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# **MADISON AREA YMCA MARINERS SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK 2024-2025**



[www.madisonymcaswimming.com](http://www.madisonymcaswimming.com)

The Madison Area YMCA provides quality programs and services for physical and emotional well-being. Guided by the core values of CARING, HONESTY, RESPONSIBILITY, and RESPECT, we aspire to be the center of a healthy community that includes and supports everyone.

# **MADISON AREA YMCA MARINERS SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK 2024-2025**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **Welcome to the Mariners Swim Team**

Our program is rooted in the YMCA's commitment to nurturing a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. Guided by the Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports and USA Swimming, we aim to create an environment that fosters both competition and opportunity. Our goal is to offer a program that supports swimmers at all levels, from beginners to those competing nationally. By embracing the YMCA core values of CARING, HONESTY, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY, we believe our swimmers will achieve success not only in the pool but also in all aspects of their lives. At the Madison Area YMCA, we live by the motto "Everybody Swims, Everybody Wins," and strive to make this a reality for every swimmer. In alignment with our core values, we are dedicated to providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all athletes. We are deeply committed to child protection, ensuring that every swimmer can grow and thrive in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and well-being.

### **About Our Team**

The Madison Area YMCA Mariners Swim Team (MAY) offers year-round competitive swimming opportunities in both YMCA and USA Swimming competitions, along with seasonal instructional clinics for aspiring athletes. Our team welcomes girls and boys from age 6 through high school.

### **Program Goals and Philosophy**

Our primary objective is to provide a fun and challenging program that helps swimmers develop a systematic blueprint for success. We emphasize individual self-improvement as the main goal for each swimmer. Training is tailored by age and ability, focusing on stroke techniques, speed, and conditioning. All swimmers will train in all competitive strokes, with attention to developing specialties as they gain experience and demonstrate success. Our program encourages goal setting and teaches swimmers how to achieve their objectives, stay in good physical and mental shape, and value hard work, sportsmanship, respect, teamwork, and commitment.

### **Life Skills Development**

Beyond mastering competitive swimming skills, our program aims to teach valuable life skills such as time management, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. We are committed to providing a positive environment at all times, fostering personal growth and team spirit.

### **Team Concept and Parental Involvement**

Each swimmer is a vital member of the Madison Area YMCA Mariners Swim Team, which emphasizes responsibility, loyalty, and dedication to the team. Mutual support during training and competition is a cornerstone of our program. Parental support and involvement are crucial and highly encouraged, serving as major incentives for swimmers at all levels.

## **Handbook and Communication**

It is essential for both parents and swimmers to read this handbook and understand the operations of our program. Many of your questions are answered within these pages. For additional inquiries, please feel free to contact the coaching staff, Parents Organization Board, or Madison Area YMCA Program Director(s).

## **Team Structure**

The coaching staff is dedicated to continually improving the Mariners Swimming program. It is the responsibility of both swimmers and parents to take full advantage of this excellent opportunity for success in swimming and life. Our program uses a progressive age group approach designed to develop each child physically, mentally, and emotionally in a systematic way.

## **Developmental Approach**

Our long-term strategy involves gradually increasing levels of challenge and commitment to help swimmers reach their peak performance at their physiological prime. In the early stages, the focus is on developing technical skills and fostering a love for the sport. Fun and learning are key priorities at this level. As swimmers progress, they will encounter more demanding physical and psychological challenges in their training. Avoiding "too much too soon" is crucial to prevent burnout and ensure long-term success.

## **Training Groups**

We emphasize long-term over short-term results, establishing training groups that are compatible in terms of abilities, commitment levels, and goals. Each level has specific goals and objectives tailored to meet the needs of the swimmers. The ultimate goal is total excellence, always keeping the long-term development of the swimmer in mind.

## **Individual Progression**

Each child is unique and progresses at their own pace. The coaching staff acknowledges this by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental, and emotional development. Our goal is to create a supportive environment where every swimmer can thrive and reach their full potential.

## **2. STAFF**

**Leadership:** Senior Director, Aquatics Yean Jimenez,  
Competitive Aquatics Director, Head Coach Kevin Carney.

**Our Coaching Team:** Tom Long, Victor Hui, Evan Kavanough, Kate Hay, Dave Kessel, Charlie Hilgendorff, Mike Siva, Tom McNally, Colleen Silvestri, Asheley Annulyse, Michael Bradley.

### **3. TEAM EVALUATIONS**

Evaluations are conducted for all new swimmers interested in joining the Mariners. Returning Mariners are not required to re-evaluate unless their primary coach determines they have not met the team's expectations. Swimmers needing to re-evaluate will be notified by mid-July. Evaluations are preferably conducted during a Mariners practice or clinic, but can also take place in small groups or one-on-one sessions, depending on space availability. To arrange an evaluation appointment, please email us.

### **4. GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Madison Area YMCA participates in the Northern New Jersey YMCA Swim League and USA Swimming competitions. YMCA swimming is conducted using the current USA Swimming rules, unless otherwise designated by the Northern New Jersey YMCA League rules under their constitution.

#### **Age Group Divisions**

YMCA and USA age groups are primarily divided as follows:

- 8 and under
- 9–10 years old
- 11–12 years old
- 13–14 years old
- 15 and over

For YMCA meets, the age group a swimmer competes in is determined by their age as of December 1 of that season. For USA Swimming meets, the swimmer competes in the age group corresponding to their actual age on the first day of each meet. For more details, see the Swim Competitions section.

