

JAMESTOWN YMCA JETS SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK

Welcome to the 2009-2010 Jamestown YMCA Jets Swim Team! We are looking forward to meeting you and working with your swimmer(s). The Jets provide opportunities for competitive swimming for boys and girls, ages 5 through 18.

This handbook is provided to help familiarize you with our program, philosophy, competitive swimming in general, your child's responsibilities as a swimmer, and your role as a parent of a Jets swimmer. It is hoped that this information will help you better understand and enjoy the workings of our team and the world of amateur swimming.

THE JAMESTOWN JETS TEAM PHILOSOPHY

The Jets swim program believes that competitive swimming is one of the greatest youth sports available, involving and enjoyed by the entire family. The coaching staff introduces novices to the sport and also endeavors to teach, train, and motivate young people to achieve their potential in swimming, in the belief that this experience will prove valuable to them as they grow and develop. The Jets program strives to instill in young swimmers an understanding of and appreciation for such concepts as high self-esteem, personal accountability, goal setting, and goal achievement through hard work in training and meet participation.

At the same time, we endeavor to provide an atmosphere which encourages the development of team sportsmanship, loyalty, and camaraderie among competitors. We place a great deal of emphasis on working to develop individual potential as part of a team effort. We endeavor to recognize the achievements of all swimmers, from those competing for the first time to our experienced swimmers participating in state-wide competition. Our swimmers support each other in their efforts, and learn to be gracious winners and losers.

The mission of the YMCA is to be a character-building organization, focusing on family and individual participation. The emphasis is on developing the whole person, as embodied in the YMCA's symbol, the triangle, which signifies the union of the mind, the body, and the spirit. Through its programs, the YMCA strives to promote self-confidence and self-respect, community responsibility, respect for the family, and leadership development. The YMCA swim coaches help instill the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

COMPETITION

The Jamestown Jets Swim Team is affiliated with the Pennsylvania YMCA Northwestern Section of the Western District. The team competes in dual meets with teams from the YMCAs in Meadville, Titusville, Oil City, Franklin, North East, Warren, County (Erie), Corry, and Bradford. Please refer to meet schedule for more information.

The "League" meet season, which generally runs from late-October through early February, culminates in the league championship meet, also known as "the Sectional Meet". This meet is usually held in early-February and marks the conclusion of the swim season for the full team. In this meet, participants may swim in only two individual events plus one relay (if a member of a relay team).

Swimmers who have achieved a District Meet qualifying time may continue to practice and prepare for the Pennsylvania Western District Swim Meet which is held in mid-March usually held at Indiana University in PA.

The top nine(9) finishers in each event at the District Meet qualify to participate at the Pennsylvania YMCA State Championship Meet usually held at Penn State University.

INVITATIONALS

In addition to the League dual meet schedule, several of the YMCAs in the league hold "Invitational" at which our swimmers may compete. At these larger meets, swimmers from many of the YMCAs may compete together with no limit regarding the number of events an individual may enter. Prizes (trophies, medals, ribbons, and/or rosettes) are awarded to the top finishers in each event. Entry fees are charged (approx. \$4/event) and must be paid by the participant (i.e. **Not** covered as part of your swim team fee) and recorded in the Jets Invitational Meet Sign-Up notebook located in upper pool area.

General List of Invitationals:

Warren Invitational	Mid November
Oil City Invitational	Late November
Meadville Invitational	Early January
Jamestown Invitational	Mid January
Franklin Invitational	Early February

Note: Travel maps / directions will be provided to you before the start of the meets.

EXPECTATIONS OF SWIMMERS

Behavior and Attitude

Our swimmers represent our team at all times and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Before and after practice they should not disturb other YMCA programs or their participants. Each swimmer is expected to be a positive influence on his or her training group. Swimmers should put forth their best efforts at all times and always treat teammates, competitors, coaches, parents, and officials with respect. Each swimmer must have the Code of Conduct form signed before first meet.

Swimming Ability

All swim team participants should, prior to joining the team, have taken lessons and/or achieved a level of swimming competence. He/she must be capable of swimming a length of the pool (25 yds.) swimming either the freestyle or the backstroke (i.e. able to do both strokes).

If a swimmer's skills are deemed inadequate (for their age designation), he/she will be removed from the team's "standard practice" and a remedial program of instruction begun, often as part of a younger age group, to ensure proper stroke development.

If you have any concern in this regard, please discuss your situation with the Head Coach. Private swim lessons are also available for an additional cost.

Swim Practice Participation

The more you practice, the better you'll get... it's an old adage that is absolutely true when it is applied to swimming. Practice is offered 4 nights a week for all age groups.

