

MONTCLAIR YMCA DOLPHINS SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK 2009-2010

www.montclairymcaswimming.com.

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1. INTRODUCTION & PHILOSOPHY

The major focus surrounding this program will be encompassed by the YMCA's philosophy of healthy spirit, mind & body. In addition, as laid out by the *Guiding Principles for YMCA Amateur Sports Competition*, we will be producing an atmosphere conducive to *Competition and Opportunity for all*. Our goal is to create a program that will be the perfect environment for multiple levels of competitive swimmer from beginners to swimmers who are nationally ranked. We believe the process of following the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility in all aspects of our swim program will inevitably lead to success not only in swimming but in all areas of their lives. The YMCA National Swimming and Diving motto is "Everybody Swims, Everybody Wins," and we strive to attain that at The Montclair YMCA.

The Montclair YMCA Dolphins Swim Team (MYM) offers a year-round opportunity for competitive swimming in both YMCA and USA Swimming competitions as well as seasonal instructional clinics for aspiring competitive athletes. The team is comprised of girls and boys from age 6 through high school.

The major objective is to offer the competitive swimmer a fun and challenging program, which will aid them in developing a systematic blueprint to succeed. The Montclair YMCA coaching staff stresses individual self-improvement as each swimmer's primary goal. Training in stroke techniques, speed, and conditioning/endurance are customized to ability and age to help achieve this goal. All swimmers will train all of the competitive strokes with attention to "specialties" as they gain experience and demonstrate success. All swimmers should learn what goals are, how to set them, and how to reach them. All swimmers should get and remain in good physical and mental shape. We are aiming for a year round program that caters to all levels of competitive swimming. We want all athletes to learn the value of hard work, sportsmanship, respect, how to work with others, and commitment both to themselves and to a group.

Beyond learning and mastering the competitive swimming skills, one of the most important goals of this program is to teach life skills, which include time management, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. A positive environment is provided at all times.

In addition to working toward each individual's personal success, the program stresses the team concept: each participant is a member of the Montclair YMCA Dolphins Swim Team. Membership on the team carries with it responsibility, loyalty, and dedication to each of the team members. Mutual support during training and competition are valuable assets attributable to the program. Parental support and involvement are highly encouraged and are major incentives for many swimmers at all levels of competitive swimming.

It is the responsibility of parents and swimmers to read the handbook and understand the operations of the program. Many questions should be answered herein. Those that are not may be directed to the coaching staff, Parents Association Board, or YMCA Program Director.

Team Structure- The coaching staff is constantly improving the Dolphins Swimming program. It is the swimmers' and parents' responsibility to make the most of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming. MYM Swimming uses a "progressive" age group program designed to develop each child physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of challenge and commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels at a swimmer's physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a

love for the sport. FUN is emphasized at this level. In the later years, more demanding physical and psychological challenges will be introduced to the training program. In this respect, “too much too soon” is more often the cause of failure to achieve maximum potential in senior swimming than in the reverse situation. In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is also important that we establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible with respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer’s physical, mental and emotional development.

2. COACHING STAFF

Entering his 6th year with this Dolphins and 3rd year as Head Coach is [Jon Siegel](#). Previous to Montclair, Jon spent eight years as Head Coach at the Madison Area YMCA and three years at the West Essex YMCA. He was also an Assistant Coach at the Summit Y for one season. Jon has coached in the Northern NJ area for the last 20 Plus years between the Livingston Aquajets, Berkeley Heights Streamliners, Minisink Manta Rays and Morristown Beard High School. Jon is an ASCA Level 5 Swim Coach, is currently YMCA Of The USA Swim Coach Faculty, is the NJ Swimming Senior Coaches Representative and is on the NJ Swimming Camps Committee. He has sat on the New Jersey YMCA Executive Swim Committee and on the USA Swimming National Communications Committee. Jon has been the Head Coach of the NJ Swimming All Star Zone Team in 1999, 2002, 2005 and 2008 and has been an assistant coach at Zones in 2000 and 2003. Jon also coached USA Swimming's Eastern Zone Select Camp in 2006.

Returning to the Montclair YMCA is [Paulo Madeira](#). He was a member of Montclair State University swim team for 4 years, held 200 yard Breaststroke school record. Competed with Montclair YMCA and coached at the Montclair for 10 years. Coached for 4 years at North Jersey Bluestreaks. Introduced USS meets to swimmers and parents, 3 JO winners, and 7 Zone qualifiers. In only 2 years the team was JCC Swim League champion and went undefeated for the whole season during their JCC league dual meets. The team was ranked 22nd during the Short Course season, and 16th in the Long Course season in New Jersey.

