extra items to loan swimmers for practice and the facilities do not regularly have extras to loan. **CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO PRACTICE.** Swimmers should bring their bags, clothes, etc. onto the pool deck with them or lock them in a locker during practice. Locks should be temporary and removed each day at the end of practice.

PUNCTUALITY

Please be on time to all practices. The only exception is when a swimmer is unavoidably late due to the time they are released from school. Practices begin with stretching and a warm up period to prevent injury. Instructions and important information are also given to swimmers at the beginning of practice. When swimmers are late, they miss this important preparation and information. Likewise, please avoid bringing swimmers to practice excessively early (more than 15 min.) and pick up swimmers promptly after practice (no later than 15 min. after the conclusion of the practice). Coaches are responsible for swimmers during specified practice times only. It is impractical and unfair to expect coaches or YMCA staff to watch swimmers before or after practice. When swimmers arrive at their practice site, they are to wait on deck until practice begins.

PARENTS AT PRACTICE

Practice is time for swimmers and coaches to concentrate on improving the swimmers' technique, increasing speed and endurance, developing a strong coach-swimmer relationship, and fostering cooperation and unity within the group. It is important that parents allow this development to occur without interruption. Therefore we ask that parents not be present on deck or talk to their children during practice. It is distracting for swimmers and coaches alike. We respect parents' interest in their children's activities and invite them to observe practice from outside the pool area or in a designated area. Parents are always welcome to ask questions of coaches before or after practice.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Practice continues when it is raining. In the event of snow or ice, practice may be canceled depending on road conditions. If public schools release early because of hazardous weather, there will be no practices. If public schools are closed for the entire day, swimmers and parents should check with the front desk after 2:00 p.m. because practice will be held if road conditions have improved throughout the day. If there is thunder and lightning, practice will be suspended, but not necessarily canceled. Pool closure is a facility, not coach or team decision. Call ahead or go to the pool to learn the fate of practice.

The Greenwood Family YMCA front desk and web site will announce all cancellations or changes that are known in advance. Keep in mind - weather conditions in one location may not be the same elsewhere in the area. If there is a question, call ahead. If parents are experiencing hazardous conditions (snow, ice, thunderstorm) while their children are at practice, they should come to the pool in case practice is ended early. Be on the safe side. Don't take chances if you have doubts.

SWIM MEETS

Swim meets are a fun and exciting opportunity for swimmers to measure progress, experience the thrill of competition, and strive for individual and team accomplishments. They provide a break in the practice routine, as well as focal points for practice efforts. All swimmers are encouraged to compete in all meets for these reasons, but are required to compete in four regular season meets to qualify for the state meet. Greenwood Gator swimmers are strongly urged to compete in the YMCA meets throughout the year and the YMCA championship meets at the conclusion of each season. Meets are offered approximately once a month for most swimmers. Please see this year's swim meet schedule on the team website.

YMCA SWIMMING AND DIVING

YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving is unique in that it, like other YMCA sports programs, emphasizes the overall development of the athlete. It promotes not only physical achievement, but also mental and spiritual growth. The National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Committee conduct the YMCA National Championship Meets and group representatives and leagues oversee local and regional competitions. Teams are divided into groups (regions) and local clusters or leagues. YMCA coaches and officials are certified by YMCA standards. YMCA competitions include dual meets, invitational, and championship meets. Swimmers must compete in at least three YMCA meets during a season to be eligible for the league, regional and national championship meets.

In order to ensure that the team is adequately prepared for competition, all swimmers need to make at least 80 % of the practices offered prior to a meet in order to compete in that meet. For championship meets, swimmers need to make at least 80% of the practices offered.

AGE GROUP DESIGNATIONS

In YMCA meets, swimmers compete according to their ages. YMCA age groups are divided as follows: 6 & Under, 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 11&12, 13&14, 15-18 and 19-21. In "open" events or meets, swimmers of any age may swim. For YMCA meets, their age group is determined by their age on the first day of the meet.