#### **Practice Schedule**

The season begins in September, with practice schedules and calendars posted on the Mariners website. Please refer to the Mariners website for detailed information.

### **5. PRACTICE TRAINING GROUPS**

Practices are organized primarily by age, ability, and level of commitment. Movement between groups can occur throughout the season and year-over-year based on the coaches' evaluations of the athlete's commitment level, work ethic, and overall progress.

Note: Swimmers should only attend practice sessions that pertain to their assigned practice group. If an extenuating circumstance arises, please speak with the lead Age Group Coach and contact Kevin Carney or Yean Jimenez to discuss availability to attend an alternate practice session.

## **Progressive Swim Lessons**

This program is designed for those not yet ready for the Mariners Swim Team, focusing strictly on learning to swim. Children are placed in appropriate groups based on their skill level.

### **Mariners 8 & Under Red Group**

This is the entry-level group for the Mariners, designed for athletes ages 8 and under, who have limited or no experience but have mastered Freestyle and Backstroke and have a basic understanding of Breaststroke. The focus is on learning the competitive swimming skills needed to build a solid foundation. Athletes are encouraged to attend at least two, but no more than three, practices a week and participate in spring sessions. Summer participation is optional but should be discussed with coaches for continuity. Participation in appropriate competitions is strongly recommended.

**Equipment:** Cap (if needed), goggles, competitive practice suit, and fins.

**Requirements to move up:**

- Swim 8x50's IM order on 1:45
- At least 50% practice attendance
- Qualify for a minimum of Current YMCA Silvers

### **Mariners 9 & 10 White Group**

This group is for athletes ages 9-10 who have mastered Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and are beginning to learn Butterfly. The focus is on refining competitive swimming skills and introducing conditioning elements. Athletes are encouraged to attend at least three, but no more than four, practices a week and participate in spring sessions. Summer participation is optional but should be discussed with coaches for continuity. Participation in specific local meets is expected, with others optional.

**Equipment:** Cap (if needed), goggles, competitive practice suit, and fins.

**Requirements to move up:**

- Swim 20x100's free on 1:50
- At least 60% practice attendance
- Silver Cut in the 11/12 age group in at least two strokes

### **Mariners 11 & 12 Gray Group**

Designed for athletes ages 11-12 with a solid competitive swimming foundation. The focus is on refining skills and developing a strong aerobic base along with race technique. Athletes are encouraged to attend between three and five practices a week, with spring and summer participation expected. Participation in specific local meets is expected, with others optional.

**Equipment:** Cap (if needed), goggles, competitive practice suit, fins, paddles, and snorkel.

**Requirements to move up:**

- Swim 20x100's free on 1:40
- At least 65% practice attendance
- Current Silver Cuts in the 13/14 age group in at least two strokes

### **Mariners 13 & 14 Silver Group**

This group is for athletes ages 13-14 with varying levels of understanding and commitment to the sport. The Silver group is for swimmers who intend to attend at least 70% of all practices and participate in competitions such as Dual Meets, Invitational Meets, and Travel Championship Meets (YMCA Champs, Sunkissed, YMCA Nationals). The focus is on mastering competitive swimming skills and emphasizing the importance of commitment.

**Equipment:** Cap (if needed), goggles, competitive practice suit, fins, paddles, and snorkel.

**Requirements to move up:**

- Swim 20x100's free on 1:20
- At least 70% year-round practice attendance
- Current Silver Cut for the 15 & over age group in at least two strokes

### **Mariners 15 & Over Gold & Platinum Groups**

These groups are for athletes ages 15 and over with a strong competitive swimming foundation and high commitment to the sport. The focus is on training at a level where participation in regional and national competitions is expected. Athletes are expected to attend five or more practices a week and participate in spring and summer sessions. Required meets may involve travel. Placement between the Platinum and Gold groups is based on attendance, work ethic, dryland participation, and communication with coaches.

**Important Note:** It is crucial for swimmers who are struggling to balance their commitments to schedule a meeting with their parent(s) and coach as soon as any issues become evident. Working together, we can better understand and support the needs of the child, ensuring they can thrive both in and out of the pool.

## **6. PARENTS' ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

Chartered under the leadership of the Madison Area YMCA Board of Directors, the Mariners Parents' Organization (MPO) is comprised of all swimmers' parents and the management of the Y's competitive swim program. The MPO leadership coordinates with, and is supported by, Madison Area YMCA management team members. It exists to support the swimmers in their development and as a resource for the team, assisting with various activities such as fundraising, social events, and meet coordination. Parent meeting dates and times will be posted on the Mariners website.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents often become closely associated with the team and can assist in many ways. As a parent, you should:

- Encourage swimmers to attend appropriate practices and meets and provide transportation as necessary.
- Motivate your child to work diligently, help younger children set realistic goals, and offer support throughout the season
- Allow the coaches to do the coaching.
- Actively participate in fundraising projects and consider becoming a certified swim meet official.
- Assist at dual meets and other team-hosted competitions by timing, managing concessions, and helping with setup and breakdown for home meets.