The 2009-2010 Coaching Staff include the following – Bios will be posted to the team website: Kenny Platt, Paul Stratis, Marvin Navata, Marc Navata, Lauren Sharkey, Dawn Amodio, Christopher Hanson, Matt Garifo, and Melissa Kranz.

3. TEAM TRYOUTS

Tryouts are conducted each Fall for all new swimmers interested in joining the dolphins. All returning dolphins are required to try-out unless their primary coach determines they have met all of our team’s expectations. Those athletes exempted will be noticed mid August. Dates and times will be posted on the tryout page of the website. Evaluations are considered by the coaching staff at other times during the season on a one on one basis. Please call to arrange an appointment.

For NEW 14/Older Athletes interested in becoming a dolphin:

- 1. You must contact head coach Jon Siegel**
- 2. After a phone conversation, we will need to schedule an appointment to either meet or evaluate in the water.**

3. Realize this is a highly competitive team and we have few spots available for 14/Older athletes depending on our returning athletes who take precedent. We will do what we can to help place all athletes who walk through our door, but we are looking for year round experienced competitive athletes with Junior Olympic time standards and faster.

4. GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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

YMCA and USA age groups are primarily divided as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| 8 and under | 9 - 10 years old <u>or</u> 10 and under |
| 11 - 12 years old | 13 - 14 years old |
| 15 - 18 years old <u>or</u> 15 and over | Open/Senior |

For YMCA meets, the age group the swimmer competes in is determined by the child's age as of December first of that season. For USA swimming meets, the swimmer competes in the age group of his/her actual age on the first day of each meet. See Swim Competitions for more information.

Practice for the season begins in September according to detailed practice schedules and calendars that are posted on the website.

5. PRACTICE TRAINING GROUPS

Practices are broken up primarily by age, ability and level of commitment. Group mobility will occur (both upwards and downwards) over the course of a season and year to year due to coaches evaluation of the athlete's commitment level, work ethics and overall progress.

Note – Swimmers should only attend practice sessions that pertain to their assigned practice group. If an extenuating circumstance arises, please contact Jon Siegel about attending an alternate practice session. For the most part this is not an option nor is it recommended.

Seasonal Developmental Groups: The 4 developmental groups will meet from the end of September to early February. There is then an additional Spring Session which is optional and has an additional fee. These groups will have home meets available to them.

Micro Dolphins will be primarily for swimmers ages 8 and under with limited or no previous competitive experience. This developmental group will meet twice a week and it is strictly an instructional based program. Our primary focus for this group is to work on the skills and progressions necessary to develop the four competitive strokes. The goal for this group is to have fun while learning the skills of the sport necessary to make the leap into one of the more competitive training groups. Swimmers in this group will have opportunities to compete in a few appropriate home competitions which are optional.

Mini Dolphins will be primarily for swimmers ages 8- 10 with limited or no previous competitive experience. This developmental group will meet twice a week and it is strictly an instructional based program. Our primary focus for this group is to work on the skills and progressions necessary

to develop the four competitive strokes. The goal for this group is to have fun while learning the skills of the sport necessary to make the leap into one of the more competitive training groups. Swimmers in this group will have opportunities to compete in a few appropriate home competitions which are optional.

New Little Dolphins will be primarily for swimmers ages 9-11 with limited or no previous competitive experience. This developmental group will meet twice a week and it is strictly an instructional based program. Our primary focus for this group is to work on the skills and progressions necessary to develop the four competitive strokes. The goal for this group is to have fun while learning the skills of the sport necessary to make the leap into one of the more competitive training groups. Swimmers in this group will have opportunities to compete in a few appropriate home competitions which are optional. Because this group meets twice a week we recommend that swimmers attend each clinic session and also sign up for an additional swim opportunity during the week.

New Stroke of Genius will be primarily for swimmers ages 11-15 with limited or no previous competitive experience. This developmental group will meet two to three times a week and it is strictly an instructional based program. Our primary focus for this group is to work on the skills and progressions necessary to develop the four competitive strokes. The goal for this group is to build strength and have fun while learning the skills of the sport necessary to make the leap into one of the more competitive training groups. Swimmers in this group will have opportunities to compete in a few appropriate home competitions which are optional. We also recommend that swimmers attend each session and also sign up for an additional swim opportunity during the week.