Entering Meets:

Meet information is posted on the website once it received from the host team. This information includes the name, location, dates, times, and eligibility requirements of the meet. Every effort is made to distribute meet information two weeks before it is due. Sometimes, however, this is not possible and the turn-around time is shorter. Please pay careful attention to the deadlines for entering each meet. Retain the meet information for reference at the time of the meet.

To enter a meet, please sign-up posted on the team website. Coaches alone determine relays and individual events. If there is an unavoidable reason why a child cannot stay for a relay, please let that be known on the meet entry. **If for some reason a swimmer signs up for a meet late and the host team decides to accept late entries, the parents of the swimmer are required to pay the entry fee which is doubled from the normal entry free.**

What to Bring: Suits, cap, goggles, at least 2 towels team shirt, sweats, jacket pen & paper (to write down times) shoes & socks money (for heat sheet, snacks) snacks (if facility permits).

CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO A MEET

PUNCTUALITY

Please arrive at the meet location at least 15 minutes before the designated warm-up time unless otherwise specified by coaches. Swimmers need to fully stretch and warm up before competing. In addition, coaches must make relay decisions before the start of competition and they will be unable to include a swimmer who is not present for warm-ups. Maps and directions to the most frequently attended meet locations can be found on the website.

TEAM AREA

Swimmers should sit in the designated team area. This promotes team support and unity, which in turn contributes to swimming success and fun. Parents are asked to sit in the stands, not with their children. Younger swimmers (Green Gators) may sit with their parents if the child prefers but they are welcome to sit with the team.

BEHAVIOR

Swim meets are an opportunity to display not only athletic ability but also team pride and sportsmanship. Parents and swimmers should always be mindful that they are representing the Greenwood Gator swim team and the Greenwood Family YMCA and should act accordingly. (Even when other swimmers and parents do not.) Swimmers are encouraged to cheer for their teammates and to stay until the end of the meet if possible. Senior swimmers are expected to stay until the end of each meet session to support their teammates, unless directed otherwise by the coaches. If a swimmer, at any level, must leave before the end of a meet, he or she should notify one of the coaches before the start of the meet.

CLERK OF COURSE/PRE-SEEDING

Some meets will offer a clerk of course to help organize swimmers for the events. Other meets do not have a clerk of course or bullpen and swimmers will be responsible to get to their heat and lane. Swimmer and parents need to stay attentive to what event is being called to the clerk or the blocks. If a swimmer misses an event, he or she may not be able to make it up.

CHECKING WITH COACHES

Swimmers should talk to their coaches before and after each swim. Coaches give final reminders and encouragement before the event, and they offer praise and a constructive review afterward.

RESULTS AND AWARDS

Results are posted on a wall at each meet. Parents and swimmers may copy official times and places from these results. The kind of awards (medals, ribbons, plaques, or trophies) and the number of awards given at each meet are determined by the host team, or by league by-laws in the case of championship meets. The meet information indicates what kind and how many awards are given. Some meets recognize high-point achievers for boys and girls in each age group. Team trophies are given primarily at championship meets. All awards are given to coaches at the end of the meet and are distributed at practice.

SNACKS

Healthy snacks and beverages (water, sports drinks) are good for swimmers to have during meets, especially during long sessions. (see nutrition section for tips) Some facilities do not allow food or

drink on deck so please be attentive to policies at the various pools. All trash in the team area should be properly disposed of before swimmers leave the meet. It is important that we respect the facility and the host team.

TEAM APPAREL

Currently, swimmers are asked to wear team attire, especially the team suits, team caps and t-shirts, at all meets. Wearing team apparel promotes team pride and unity. It also helps coaches, parents and other swimmers locate Greenwood Gator team members. Team apparel may be ordered from the Gator Swim Shop on the team website.

ACOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAVEL

Whenever possible, the team will reserve a block of rooms for multiple-day meets 1 1/2 or more hours away from Greenwood. The hotel will be listed on the meet information. Participants are not required to stay at that particular hotel, or stay at all, but group planning promotes camaraderie among parents and swimmers. Carpooling and sharing rooms (when appropriate) also saves on costs.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers are essential to a successful swim team! The parent committees consist of parents who take on a different responsibility for a 1 year term and report directly to the Head Swim Coach. The following are the members of the committee: Fundraising, Hospitality, Meet Director, New Member, Social/Spirit, Team Apparel/Travel, and Volunteer. See attached sheet. **Swim meets are completely run by parent volunteers.** There are numerous jobs to be filled at meets and volunteering is a great way to stay busy between your child's events. It also gets parents involved in the achievements of all team members and builds relationships with other parents in the swimming community. If your child is swimming in a "home" swim meet you are required to help run the swim meet. Many jobs have to be done and everyone can find a job that they enjoy doing. Every attempt will be made in order for each parent to see their child swim each event they swim in.

ALL MEET NEEDS:

Timers - Time each heat in a specific lane using stopwatches that are provided by the host team. This job is very easy and keeps you right next to the action. No prior experience is necessary.

Officials - These include the starter, referee, and stroke and turn judges. They conduct the meet and address rule infractions; training is necessary (through USS and/or YMCA, depending on the meet). There is always a demand for these volunteers. Training is technical but not difficult.

HOME MEETS ALSO REQUIRE:

Ribbon writers - Write names and times, or place computer-generated labels on ribbons and other awards for swimmers. No prior experience necessary.

Runners - After each heat, this person takes cards from timers to the computer operator. No prior experience necessary.

Hospitality - These volunteers provide drinks to other meet workers, act as host/hostess in the hospitality room where coaches and officials go to relax and have a snack. No prior experience needed.

Concessions – These people sell snacks and/or supplies which help make up for the cost for hosting swim meets.

Computer Operator – This person inputs data during meets (times, relay names, etc.) and generates results from the system. Training on specific meet manager software is needed.

Clerk of Course – The clerk organizes swimmers into proper heats, gives them cards if necessary, and sends them to starting area behind blocks.

Marshal – Monitor the pool deck, especially, but not only, during warm-up periods to make sure all safety rules are being followed.

GATOR SWIM TEAM COMMITTEES

RESPONSIBILITIES BY COMMITTEE:

- FUNDRAISING** Responsible for planning, organizing, and implementing team fundraisers each year in order to meet the annual fundraising budget.
- HOSPITALITY** Coordinates the Officials and Coaches Hospitality Room for home meets to include purchasing food, procuring donations, scheduling of volunteers, setting up and cleaning up the Hospitality Room.
- MEET DIRECTOR** Responsible for the arranging, conducting, staffing, and overall supervision of home swim meets.
- NEW MEMBER** Coordinates fall New Member drive and conducts New Member meetings on a seasonal basis.
- SOCIAL/SPIRIT** Is charged with coordinating all Team social events and finding volunteers to Chair and/or help with activities including the banquet, Pre-Meet Dinners, Parties and get together. Making signs for home meets and championships.
- TEAM APPAREL/
TRAVEL** Coordinates the ordering and disbursement of team apparel, including T- shirts, warm-up suits, Family shirts, etc. Coordinates team travel arrangements including hotel block reservations for designated team meets, and away meet gatherings.
- VOLUNTEER** Recruits and coordinates volunteers.

APPOINTED BY COACHES

- PARENT REPS** Three parents with 1 representation from Green, Silver & Gold teams.
- TEAM CAPTAINS** Three swimmers with 1 representation from Green, Silver & Gold teams. Represent the swimmers' points of view. Help plan social activities, activities, and "Buddy Systems" at home and some away meets

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is available for families needing help in paying swim team program fees. To apply for assistance, contact Angie Brathwaite at the YMCA.