When the team hosts a meet at the Madison Area Y, the MPO provides volunteers for roles such as timers, officials, computer operators, and general helpers. This may involve preparing and selling food, marshaling, administrative tasks, etc. Every parent is expected to contribute their time and talent to facilitate these activities for the benefit of the team.

All parents of swimmers on the team are members of the MPO. At least one parent from each family is expected to participate on a working committee and/or help at dual meets.

### **Official's Certification**

A significant part of parental involvement comes from those who become certified swim officials:

- USA Swimming Certification: Qualifies individuals to officiate at any New Jersey Swimming (USA) meets. Various levels of certification are available, with courses offered throughout the season.

- **YMCA Certification:** Qualifies individuals to officiate at YMCA dual meets and other Y-sanctioned meets. Various levels of certification are available, with courses offered throughout the season.

Interested parents can seek guidance from the officials' chairperson or a Parents' Executive Board Member. Information regarding upcoming officials' clinics will be posted on the Mariners website.

## **Fundraising**

The MPO manages several fundraising events throughout the year:

- **Invitational Swim Meets:** Revenue generated by swim meets helps to support the end-of-season banquet, athlete recognition programs, end-of-year athlete gifts, team social events, annual maintenance of the timing system, championship gear, and out-of-state travel to meets such as Sunkissed, YMCA Nationals and Olympic Trials.
- **Swim-A-Thon:** Proceeds raised through this event are contributed to the Madison Area YMCA Annual Fund, which provides financial assistance for participants who cannot afford the full cost of YMCA participation. The YMCA mission exists to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate, regardless of the ability to pay. The Mariners Swim-A-Thon also demonstrates to our youngest swimmers the importance of their personal efforts to support others in our community. The MPO's commitment to these priorities is essential to our YMCA's charitable mission.

## **MPO Board**

Chartered under the auspices of the Madison Area YMCA Board of Directors, the following MPO officer positions are selected each year to manage the MPO:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Program Director/Head Coach
- Board Liaison

Committee assignments will be filled and managed by the Madison Area YMCA Board each season. The officer positions change annually and will be posted on the Mariners website when changes occur. Board members serve as resources to all Mariner parents and can provide detailed information on the functions and activities of the board.

## **7. FEES/USA REGISTRATION/MEET FEES AND SIGN-UPS**

### **Madison Area YMCA Membership**

All swimmers joining or returning to the team are required to pay a yearly Madison Area YMCA membership fee. This payment must be made at the Madison Area YMCA Welcome Center. To terminate your membership, you must submit a written withdrawal notice to the front desk 30 days in advance.

### **Program Fees**

All participants must pay team fees to the Madison Area YMCA, which serves as tuition for the team. These fees are payable online or at the front desk. Once registered, you are responsible for all program fees for the season. To withdraw from the team for the fall/winter season, you must email us before December 1.

### **MPO Fees**

The Mariners Parents Organization (MPO) assesses an annual fee to each swimmer or family. This fee has been approximately \$200 per family in recent years. Payments are made via Team Unify and are divided into four installments. These fees support the MPO's charter.

### **USA Swimming Registration**

Included in the swim team program fee for some swimmers are funds to cover registration costs for eligibility to compete in USA Swimming meets. Swimmers aged 9 and older are automatically registered for USA Swimming. For athletes aged 8 and under, there is an optional registration fee for participation in appropriate USA Swimming meets. Once paid, USA Swimming fees are the athlete's responsibility.

### **Meet Fees**

Meet entry fees will be charged to your Team Unify account at the time the entry is processed. You are financially responsible for any fees incurred for meet entries, including fees for meets you sign up for but later decide not to attend.

### **Sign-Ups for Meets**

For YMCA dual meets, athletes must sign up or decline participation on the Team Unify site. Invitational meets have various formats, with event details varying for each age group. Please refer to the Mariners website for individual meet details and sign-up procedures. Some meets will allow athletes to choose their events, while others will require a simple yes or no response.

### **Meet Entry Procedures**

All meet information will be posted on the Mariners website, with specific entry instructions for each meet. Check the Mariners website daily as meet information can be posted and deadlines can be as short as 36 hours. Sign up as quickly as possible after a meet is posted to ensure our team is not closed out.

Adhere to the posted deadlines! All meet entries must be processed through the Team Unify site or coordinated with Director(s).

## **8. SWIM COMPETITIONS**

### **Competition**

Competition offers a valuable opportunity to learn about oneself, not only in terms of physical accomplishment but also in terms of willpower, goal attainment, and self-discipline. It is a healthy and necessary aspect of life that fosters productivity and excellence. Developing the capacity to strive for better and not settle for mediocrity is a crucial tool that can be applied to all areas of life.

### **Eligible Competitors**

To be eligible for any meets, swimmers must be Madison Area YMCA members in good standing with all fees up to date. Additionally, swimmers must regularly attend practices as recommended and demonstrate effort during them. Being a good teammate and a responsible and respectful member of the team is also required. Coaches make the final decisions regarding which swim meets the team will attend and which swimmers may participate. The coaching staff also decides on the events the athletes will swim. Some meets are mandatory (required for further competition), while others are recommended for certain age groups or practice groups, such as Mini Meets for 8 & under and Qualifying Meets.

Participation in some meets will be determined by the primary coach based on the swimmer's readiness. For travel meets and high-level championships, the primary coach may determine that an athlete is not prepared if they have not been attending practices regularly, are recovering from an injury, or have not shown honest effort in training sessions.