To maximize your child's improvement, attendance at as many practices as possible is strongly encouraged. However, it is understood that the swimmers have other interests as well: scouting, band, etc., that are also important to their personal development.

All swimmers are expected to attend a minimum of two (2) practices per week.

(Note: If a swimmer is actively practicing independent of the YMCA team practices, the Jets Head Coach must be informed and, if deemed adequate, the off-site practice may satisfy this requirement until their swimming season is over. Swimmers not in season are expected twice a week).

Practices at the Jamestown YMCA and the Jamestown High School are CLOSED to the parents. The lower pool balcony is closed for midgets practice. At the Jamestown High School, parents are not allowed on pool deck or bleachers during practice.

Swim Meet Participation

All team members are encouraged to attend as many of the meets as possible. All swimmers must practice at least twice a week in order to participate in the meet that week

Swimmers are expected at all home meets, the Jamestown Invitational, and sectionals (championships), and Districts if qualified*.

If unable to go to Districts, you must inform the Head Coach as early as possible, this has bearing on relays.

Invitationals are optional for all swimmers (though they are a worthwhile experience prior to the Sectional Meet, since they are run in a similar manner).

Swimmers participating in a meet must sign-up for the meet. Sign-up sheets are located at the Y and at JHS during practices. Swimmers not signed up by the posted deadline will not be placed in the line-up and will not be permitted to swim in the meet.

If your child becomes sick **the morning of a meet** or some other emergency/situation will prevent your swimmer from making it to the meet, **PLEASE CALL THE COACHES!** This is exactly why we have most of the coaches' **cell phone numbers** listed for your use.

All team members are expected, unless prior arrangements have been made with their coach, to **stay until the end of all dual meets on deck** to cheer on and encourage their teammates.

All swimmers are expected to participate championships

THE ROLE OF THE SWIM TEAM PARENTS

The Swim Team Parents strive to provide encouragement and support for all efforts made by swim team members. Active meet involvement as timers, officials, scorers, etc. as well as participation in fund-raising activities are necessary for our team to function effectively and for the team's members to fully-benefit from the "swim team experience".

Fund-raising activities help to defray costs for the team and through which meet pool rental, practice equipment, the annual banquet, social activities, and incentives for the swimmers are partially or fully funded.

Some of the activities of the Swim Team Parents' Group include:

- Food sales at home meets
- 50/50 raffles at home meets
- Swim team public relations
- End-of-the-season banquet
- Social get-togethers
- Participation in fund-raising events, such as the Jamestown Invitational
- Welcoming and orienting new parents and swimmers
- After meet lunch at home meets
- Personnel to "work" the home meets (e.g. timers, scorers, officials, set-up, etc.)

Parents (or a responsible adult) are required to accompany their swimmers and remain in the building during swim meets. Parents are expected to participate in order to support our swimmers. We also need to have all parents monitor their child's conduct when not under the direct supervision of the coaches.

As a parent of a Jamestown Jet, your major responsibility is to be enthusiastic and supportive of your child's swimming. You can show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, and by coming to meets and cheering for the team. Attendance at parent meetings is expected of ALL swim team parents. Parents need to show their swimmers that they support them and their team.

Parents should also serve as positive role models for their children and show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents, and teammates. Parents should be careful not to impose their own standards and goals upon their children. The most important part of your child's swimming experience is that he learn about himself by enjoying the sport. This healthy environment encourages learning and fun which will develop a child's positive self-image. Parents should encourage their child's efforts and those of their teammates stressing the positive aspects of their development. As long as a child gives his best effort, you should make him feel like a winner. All parents and swimmers must sign an obligation form before attending first swim meet.

PARENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

I will place an emphasis on the fun of participation and keep the emotional and physical well being of all the children ahead of my personal desire to win.

I will require my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect without regard to gender, race, religion, culture, or ability.

I will encourage good sportsmanship by giving positive support to all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other event.

I will support and assist this experience however I can... by being a respectful fan, by assisting with the practices, by providing transportation, etc.

I will support coaches and officials by working with my child in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

I will refrain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs at all youth sports practices, games, and other events and I will encourage others to do the same.

I will remember that youth sports are for the kids and not for the adults and will do my very best to make this experience fun for all of the children and parents involved.

I will monitor the actions of our coach or coaches and will bring any behavior that is inconsistent with the Coach's Code of Conduct to the attention of someone in authority at the YMCA.

YOUTH-SPORTS PARTICIPANT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

I will not intentionally hurt or be mean to any player, coach, or referee.

I will pay attention to my coach and give her/him the respect s/he deserves. I will not misbehave or be disruptive during practices or games so that I do not ruin the experience of other children.