CANCELLATIONS

To cancel membership in the swim team program, a family must fill out a cancellation form at the YMCA front desk.

FUNDRAISING

The Greenwood Family YMCA Swim Team does not require families to participate in fundraising. We do have a "Banner/Sponsor" program that does assist in providing financial assistance to swimmers and equipment. We often operate a concession stand at meets to supplement equipment needs and financial assistance needs. There may also be times in which fundraising is necessary for the program for a specific purpose (travel, equipment, etc.).

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital to any organization and it must be a two-way street. Coaches will make every effort to convey information to swimmers and their parents. Likewise, team members and their parents need to communicate with coaches in order to avoid misunderstandings and to inform them of things that may affect a swimmer's training and competition.

INFORMATION FOR SWIMMERS AND PARENTS

The Greenwood Family YMCA Gators web site – The team web site has current information on the team, practices, meets, special events and more. Families may add their e-mail address to the contact list and new information will be automatically sent to their e-mail account. The address is www.greenwoodgators.org

E-Mail – Reminders and last-minute information is sent to families via e-mail and/or text messages. This is a secondary means of communication and is most useful when there is a limited amount of time to send out information or when a quick reminder is needed. Please update the coaches with any changes or additions for the e-mail list.

Verbal – Sometimes swimmers are given information verbally by coaches. This is most common at the senior level. Regularly ask your swimmer about information given verbally.

Parent meetings – Held periodically throughout the year, these meetings allow coaches to convey site-specific and group-specific information to parents. These meetings are an opportunity to educate parents in various aspects of competitive swimming and the Greenwood Family YMCA Swim Team. They also provide an open forum for parents to ask questions and address concerns.

COMMUNICATION WITH COACHES

Parents are welcome to e-mail coaches with questions, information and ideas. Please address large issues or concerns in person with the appropriate staff member(s).

Coaches are available after practice to answer quick questions. If you would like to address issues that require more time, please schedule an appointment with your child's coach or the Head Coach. Do not interrupt coaches or swimmers on deck during practice time. Coaches are more than happy to answer questions or address issues at a more appropriate time and place.

GRIEVANCES

Most problems are rooted in simple misunderstandings or miscommunication and can be resolved quickly and easily. If allowed to fester, however, problems grow out of proportion and can be harmful to swimmers, parents, coaches, and the program. This can be prevented by addressing grievances immediately and with the appropriate person. If a team member or parent has a grievance concerning any aspect of the program, he or she should go directly to the source.

ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Each spring the team has an awards dinner honoring the team's achievements during the previous year. All swimmers receive participation plaques and year plates. Character Awards are given to swimmers who best exemplified the character traits during the season. Graduating seniors receive special recognition as they complete their Greenwood Gator careers. Additional special awards are also given.

SWIMMER, PARENT, COACH

The relationship between swimmer, coach and parent is an important aspect of swimming. Usually it is a mutually supportive partnership, but it can become strained and, ultimately, harmful to a swimmer's experience in the sport. Regular and open communication is necessary to avoid misunderstandings. The swimmer, the coach, and the parent must each understand and respect his or her role so that conflicting or negative signals are not sent. Swimmers, parents and coaches may not always agree but respectful and open communication will help maintain a positive relationship. The collective goal of the swimmer-coach-parent triangle should be the maintenance of an environment most conducive to the development of the swimmer - both as an athlete and as a person.

PARENTS

The six most important words you can say to your swimmer "I love to watch you swim."

Parents are a vital part of every child's life. They are central figures in the growth and development of their children. Parents are the primary example after which children pattern their behavior and beliefs. For athletes, especially teenagers, the role of parents may change as others, including coaches, assume a strong role not only in their physical achievements but also in their mental and emotional development. Because coaches and teammates have such a strong impact on a swimmer, parents should fully investigate the philosophy and conduct of the program before registering their child. When a child begins swimming on a team, the parents put their faith in the program and its coaches to make the child's swimming experience positive, rewarding, and enjoyable. There are ways in which parents can also aid the experience.