### **Red/Black Meet**

All swimmers are encouraged to attend the Red/Black Scrimmage, an intra-squad meet/time trial used to help finalize dual meet team assignments (check Mariners website for more information). If you cannot attend due to unforeseen circumstances, contact the Director(s).

### **YMCA Dual Meets**

We participate in the Northern New Jersey YMCA Dual Meet League, with one-on-one meets against other YMCA teams in the North Jersey area. Each team competes in approximately three to five of these meets, which take place on Saturday afternoons from October to February. Each swimmer is permitted to swim in up to three events, one of which must be a relay. The coach makes all event and lane assignments, which may change throughout the meet. USA Swimming rules apply to YMCA competitions, and age is determined as of December 1st. All team members are expected to compete in dual meets.

The Madison Area YMCA will have girls' and boys' Traveling teams and Home teams, with several divisions in both leagues. The dual meet lineup for each team will be

available on the Team Unify site up to a day before the meet. Coaches aim to get everyone into at least two events at an 8-lane pool and at least one event at a 6-lane pool. Pools with four lanes are typically avoided. All races are treated as official and are used to qualify for various competitions. Athletes will be placed on a competitive team based on their swim times, attendance, and overall commitment.

### **Invitational Meets**

These meets involve individual competition against swimmers from other teams. Both our YMCA league and USA Swimming sanction these meets. Swimmers must submit their information for these meets by the given deadlines.

### **YMCA Championship Meets**

The NJ State, Silver, Bronze, and Mini Meet Championships are held at the end of the dual meet season. All qualified swimmers are expected to attend, as these are team-scored meets. To participate in YMCA National level competition, swimmers must fully compete in the YMCA State Championship Meet. Athletes must attend their highest-level YMCA championship meet.

### **USA Swimming Championship Meets**

NJ Swimming offers an extensive championship season, similar to the YMCA system. Meets we participate in will be posted on the Mariners website. For elite swimmers, USA Swimming sponsors events such as Sectional Championships, Phillips 66 National Championships, U.S. Open, Olympic Trials, and Grand Prix meets. Time standards for these events will be posted on the Mariners website, and details will be distributed to qualified swimmers.

### **Eastern Zone Age Group Championships**

The Eastern Zone hosts two "Zone" meets annually, one in the spring and one in the summer.

**Spring Meets:** The NJ Zone team is comprised of the top two fastest times achieved at Junior Olympics or NJ Junior/Senior Championships. Since MAY attends the Sunkissed Invitational as a team, spring Zones is not our focus meet. However, a 12-year-old swimmer may attend the spring Zone meet if it does not conflict with Sunkissed Invitational. The Zone meet should be in addition to, not instead of, Sunkissed Invitational. For swimmers aged 13 and older, attending spring Zones is generally not acceptable unless Zones falls after Sunkissed Invitational.

### **Final Finale Meet**

The Final Finale meet is a championship-style event for swimmers aged 9 and older, serving as a last-chance meet for qualifying for events such as Sunkissed and possibly YMCA Nationals.

To participate, swimmers must:

- Be within the appropriate age ranges.
- Have fully participated in their highest-level YMCA Championship meet.
- Have met the meet qualifying times (if any).
- Be in good standing with the team.
- Have fully complied with the team's expectations.

### **Sunkissed Invitational Championship Meet**

The Sunkissed Invitational differs from YMCA Nationals in that it has both Junior (10–13 years old) and Senior (14 years & older) Divisions and is a USA Swimming-sanctioned meet. It has qualifying times that are less stringent than those for YMCA Nationals, allowing a larger group of athletes to attend. This meet has been held in Charlotte, North Carolina in late March to early April. Qualified athletes are expected to attend.

To participate, swimmers must:

- Be age 10 or older.
- Have fully participated in their highest-level YMCA Championship meet.
- Have met the meet qualifying times.
- Maintain a 70% attendance rate from the first day of practice until the entry deadline for that season.
- Be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team expectations.

One parent from each participating family is expected to attend this meet. Transportation for swimmers is the responsibility of the parents. Information regarding air and hotel reservations is usually handled early in the season and will be distributed and posted throughout the season.

### **YMCA National Championship Meets**

The National YMCA Short Course Championship is an open national competition for swimmers aged 12 and older who have achieved the qualifying times, fully attended YMCA States, and are in good standing with the team. This meet is held in late March to mid-April, typically in Greensboro, NC or previously in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Qualified athletes are expected to attend in addition to or instead of Sunkissed.

The National YMCA Long Course Championships (50-meter pool) is an open national competition for swimmers aged 12 and older who have achieved the qualifying times, fully attended YMCA States, and are in good standing with the team. This meet is held in late July to early August, usually at IUPUI in Indianapolis or Georgia Tech Aquatics Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Qualified athletes are expected to attend.

Coaches have the final determination of meet entries. Athletes must be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team expectations to be entered in any meets. To compete in meets representing the Mariners, athletes must maintain honest effort, good attitude, and appropriate attendance at practices and meets. All swimmers attending are REQUIRED to maintain a 70% attendance rate year-round.

## **Competition Guidelines for Athletes**

All athletes will be placed onto a dual meet team. Swimmers in each group are expected to compete in a few appropriate competitions.