Competitive Training Groups:

Intro – Includes swimmers approximately ages 10 and under: primary focus includes development of stroke mechanics and swim specific strength building necessary to progress the swimmer to the next level. This group practices three times a week. A minimum of two practices a week is expected. Intro athletes will be placed onto a dual meet team as their personal development allows for it. Spring and summer sessions are recommended but not required.

Novice - Includes swimmers aged 9-12; primary focus is developing proper mechanics of the four strokes and starts and turns. This group is introduced to basic endurance, conditioning, attention to breathing patterns, and familiarity with race situations. A minimum of three practice sessions a week is expected. Spring and summer sessions are recommended but not required.

Prep – Includes swimmers ages ten and under, primary focus is more advanced mechanics of the four strokes and starts and turns. This group will continue development of endurance, conditioning, attention to breathing patterns, and familiarity with race situations. A minimum of three practice sessions a week is expected. Spring and summer sessions are highly recommended but not required to stay in this group, but would be to move up to the next group.

***Junior** - Includes swimmers aged eleven and older. These swimmers continue to build on the foundations already mastered with increased focus on interval training. Constant drill work to perfect stroke technique and start and turn mechanics will be done consistently throughout the season, depending on where the athlete is in their own personal progression. The athletes in this group are expected to train four to five days per week, which will need to be communicated with coach during goal meetings to stay in this group. Dry-land training is included in their practice schedule. Morning practices are offered to any High School aged athletes in this group. Spring and Summer sessions are required to stay in this group. Athletes who are committed year round and are

leading the fastest lane would be considered to move up to the next group. Moving into 2010-2011 season athletes will need to have Charlotte Cuts to be in this group.

*Senior - Includes swimmers predominantly 14 years of age and older. Practices will include endurance and speed training, technique work and drills, race strategies and starts and turns. We will be following a serious annual training plan so year round commitment to this group is necessary. Individual dry-land program will be tailored to the athlete's needs and outside cardio is recommended. Morning practices are offered to any High School aged athletes in this group. **Seniors are expected to attend five or more practices per week and schedule yearly goal meetings to stay in this group.** They train two to two and one half hours per session. Spring and summer sessions are required to stay in this group. Moving into 2010-2011 season athletes will need to have Charlotte cuts to be in this group and be in high school or PG. The exception is an athlete who is not yet in high school will need to have at least one long course national cut.

*Swimmers having a difficult time balancing their lives with the expectations this team demands, should schedule a swimmer, parent, coach meeting as soon as a problem becomes evident.

*Athletes at this age and level tend to congregate with their swimming friends in the YMCA. While we encourage this, it is unacceptable to be late to warm-up because the athlete was "fooling around in the building" but had ample time to be punctual.

6. PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (MYPO)

The Parents' Association (MYPO) is an organization comprised of all swimmers' parents, formed to help the coaches and swimmers in their endeavors. The Association also tries to improve conditions for the team and is a resource for many of the team's outside activities: fundraising, social, meet coordination, etc. Parent meeting dates and times will be posted on the website.

Parents often become closely associated and involved with the team and can assist the team in many ways. A parent should:

- Encourage swimmers to attend appropriate practices and meets, and provide transportation to the workouts and meets as necessary.
- Encourage their child to work diligently, and assist their younger child to set realistic goals; offer support to the child throughout the season.
- Let the coaches do the coaching.
- Take an active part in fundraising projects and consider becoming a certified swim meet official.
- Assist at dual meets and any other team-hosted competitions: timing, concessions, and help in the setup and breakdown for home meets.

Whenever the team hosts a meet at the Montclair Y, timers, judges, recorders, and general help come from the Parent's Association. There may be a need for preparation and selling of food, marshalling, basic clerical work, etc. All of this is **required** work and it is anticipated that each parent gives of his/her time and talent to facilitate the job for everyone!

All parents who have swimmers on the team are members of the Parents' Association. At least one parent is expected to participate on a working committee and/or help at the dual meets.

Official's Certification

A big part of parental involvement comes from those who become certified to be swim officials:

USA Swimming Certification – qualifies one to officiate at any New Jersey Swimming (USA) meets, various levels of certifications are available, and courses are offered throughout the season.

YMCA Certification – qualifies one to officiate at YMCA dual meets and other Y sanctioned meets; various levels of certifications, courses are offered throughout the season.