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

Children tend to pattern their attitudes and behavior after the example set by their parents. Please be aware of your attitudes and behavior, especially in the team setting. Exemplify good sportsmanship and the positive values of the YMCA. The Greenwood Gator swim team program encourages swimmers to be honest, caring, respectful and responsible, to ask questions and address concerns directly and to serve others. Observing these habits in parents further enforces

the lessons taught at the YMCA. After all, parents represent the team and the YMCA as much as the swimmers and coaches do.

POSITIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

We ask that parents reserve concerns and disagreements about the program for discussion with a coach or the swim team director. Questioning or criticizing a coach, team member, or the program in front of a swimmer seriously damages the swimmer's trust and confidence in the coach and the team. If your swimmer has a problem, try to gather as much information as possible and address it with the coach or appropriate person directly. Avoid passing judgment, jumping to conclusions or discussing it with others. Gossip is never constructive.

GET INVOLVED

We invite parents to become involved in the swim team in a constructive way. There are numerous volunteer opportunities that allow parents to be more involved in swimming and in the Greenwood Gator swim team. Swim meets (all meets, but especially those hosted by Greenwood Family YMCA) require extensive volunteer efforts to run. Team social events bring parents, swimmers and coaches together in an informal and fun setting. Chaperones are needed for all team travel meets and provide an opportunity to work closely with coaches and swimmers. Help is always needed with apparel orders and distribution, bulletin board maintenance, and in other areas.

...BUT NOT TOO INVOLVED

Please respect the time your swimmer spends with his or her coach and teammates by not interrupting a coach or swimmer during practice or team activities. During practice times and meets please do not come on deck. (refer to sections on practices and meets) It is distracting to both swimmers and coaches. Furthermore, please refrain from offering swimming-related instruction to swimmers (your own or others). This is confusing for swimmers and disrespectful to coaches. If you have a question or concern, contact your child's coach.

SWIMMERS – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Greenwood Gator Swimmers strive to be positive team members in and out of the pool. Most importantly, swimmers should always remember that they represent the YMCA and the Greenwood Gator Swim Team. Their words and actions reflect not only on themselves but on their teammates, parents, coaches, and the YMCA. With the guidance of coaches and parents, swimmers are expected to demonstrate the YMCA's character development traits of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

FOCUS ON TEAM

Individual achievements are important but supporting others and working together toward a common goal raises everyone's performance level. Furthermore, shared experiences are more fun and exciting than individual ones. Together Everyone Achieves More.

ACT, THINK, LOOK, AND TALK POSITIVELY

Attitudes are contagious so make sure that yours is worth catching. Every member of a team contributes to the overall team experience. Help make ours AWESOME!

Take responsibility – for your belongings, words, actions, and swimming. Attend practice regularly. Be on time and remember all equipment (cap, goggles, suit, towel, etc.) Don't blame others when things don't go your way. Excuses satisfy only the person who makes them. Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times. Athletes with good sportsmanship habits earn the respect of their competitors and gain pride and confidence in them. Loud, emotional, or rude displays are inappropriate, regardless of the reason. Always think before you speak or act. Remember that you represent the YMCA – at the pool and away from it.

Show respect – The best way to gain respect is to show respect. Allow others to share their opinions and ideas freely. Follow rules set forth by coaches and officials. Do not talk while others are talking, and don't talk back to coaches or officials. Refrain from speaking or acting negatively toward other swimmers, teams, coaches, or officials. Do not misuse or abuse property – in YMCAs, at meets, in restaurants, etc.