- Check all posted meet information websites prior to leaving for a meet.
- Arrive on time to all meets. For invitational and dual meets, arrive at the pool with enough time to get "checked in," dressed, and situated with the team before warm-up is scheduled to begin.
- Arrive at the meets 15 minutes prior to the first scheduled warm-up time.
- Swimmers who are not "checked in" will be scratched from the day's events if they arrive after the check-in time.
- Warm-up with the team. A proper warm-up is crucial to the success of a meet.
- Arrive at the blocks at least five heats before your race.
- Try your best and swim hard. It is okay to be nervous! Many swimmers experience pre-race apprehension, especially for events they may not have swum before.
- After your race, immediately see a member of the coaching staff for feedback. Learning what you did well and understanding areas for improvement will help you become a better swimmer.
- Warm-down after each race if a pool is available.
- Relay spots are decided by the coaches.
- Sit with the team; you are part of it.
- Support and encourage your teammates before, during, and after their races.
- Join in team cheers.
- Wear the Madison Area YMCA Mariners team uniform at all meets. Caps and suits from other teams (high school, USA, or YMCA) are not permitted.
- For dual meets, remain in your team swimsuit until the meet is over and you have finished the team cheer. Since relays are at the end of the meets and are subject to change, do not leave as you may be called upon to swim. For invitational meets, stay at the meet until you have received clearance from the coach to leave.
- Phones, tablets, or other electronics are not permitted on deck during a swim meet.

**For all meets, parents are not allowed on the deck or in the swimming section. The only exception is parents who are timing or officiating. This is a standard regulation for all swim meets, and breaking this regulation can lead to removal of the swimmer and parent from the meet and/or fines.**

## **9. RELAYS**

For Dual, Invitational, and Championship swimming meets, if enough swimmers in an age group attend the meet, the coaches will put together relays when preparing the entry for each meet. It is very important to check with the coach at any meet to confirm whether a swimmer has been assigned to a relay. In all meets, relays are set by the coaching staff.

Please note that it takes four (4) swimmers to make a relay, and if one swimmer does not swim, the remaining three lose out! Unless an acceptable excuse is given to the coach, the "no show" swimmer may be assessed the entire fee for the relay.

## **10. TRANSPORTATION**

For most meets, except for some championships where air transportation is required or encouraged, it is the parents' responsibility to arrange travel and ensure that swimmers arrive at the meet on time and are ready for warm-ups at least 15 minutes prior to the first scheduled warm-up time. If there is a scheduling conflict, parents should arrange transportation with another parent.

A complete packet of directions to all pools will be posted on the Mariners website before the competitive season begins.

### **Coaches' Transportation Policy**

Coaches CANNOT transport athletes at any time for any reason, except where we are using a YMCA vehicle or a vehicle that is owned, rented, and insured in the name of the YMCA.

## **11. BEHAVIOR AT PRACTICE SESSIONS/SWIM MEETS**

It is very important for swimmers to arrive early to practice and meets to allow for stretching/preparation and warm-up. Athletes on a specific stretching regimen need to arrive with enough time to still be early for warm-up. Swimmers are expected to stay in the pool area during the entire practice and must not visit with parents during the sessions.

Swimmers are expected to check in with a coach when arriving and before leaving a practice or meet. They should see a coach before and after races at meets. Proper warm-up and warm-down as a team is expected in both practices and meets, as well as before and after races when available. Swimmers must compete in all events they are entered in at meets, including bonus, consolation heats, and final heats of trial-final events.

Parents are not to come on the pool deck while practice is in progress unless invited by a coach. "Coaching" by parents from the observation area will not be tolerated.

During practice sessions, swimmers are expected to pay attention and listen carefully to directions. No physical or verbal abuse or profanity directed at anyone will be tolerated. Coaches are essentially teachers and should be treated with respect. The coach's major objective is to teach, so swimmers should be able to learn in a suitable environment. A swimmer who misbehaves may be dismissed from that practice.

At swim meets and practices, each swimmer is a representative of the Madison Area YMCA. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Behavioral violations during practice, or at meets may result in suspension or expulsion from the team. All swimmers will be asked to read and sign a code of conduct (to be distributed separately), witnessed and signed by a parent or guardian.

### **Discipline Policy**

Athletes who require disciplinary action will be addressed individually according to the infraction. Disciplinary action may include but is not limited to breaks, dismissal from practice/meets, parental notice/meetings, suspension, and ultimately could lead to dismissal from the team. Extreme disciplinary problems may involve interaction with the Vice President and/or CEO of the Madison Area YMCA.

### **Swim Caps**

Swim caps must be worn in the pool by all swimmers with hair that can reach their eyes or if it interferes with their swimming or breathing.

### **Showers**

Showers must be taken before entering the pool, in accordance with New Jersey State Code. Showers should be brief, and swimmers must remember to turn off the shower when finished.

### **Bathroom Use**

Swimmers are asked to use the bathroom before and after practice to avoid disruptions during practice. There should be no fooling around or yelling in the locker rooms.

### **Personal Belongings**

The YMCA is not responsible for personal belongings. It is recommended that valuables be left at home or with a parent. Valuables may be locked in a locker; however, please do not give valuables to the coaches. Swimmers are encouraged to bring a lock for their locker each day or bring their swim bags onto the deck while swimming.