I will not argue with referees and will leave any disputes regarding officiating to game officials and my coach.

I will follow the rules for safety that my coach and the YMCA have established.

I will seek and willingly receive instruction both in the skills of the sport and in proper sporting behavior and good sportsmanship.

I will encourage my parents to set an example of good sportsmanship for my fellow teammates, the other parents, and myself.

QUESTIONS PARENTS MIGHT HAVE?

- Q. Do you have to be an expert swimmer to be on the team?
- A. No, but you must be able to swim the length of the pool. The child must be able to do the front crawl and the back crawl.
- Q. How often does my child need to attend practice?
- A. The YMCA recommends a minimum of two practices a week in order to achieve the conditioning necessary for meets. The more practices attended, the more that is achieved. Regard may be given to the age of the child for the appropriate amount of practice as well. If your child does not attend practice for a full week before a meet, the coach has the option of not permitting that child to swim in the meet for his own safety.
- Q. How are practices and competition organized?
- A. YMCA meets are organized by sex and age group. The youngest (8 year-old and under) swim together and are divided into lanes by ability. The other age groups are 9 & 10, 11 & 12, 13 & 14, and 15 & Up and are divided according to age and ability during practices. Swimmers may be moved between groups at the discretion of the coaches. For the purposes of YMCA meets, age group is determined by the child's age as of December 1.
- Q. What is a meet?
- A. A meet is a swim competition between two or more teams. A meet consists of up to 70 events, with each stroke, each age group, and each sex swimming separately. Most of our YMCA league meets during the regular season are "dual meets", which means two teams compete. The Sectional meet in mid-February consists of all of the YMCA teams in our league. The District meet in mid-March is only for those swimmers who have met the qualifying times in their individual events. The State meet, the weekend after the District meet, is only for the top 9 finishers in each event at the District meet.
- Q. Does my child have to compete in the meets?
- A. No, your child may only come to practice and does not have to compete in the meets, but we do expect all swimmers to attend as many meets as possible. We provide a Practice Mock Meet the week before our first competitive meet, so the swimmers have an opportunity to see what a meet is like.
- Q. What should I do if my Swimmer will miss a meet?
- A. If you are not attending do not sign the swimmer up.
- Q. Where are the meets
- A. Jets' home meets are held at the Jamestown High School Pool.

Away meets are generally held at the YMCAs of the other teams in the League: Corry, Bradford, Warren, County (Erie), North East [Elem Sch.], Meadville, Titusville [High Sch], Oil City, and Franklin.

Q. What equipment does my child need?

A. A bathing suit, cap, towel and goggles are the basic equipment. Separate suits are recommended for practices and meets, since the chlorine is pretty hard on the suits and the elastic stretches out. The meet suit may be purchased through the Head Coach early in the season. Our coaches recommend fitting your child one size smaller than a normal recreational swim suit in order to minimize drag through the water. Goggles may be purchased at the Jamestown YMCA front desk. It is strongly advised that the swimmer's name be placed upon each item of their equipment with a permanent marker. During a meet, your child will need extra towels, a sweatshirt, and sweatpants. The temperatures in the pool areas vary considerably, and your child should be prepared for any conditions.

Q. How long are the meets?

A. Dual meets typically run about 3 to 4 1/2 hours (including the warmup period). They are held (usually) on Saturday mornings. Please check the current year's meet schedule for the exact arrival times.

Q. How is transportation to away meets handled?

A. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to away meets. Carpooling is encouraged

Q. How will I be kept informed during the season?

A. There are four primary ways: the mailboxes, the bulletin board, email, and parent meetings. The "mailboxes" are located at JHS when we are there and at the YMCA when we are not. Each swim team member (or family) will be provided with a mailbox. Every swimmer should check their mailbox before or after each practice. Informational flyers will be placed in the mailboxes along with swimmers' Personal Best awards, etc. The bulletin board is located outside the upper pool in hallway by lower gym. Information pertaining to meet results, upcoming social events, newspaper clippings, etc. Another manner of communication is meetings of the swim team parents. Attendance at these meetings is expected.

Q. What is a Personal Best award?

A. A "Personal Best" is achieved whenever a swimmer swims a competitive race faster than he ever has

before. Whenever a swimmer sets a new “Personal Best” in an event, the Records Committee will document the time and present the swimmer with a “Personal Best Ribbon” which documents: Where, When, Age Group, Event, and the new Personal Best time.

Q. What is the Parent Advisory Committee?

A. The Parent Advisory Committee is a volunteer group of swim team parents who provide support to the coaches and leadership to the swim program. The Parent Advisory Committee helps make decisions that help the swim team program run smoothly. All meetings of the Parent Advisory Committee are open to all swim team parents.