The officials' chairperson or a Parents' Executive Board Member can direct interested parents appropriately. Information regarding upcoming officials' clinics will be posted on the Swim Team website.

Fundraising

During the year, the Parents' Association conducts several fundraising events. Such events include a swim marathon and hosting swim meets. The funds raised are used to help defray some of the costs for the Annual Awards Brunch, Nationals, other social activities, and for annual maintenance of the timing system, team computer, etc. All monies raised during these events benefit the program and the swimmers, so 100% participation is strongly encouraged.

Parents Executive Board

The Parents' Executive Board operates according to by-laws established by the Parents' Association. Officers are selected per the by-laws each year to administer the Parents' Association and serve on the steering committees as follows:

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| President | Treasurer |
| Vice President | Members at Large |
| Secretary | Team Managers |

Committee assignments will be solicited by the Executive Board each season. The President and board positions of the Parents Executive Board/Association changes annually and will be posted on the website whenever changes occur. Board members may be contacted with questions pertinent to the function of the board and its many activities.

7. USA SWIMMING REGISTRATION/MEET FEES AND SIGN-UPS

Included in each swimmer's swim team program fee are funds to cover registration costs to be eligible to compete in USA swimming meets. Each swimmer placed into one of the competitive training groups is registered with USA swimming each year, regardless of whether they actually compete in USA meets or not. For athletes placed into our stroke clinics who would like to register for USA Swimming there will be an optional registration fee which will allow participation in appropriate USA Swimming meets.

Meet Fee Account During the season, swimmers are assessed separately to cover meet entry fee costs required to compete in each invitational meet. There are no fees for the regular YMCA dual meets. An accounting of meet fee deposits and withdrawals are maintained for each swimmer's family. Parents are asked to make a deposit in **September** as per the recommendations below:

\$50 per Little Dolphins and Stroke Of Genius Clinics (Optional)
\$100.00 per Intro, Novice, and Gold, \$125.00 per Prep and Junior
\$175.00 per Pre-senior and Senior

As the funds are used for meets and become exhausted, parents will be contacted for an additional deposit. Accountings/billings are distributed via email from Chris Jung so it is important that we have a correct family e-mail address on file. Funds remaining from the previous year will be forwarded into the next year's account. **Unless funds are in a family's account to cover the cost of a requested meet, the swimmer cannot be entered into that meet.** This must be strictly enforced. Questions can be directed to the meet fee chairperson: Chris Jung. Please e-mail her at Chrisleexx@aol.com with any questions regarding meet fees.

Note that you are financially responsible for any fees incurred to enter into a meet. You will be charged for meets (or events) you scratch, sign up for and then decide you can not go, when you are auto-entered into meets that you did not decline participation and any relays you swim or cause the team not to swim (see relay section).

Make checks payable to: Swimming Parents and mail payments to: Chris Jung, 4 Essex Court, Livingston, NJ 07039

Sign-Ups for Meets

For YMCA dual meets, all swimmers are automatically signed-up and placed into events by the coach. Unlike YMCA dual meets whose events are fixed and known well in advance, invitational meets have many different formats; i.e. the events swam for each of the age-groups varies from meet to meet. Please see website for individual meets and sign up procedures.

For USA Swimming and YMCA Invitational meets – a schedule will be posted on the team website at www.montclairymcaswimming.com with information.

Meet Entry Procedures – All meet info will be on the website and each meet will have some entry instructions specific to that meet. You should check the website as close to daily as possible because meet information will be posted and sometimes turned over within as little as 36 hours from posting.

For invitational meets marked **auto-enter** all swimmers who qualify for that meet will be entered unless those swimmers respond that they can not go by the date listed as the due date. Coaches will try to discuss all those entries with the athletes on deck at two or three consecutive practices, but it is crucial that we send in the entry as fast as possible. We will not be able to await individual entries to ensure that our team does not get “shut out” of meets like Holiday Classic, and Winterfest.

For all invitational meets **not** marked “auto-enter” you will have to let us know if you **can** attend by the due date listed along with some event preferences that you have discussed with your primary coach. Please sign up as quickly as possible after the meet is posted. The entry needs to be sent in soon after we receive notice to avoid the situation that our team is closed out of a meet. **YOU MUST** adhere to the posted deadlines! All meet entries go through Jon Siegel. It is assumed that all emails sent to Jon regarding meet entries have already been discussed between the primary coach and the athlete.

Eligibility Report: For meets with time standards (qualifying times necessary) we will post an eligibility report on the website on the page with the meet information so a swimmer may see if they have qualified for that meet and if so what events they are eligible for.