## Practice Guidelines

- **No Gum or Food:** No gum or food is allowed in the pool area during practice. Swimmers are encouraged to bring water bottles labeled with their name. For health purposes, please do not share water bottles!
- **Cleanliness:** Athletes are asked to keep the pool area clean by discarding empty containers and restacking borrowed kick boards and other equipment.
- **Damage to Facilities:** Damage to facilities used by athletes on the team will not be tolerated. Whenever possible, we will hold the family financially responsible.
- **Water Safety:** No swimmer is to enter the water unless both a coach and a lifeguard are in attendance. Never jump in the water when there is any danger to you or another swimmer. Feet-first entry is enforced at all times except when instructed otherwise.

## Smoking and Vaping Policy

No Smoking or Vaping! No smoking or vaping is allowed on YMCA property, including in or near the building.

## 12. COMMUNICATION

The MARINERS WEBSITE (Team Unify) at <http://www.madisonymcaswimming.com> will be the lifeblood of our communications. We will use this tool to post updates, send emails, texts, and app notifications (OnDeck).

Please feel free to schedule an appointment with any member of the coaching staff for questions and/or concerns. You may also contact the coaches by phone or email throughout the season. Additionally, you are encouraged to contact the Director(s) via email at <mailto:mkcarney@madisonymca.org> or [yjimenez@madisonymca.org](mailto:yjimenez@madisonymca.org) or call at 973-822-9622 ext. 2231 or 2230.

Please avoid trying to meet with the coaches during, just prior to, or immediately after meets.

Note: We often receive emails while we are on the way to or already at meets. Please use your best judgment when communicating with us at the last minute and understand that if the coaching staff is at a 2- or 3-day meet, we will not be checking emails or YMCA messages regularly.

If you need to leave a phone message, please ensure you also get an emergency message to someone else who is attending the meet.

## 13. WEATHER/VACATIONS/ILLNESS

Practice and YMCA dual meets will be held unless notified by at least one of the following: email, text, or Mariners website. Please check your email, the Mariners

website, and your mobile phone before venturing out in a blizzard. YMCA meets have been canceled due to inclement weather or other emergency situations. USA and Invitational meets are very rarely canceled (unless a state of emergency is declared or the host facility closes), but facility closing information and meet host team website info are usually provided on the meet page of the Mariners website. If we find out about a cancellation ahead of time, we will do our best to disseminate the information, but if the staff is already at the meet, it may be impossible. In inclement weather, use your best judgment and please try to contact us as best you can.

Please inform your coach via email or phone message if you will be missing practice or meets for any reason if the absence is to be longer than three days. Do this as soon as you are aware of the dates, even if you have already mentioned it in passing or on deck. We will not remember. Be sure to contact the coaches if a swimmer's illness will prevent them from competing in a meet.

It is important to avoid sending any information verbally through other swimmers or parents to avoid confusion or miscommunication. All communication should be directed as indicated above.

## **14. GOAL SETTING FOR OUR SWIMMERS**

Goal setting is an extremely effective motivational training tool. At the beginning of the season, each swimmer will be asked to set realistic and achievable goals. These goals will be discussed in detail with their coach to ensure they are specific, measurable, and attainable within the season. Throughout the season, the coaching staff will track and monitor progress towards these goals, providing feedback and support to help each swimmer stay on track and achieve their objectives.

Key points:

- Each swimmer sets realistic and achievable goals.
- Goals are discussed and refined with the coach.
- Coaching staff tracks and monitors progress throughout the season.
- Regular feedback and support are provided to ensure goals are met.

## **15. SOCIALS AND TEAM BONDING**

Team bonding and supportive social events are crucial aspects of our program, fostering a sense of inclusion and camaraderie among all swimmers. From time to time, the Parents' Association organizes social gatherings and special events to encourage athletes and their families to connect and bond outside of regular training sessions. These events play a vital role in building a strong, supportive team environment where every swimmer feels included and valued.

Please check the Mariners website regularly for information about upcoming gatherings. If you have ideas or can help organize an appropriate outings or special event, please talk to the Director(s). Your participation and creativity are highly encouraged to enhance our team's social experience.

## 16. SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAM

The Madison Area YMCA Mariners Swim Team offers a year-round experience designed to foster long-term success for our athletes. Participation in both the spring and summer programs is crucial, especially for athletes aged 11 and older. For athletes aged 10 and under, participation is highly recommended to build a strong foundation for their future in the sport.

**Spring Program:** Spring is the most comprehensive phase for stroke work and conditioning. During this time, athletes will focus on refining their techniques and improving their overall conditioning. By the end of the spring season, swimmers should have significantly improved their strokes and be well-prepared for the summer program.

**Summer Program:** In the summer, we compete in both USA and YMCA meets, though there are no YMCA dual meets during this period. The summer program provides ample opportunities for competition and further skill development.

**Fees:** Please note that a separate fee is charged for the spring and summer sessions for some groups.

We encourage all athletes and their families to commit to these programs to ensure continued growth and success in the sport. For more details or to register, please visit the Mariners website.

## 17. SWIMMING IN COLLEGE

Participating in the Mariners Swim Team can significantly enhance a student-athlete's college search, much like any commitment-driven extracurricular activity. Successful academics and athletics often go hand in hand, and being part of our team demonstrates key qualities such as goal setting, work ethic, dedication, determination, time management, and a desire to succeed.