Be honest – Do not lie. Refrain from gossip (which often involves at least one untruth). Do what you think is right, not just what is popular. Give an honest effort toward achieving your stated goals. Communicate with coaches regarding anything that might affect your performance, or the team as a whole.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As representatives of the Greenwood Family YMCA Gator Swim Team swimmers are expected to speak and behave in a manner that is respectful, responsible, honest, and caring. If each swimmer is mindful of these traits, appropriate conduct should never be an issue. These guidelines are to be followed by Greenwood Family YMCA swimmers at all practices, meets, and other team functions. Special activities, such as team travel trips, require adherence to additional activity-specific conduct guidelines.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR:

- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Taunting, teasing, or speaking negatively about teammates, competitors, officials, or coaches.
- Use of inappropriate, strong, or vulgar language or gestures.
- Lying, deceit, dishonesty.
- Littering, abuse, or misuse of equipment, furniture, or other items of property.

The first violation will receive a verbal warning. The second will result in dismissal from the practice, meet, or team function where the violation was made. The third violation will result in suspension from the team for a period of time determined by the swim team director. A fourth violation will cause the removal of the swimmer from the program. Parents will be notified at each step.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED:

- Verbal or physical abuse toward others;
- Theft of any kind;
- Vandalism or any destruction of property, public or private.
- Use of tobacco products or other illegal substances.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other illegal substances. Sexual activity.

POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

Individual swimmers develop at different rates. This fact alone may cause stress for swimmers and external pressure cannot quicken or slow the pace of natural development. Excessive pressure can, however, contribute to burnout. - Coaches, swimmers, and parents are human. Mistakes are inevitable. The most productive response is to admit them, excuse them, and move on. Grudges help no one. - Let the coaches coach, let the swimmers swim, let the parents support. - The process, not the awards, is the most valuable part of competitive swimming. The friendships, lessons, skills, and memories gained from participating in the sport last forever. They help create a healthy, happy and strong person. - As stated before, parents, swimmers and coaches may not always agree but honest and open communication maintains mutual respect and a positive relationship.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Swimming is an ideal sport to promote total health and fitness. Here is some basic information on health and nutrition to prevent injury and to help ensure improved performance in practice and meets.

HEALTH

All pools have safety rules. Please read and follow them. These standard pool safety rules always apply:

1. Don't run.
2. Never swim alone.
3. Look before you dive.
4. Never bring glass containers on a pool deck.
5. No horseplay on pool deck or in locker rooms.

Some other safety guidelines pertaining to swim practices and meets: 1. Inform coaches of medical conditions and prescription drugs. 2. Swimmers with asthma should always bring an inhaler and have it ready for use. 3. Swimmers should bring and use a water bottle for practice and meets. 4. Wear proper shoes and clothing for outdoor activities. Swim coaches are required to be trained in First Aid, CPR, and Lifeguarding or Safety Training for Swim Coaches. Common sense can prevent them from having to demonstrate their skills.

INJURIES

Injuries incurred during practice, meets, or team activities will be treated immediately and parents will be notified. Sometimes swimmers experience pain that is not the result of a particular wound or accident. Muscle pain is common, especially as swimmers mature and their muscles develop further. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between soreness and injury. If pain restricts movement or lasts more than 3-4 days, swimmers should seek medical attention. Coaches are not doctors and can only give advice, not diagnosis or treatment. It is, however, important to keep coaches informed of injuries, treatments, and rehabilitation.

ILLNESS

In case of illness, swimmers should let their bodies heal by restricting activity. It is also better to miss a practice or two than to expose many other team members and coaches to the same illness. Once recovered, swimmers can return to practice and regain their strength in the water.