In all cases for invitational meets, a Meet Entries Report indicating all swimmers and events entered will be posted on the website once the meet entry has been sent in and accepted. Check this

immediately for any errors and contact the meet entry person to correct. In some cases when there are a lot of changes a second will be posted. It is the responsibility of the interested swimmers/parents to check and ensure proper entry as early as possible.

*For Pre-senior and Senior level athletes all meets entries should be discussed with their primary coach.

8. SWIM COMPETITIONS

At all meets, swimmers are required to “check in” with a coach when arriving and before leaving. It is imperative that swimmers are at the meet at least 15 minutes prior to the first scheduled warm-up time of your session in order to “check in” with the coach so that the team can check in with the meet director. Swimmers who are not “checked in” **will** be scratched from the day’s events if they arrive after the check in time.

Swimmers are expected to warm-up and warm-down properly and as a team at meets and when available before and after races.

Swimmers are expected to check all websites posted on the meet information prior to leaving for a meet to see if any last minute changes have been posted.

Competition

Competition gives you an opportunity to learn about yourself. Not only in terms of physical accomplishment, but perhaps more importantly, what you are capable of in terms of will power, goal attainment and self-discipline. Competition is a healthy and necessary aspect of life in order to be productive. It is vitally important to develop the capacity to do better and to not settle for just being average. This type of motivation and desire can be applied as a tool, not only to swimming, but to school and all aspects of life as well.

Eligible Competitors:

In order to be eligible for any meets swimmers must be Y members in good standing with all fees up to date. Additionally you must be regularly attending practices as per our recommendations and putting forth effort during them. You must be a good teammate and a responsible and respectable member of the team. Coaches will make final decisions concerning what swim meets the team will going to and what swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also will make the final decisions as to what events the athletes will be swimming.

Red Black Meet:

Swimmers in all groups (not including stroke clinics) are required to attend the **Red/Black Scrimmage** (an intra-squad meet/ time-trial) which is also used to help finalize dual meet team assignments (check website for more information) If you can not attend due to an unforeseen circumstance contact both Coach Jon or Paulo

YMCA Dual Meets

We participate in the Northern New Jersey YMCA dual meet league (one-on-one meets with other YMCA’s in the North Jersey area). Each team competes in approximately 6 of these meets which take place on Saturday afternoons from October to February. Each swimmer is permitted to swim in a maximum of three events, one of which must be a relay. The coach makes all event and lane assignments and they are at his/her discretion and quite often will change throughout the meet. USA Swimming rules apply to YMCA competitions and age is determined as of 12/1. All swimmers on the team are required to compete in dual meets.

The Montclair “Y” has two girls teams, (“A” and “B”), two boys teams, (“A” and “B”), and a CO-ED team. There are several divisions in both the girls’ and boys’ YMCA league. The dual meet “line-up” (events each swimmer will be competing in) for each team will be posted just before the start of the meet. The coaching staff tries to get everyone into each meet where the pool has six lanes (some pools have four lanes). 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 are meets where swimmers compete against other swimmers on an individual basis. Both our YMCA league and United States Swimming (USA Swimming) sanction these meets. USA Swimming in our part of the country is governed by our Local Swim Committee (LSC) which is New Jersey Swimming (NJS). Swimmers are required to submit information for these meets by a given date.

YMCA Championship Meets

The NJ State, Silver, Bronze and Mini Meet Championships are competitions held at the end of the dual meet season. All swimmers who qualify for these meets are expected to attend as they are team scored meets. To attend YMCA National level competition, a swimmer is required compete fully in the YMCA State Championship Meet. Athletes are required to attend their highest level YMCA championship meet.

USA Swimming Championship Meets

Similar to the YMCA system, NJ Swimming offers an extensive championship season. Those meets that we will be participating in will be posted to our website.

For very elite swimmers, USA Swimming sponsors Sectional Championships (Northeast region), Phillips 66 National Championships, U.S. Open, Olympic Trials, Grand Prix, etc. Time standards for all of these meets will be posted on the team website. Details regarding any of these competitions will be distributed to qualified swimmers.

Eastern Zone Age Group Championships

The Eastern Zone hosts two “Zone” meets a year, one in the spring and one in the summer.

Spring: In the Spring the NJ Zone team is comprised of the top 2 fastest times achieved at JO’s or NJ Junior/Senior Championships who apply for that competition. Because MYM attends Sunkissed Invitational as a team, Spring Zones is not our focus meet.