Some of our high school graduates have chosen to continue their competitive swimming careers at various colleges. During their junior year of high school, any student-athletes interested in swimming in college are encouraged to meet with the Coach/ Director(s). This meeting will initiate the college selection process, considering academic abilities, demographic preferences, and competitive swimming opportunities. We are here to support our athletes in achieving their academic and athletic goals.

## 18. EXPECTATIONS OF ATHLETES

The following portion of this handbook outlines the collective expectations our coaches have for our athletes. It is crucial that all athletes are aware of these guidelines to understand the standards we uphold. Our goal is to foster a positive, supportive, and high-achieving environment for all. Adhering to these expectations

ensures that every athlete can reach their full potential and contribute positively to the team.

## **Improvement**

We expect that all athletes in our programs are committed to improvement. Achieving progress requires increasing both the frequency and intensity of your workouts. Attend more practices and work harder than you did yesterday to see continuous improvement.

## **Practice Attendance**

Each training group has a recommended number of practices. It is expected that you stick to these guidelines. If you need to arrive late or leave early, inform and get approval from your deck coach at least 24 hours in advance for the practice to count toward your requirement. Excused absences will be granted for religious reasons or with a medical note.

## **Meet Attendance**

All swimmers are expected to attend all meets and fully participate in all registered events. If you cannot attend, contact Coach/Director(s) as far in advance as possible—at the very latest by the Wednesday prior to the meet. Only emergencies are acceptable reasons for missing a meet. Encourage your teammates to attend every meet.

## **Tardiness**

Swimmers must be on time to practices and meets. Warm-ups are crucial for preventing injuries, so lateness is not acceptable. Athletes who arrive after check-in time for a meet will be scratched.

## **Full Practices**

Athletes should arrive on time and stay for the entire practice. Warm-up and cool-down sessions are essential. Plan your schedule to ensure you can attend the full practice.

## **Attitude/Will/Determination**

Mariners must be willing to work hard, improve, try new things, break old habits, have fun, work with others, and be leaders. A positive attitude and determination to succeed and be part of a team are essential. Swimmers and parents should maintain a positive outlook throughout the season.

## **Respect**

Mariners must show respect for themselves, each other, coaches, and the facilities we

use. This includes respecting others' belongings, the buildings we visit as a team, and the actions and activities we engage in while wearing team apparel.

## **Good Behavior**

Mariners should always behave respectfully. Avoid any actions that could harm, bother, dishonor, disrespect anyone or damage the facilities we use. Use good judgment and consider the consequences of your actions.

## **Equipment/Swimmer**

Swimmers must come to practice with a healthy, well-rested, well-fed body and a positive attitude. Bring all necessary swim items, such as goggles, a cap, fins, hand paddles, a bathing suit, towels, and a water bottle. Keep swim items on the pool deck during practice, not in the locker room.

## **Communication**

Athletes should communicate with the coaching staff about anything affecting their swimming, including illness, injury, academics, swim camp, high school swimming, summer league swimming, and private lessons.

## **Time Management**

Athletes should learn to manage their time effectively to meet the program's expectations. While we encourage activities outside of swimming, balancing time is crucial. If you struggle with time management, seek assistance from the coaches.

## **Vacation and Absences**

Plan vacations and absences (such as SAT prep courses, lifeguard courses, etc.) at appropriate times to avoid impacting your swimming goals. Ideally, plan vacations for April and August after the competitive season.

## **Continuity**

Swimmers aged 11 and older are expected to participate in spring and summer practice. This allows you to compete in spring meets and long course meets. If you qualify for Long Course Championship Meets or Long Course USA meets, you should continue training with the team in spring and summer.

## **Separation**

If you decide to leave the team, notify the coaching staff and share your decision. If you prefer not to discuss it in person, send an email or letter. We respect your decision but need to understand your reasons. Leaving without communication makes it difficult to return if you find the grass isn't greener elsewhere.

## **Rules of Swimming**

All swimmers are expected to familiarize themselves with the technical rules of the sport. There are rules in the rulebook that athletes may be unaware of but are still accountable for. Violations such as deck changing, spitting, swearing, throwing goggles, and unsportsmanlike conduct can result in removal from competition, regardless of awareness of the rules.

## **Uniform**

At swim meets, wearing the current team cap and a current team suit (or a plain black suit) is required.

By following these expectations, we can create a supportive and successful team environment where every athlete can thrive.

## **19. FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY (FDU) FACILITY USAGE**

Use of the locker rooms at FDU is a privilege for Mariners swimmers and is primarily intended for use by the entire FDU population. Yelling, fooling around, or any unsafe/bullying behavior will result in the loss of locker room and/or facility privileges. Mariners swimmers are expected to follow the Madison Area YMCA Code of Conduct while using any facility, as you represent the Madison Area YMCA. However, because we are on FDU property, we cannot regulate the behavior of the FDU population. Please remember, this is a college campus, and college students are present and will act as such. Stay alert while on campus and report any alarming behavior to campus security. Understand that this building is dedicated to FDU staff and students. Our relationship with FDU is crucial to the team, so please do everything you can to preserve that relationship. Be aware that locker room access might be restricted without notice and that practices could be canceled due to FDU events with little notice.