SWIMMER'S EAR

Otitis Externa, commonly known as "swimmer's ear," is an infection of the skin in the ear canal. The dark, warm, wet environment of a swimmer's ear canal is a breeding ground for such an infection. To prevent swimmer's ear, dry the ear well after each time in the water. Use a towel, Q-tip (carefully), or gently shake the head on its side. Commercial products aid in the prevention and treatment of swimmer's ear. A cheap and easy remedy is to make a solution of 50% rubbing alcohol and 50% white vinegar. A couple of drops in each ear will help kill some of the normal bacteria and will help dry out the ear. ** Alcohol or vinegar should not be put in the ears of children with PE tubes in their ears or holes in their eardrums. (Information borrowed from Dr. Raymond B. Coors, MD.)

NUTRITION

Food is the body's fuel, and the body's performance can be helped or hindered by the quality of food that is consumed. In terms of quantity, young swimmers must strike a delicate balance between consuming enough calories and nutrients to promote growth and muscular skeletal development on the one hand, and not eating so much that they are sluggish due to excess food storage. As for quality of food, carbohydrates should make up the highest percentage of a swimmer's diet.

Carbohydrates provide the greatest source of energy during physical exertion. Because calorie needs vary from person to person depending on age, size, amount of training, etc., swimmers should concentrate on the kinds of foods that make up their diet. In general, a swimmer's diet should contain 55-65% carbohydrates, 15-25% protein, and 20-30% fat. Swimmers may need a boost of "fuel" before and after practice, so eating smaller meals plus snacks during the day can be helpful in sustaining a swimmer's energy. Furthermore, the body more quickly and efficiently digests smaller amounts eaten throughout the day than it does large meals eaten three times a day. This is particularly important during meets that can last several hours per session. Snacks at meets should be small, easily digestible, and able to be quickly converted to energy (foods high in carbohydrates and low in fat). Try to leave at least 20-30 minutes between the time you eat a snack and the time you swim your next event.

Perhaps the most forgotten element of good nutrition is water. Swimmers need to drink a large amount of water to aid in digestion, keep the body cool and replace fluids lost during workout. (Yes, you do sweat in the pool.) The best indicator of adequate hydration is the color of your urine. Pale urine indicates good hydration. Dark urine means you need to drink more! A good rule of thumb is to drink before you are thirsty. Sports drinks can help replace some nutrients and electrolytes during intense exercise but some may have high amounts of sugar and sodium. As a general rule, if an athlete is exercising continuously for 90 minutes or longer then he/she would benefit from a sports drink with carbohydrates. Diluting sports drinks with water can help replace

carbohydrates without consuming as much sugar and can help those athletes whose stomachs are upset by the strong taste of such drinks.

Refueling the body after a workout is as important as fueling it beforehand. Within 30 minutes after the completion of a rigorous workout, athletes should start replacing the energy (carbohydrates, fluids and a small amount of protein) that they depleted. Having a small, easily digestible snack on the way home can help the recovery process significantly. Sports drinks, water, energy bars, crackers, bagels, etc. are good choices for replenishment following a workout. The best diet for swimmers is one that is well-balanced, includes a variety of foods, and is accompanied by a large amount of water. Some swimmers like to take multivitamins to ensure that they are receiving recommended amounts of vitamins and minerals. Dietary supplements are not necessary if these guidelines are followed naturally. We do not encourage alternate methods of muscle or energy building such as creatine loading.

Good sources of carbohydrates: breads, bagels, cereal, pasta, fruit, green vegetables, corn, beans, milk, potatoes, rice, granola bars, crackers

Good sources of protein: lean meat & poultry, fish, lowfat yogurt and milk, soups with lean meat, peanut butter, beans, eggs

Foods to limit: sugary foods, fatty foods, greasy foods – ie. candy, chocolate, potato chips, french fries, fried anything, butter, mayonnaise, creamy sauces, ice cream, cookies, cake, cupcakes

Each person has different likes, dislikes, and preferences. Swimmers should be conscious of their food choices and listen to their bodies. Variety is the spice of life; but enjoy everything in moderation.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

www.usaswimming.org

www.sc-swimming.org

www.swimswam.com (news from the world of swimming)

www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org

www.cyslswim.org

www.greenwoodgators.org