### **Adherence Guidelines for FDU**

- **Campus Entry:**
  - Come to a complete stop at the security gate at both the Madison Ave entrance and Park Ave entrance.
- **Building Entry and Exit:**
  - Do not drive onto the sidewalk curve in front of the Ferguson Recreation Center. Only enter and exit the building through the front door. Do not use any other doors.
- **Pool Deck Access:**
  - The door to the pool deck must remain closed at all times and may only be propped open by FDU staff.
  - Parents are not permitted on the pool deck.
  - No glass or heavy stainless steel water bottles are allowed on the pool deck.

- **Pick-Up and Drop-Off:**
  - If space is available in the pick-up area on the parking lot side, you may hover out front. You cannot stop the car to drop off or pick up on the main road of the campus that runs in front of the pool.
- **Supervision After Practice:**
  - All swimmers must be in the care of a parent/guardian no later than 15 minutes after practice ends. If additional time is needed for showering, changing, etc., it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise after the initial 15 minutes.
  - Coaches will stay for 15 minutes after practice ends.
  - Parents may meet their child in the lobby or in the car, but you cannot drop off or pickup on the main road of the campus.
- **Late Pick-Up:**
  - Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the Head Coach and/or age group coach if unavoidably delayed in picking up their child(ren). If we do not hear from you within 15 minutes, we will make every effort to reach your emergency contact. After 15 minutes, additional late fees may apply (\$20).
  - The YMCA will notify the authorities if we do not hear from you and cannot reach an emergency contact one hour beyond the end of practice.
  - If the regular parent/guardian is not picking up your child, inform the Head Coach and/or Age Group Coach to make alternate arrangements.
- **Timeliness:**
  - Parents must notify the coaching staff via note or text when an athlete is late or leaving early.

### **Suggestions for FDU:**

- Do not leave items of value in the locker room. Most athletes bring their bags onto the pool deck.
- Check in on your athletes. There have been incidents of athletes being dropped off for practice and never attending.
- Ensure your swimmer(s) arrives early enough to be on deck ten minutes before the start of practice and meets.

## **20. CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES AT ALL LOCATIONS: 11/U ATHLETE DROP-OFF POLICY**

At the Madison Area YMCA, the safety and well-being of our children is our utmost priority. As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring a secure and supportive environment, we wish to remind all families of our essential Child Safety and Supervision Policy.

## **Child Safety and Supervision Policy for Swimmers Under 12:**

- **Check-In:** All swimmers under the age of 12 must be accompanied to the pool deck by a parent or a designated guardian. This allows our coaches to personally check in each swimmer for their practice session, ensuring they are under direct supervision from the moment they arrive.
- **Pickup:** At the conclusion of practice, swimmers under the age of 12 will remain on the pool deck and under coach supervision until a parent or designated guardian arrives. This policy is crucial for maintaining a safe environment and ensuring that all children are accounted for and safely handed back to their families.

We understand that schedules can be busy, and we appreciate your cooperation and support in adhering to this policy. Our goal is to protect our youngest members and provide peace of mind for our families and staff alike.

Thank you for your support!

## **21. GENERAL TRAINING PLAN**

### **Red & White Training:**

- Follows the physiological recommendations of the American Swim Coach's Association (ASCA) and USA Swimming (USAS).
- Focuses primarily on isolations and drill work.
- Includes some anaerobic and aerobic training.

### **Gray Training:**

- Adheres to the physiological recommendations of ASCA and USAS.
- Emphasizes isolations and drill work.
- Incorporates anaerobic and aerobic training.

### **Silver Training:**

- Based on ASCA and USAS guidelines.
- Workouts include drills, kicking, pulling, and swimming.
- Emphasizes sprint training due to lower anaerobic capacity compared to senior swimmers.
- Aerobic work consists of 15 to 30-minute swims and shorter distance repeats.

## **Gold and Platinum Seniors:**

- Trained as adult athletes following ASCA and USAS recommendations.
- Includes drills, kicking, pulling, endurance, and speed work.
- Focuses on expanding anaerobic capacity and developing aerobic capacity through longer distance swimming.
- Seniors must take all forms of endurance work seriously to be successful athletes.

## **Specific Training Plan (Gray and Above)**

### **Phase I:**

- Learning or relearning strokes and turns.
- Breaking bad habits and starting endurance work.
- Duration: Beginning of Season - Mid October

### **Phase II:**

- Building endurance and strength through longer sets, including kicking, pulling, and yardage swims.
- Heavy emphasis on drill work.
- Duration: Mid October - Early December

### **Phase III:**

- Emphasizing speed work and fine-tuning strokes.
- Reinforcing good habits with drills.
- Duration: Early December - Late January

### **Phase IV:**

- Concentrating entirely on speed.
- Drills and stroke work primarily during warm-ups and cooldowns.
- Preparing for the last chances to qualify for championship meets.
- Duration: Late January - Mid February

### **Phase V:**

- Preparing for final meets for which swimmers have qualified.
- Adjusting practice schedules and starting tapering.
- Dividing swimmers into specific training groups based on their final meet requirements.
- Duration: Mid February - Late March/Early April

This structured training plan ensures that all swimmers are progressively developed in line with their physiological needs and competitive goals, preparing them for peak performance at the end of the season.