For a 12 year old swimmer, it is acceptable to attend the Spring Zone meet providing it does not conflict with Sunkissed Invitational The Zone meet will be swam in addition to and not instead of Sunkissed Invitational.

It is not acceptable for a MYM 13/Older to attend Spring Zones except in the rare occurrence that Zones falls after Sunkissed Invitational

SC YMCA National qualifiers can not attend Spring zones except in the rare occurrence that Zones occurs after YMCA Nationals.

Summer: In the summer, the NJ Zone team is comprised of anyone who made the meet qualifying times and applied to be on the team or in the case that two people do not apply, the two fastest swimmers who do apply will be selected.

In the Summer, LC Zones should be the focus of every swimmer who did not make YMCA Nationals or beyond. YMCA National qualifiers can attend this meet providing it falls after YMCA Nationals.

Sunkissed Invitational Championship Meet

The Sunkissed Invitational Champs differs from YMCA Nationals in that: they have both Junior (13 years) and Senior (14 years & older) Divisions and it is a USA Swimming (not YMCA) sanctioned meet. The Sunkissed Invitational also have qualifying times which are less stringent than those for YMCA Nationals (cuts to be posted to the website during the season) enabling a large group of our athletes to attend. In recent years more than 85 Montclair Y swim team members have competed at this meet. For the past few years this meet has been in Charlotte, North Carolina in early-mid April. Athletes who qualify for this meet are required to attend.

In order to participate in this meet you must be 10 or older, must have fully participated in your highest level YMCA championship meet, must have made the meet qualifying times and must be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team's expectations.

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

YMCA National Championship Meets

National YMCA Short Course Championship is an open national competition. All contestants must be 12 and older and have achieved the qualifying times, have fully attended YMCA States and be in good standing with the team. This meet is held in early April and has for the past several years been in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Athletes who qualify for this meet are required to attend.

National YMCA Long Course Championships (50 meter pool length) is an open national competition. All contestants must be 12 years of age or older and much have achieved the qualifying times, have fully attended YMCA States and be in good standing with the team. This meet is held in late July into early August and has been at the University of Maryland for the past several years. Athletes who qualify for this meet are required to attend.

Coaches have final determination of meet entries. Athletes must be in good standing with the team and have fully complied with team's expectations in order to be entered in any meets. In order to compete in meets representing the dolphins, athletes must be maintaining honest effort, good attitude, and appropriate attendance at practices and meets.

Competition Guidelines for Athletes

1. Arrive on time to the meet. For invitational 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.
2. Warm-up for all meets as a team. **A proper warm-up is crucial to the success of a meet.**
3. Arrive at the blocks at least 5 heats before your race.
4. Try your best and swim hard. It's ok to be nervous. Many swimmers have pre-race apprehension, especially for events they may not have swum before.
5. 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.

6. Warm-down after each race, if a pool is available.
7. Relay spots are decided by the coaches.
8. Sit with the team, you are part of it.
9. Support and encourage your teammates...before, during, and after their races.
10. Join in team cheers.
11. Wear Montclair YMCA Dolphins team uniform at all meets. Caps and suits from other teams (high school, USA or YMCA) are not permitted.
12. **For dual meets** remain in your team suit 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.

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 establish 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 will be assessed the entire fee for the relay.

10. TRANSPORTATION

For most meets (except for some championships where air transportation is required) it is the parent’s responsibility for travel arrangements and to see that swimmers are at the meet on time and ready for warm-ups at least 15 minutes prior to the first scheduled warm-up time. Arrangements should be made with another parent if there is a conflict of schedules.

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

Coaches can NOT transport athletes at any time for any reason, except where we are using a YMCA vehicle or a vehicle that has been rented and insured in the name of the YMCA.

11. BEHAVIOR AT PRACTICE SESSIONS/SWIM MEETS

It is very important that the swimmer be early to practice and meets to allow for stretching/preparation and warm-up. Athletes who are on a specific stretching regiment need to arrive with a time to still be early for warm-up. Swimmers are expected to stay in the pool area during the entire practice, and they 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. Swimmers are expected to see a coach before and after races at meets. Swimmers are expected to warm-up and warm-down properly and as a team in both practices and meets and when available before and after races. Swimmers are expected to compete in all events they are entered in at meets: this includes bonus, consul and final heats of trial-final events.

- Parents of Junior, Pre-senior and Seniors are **not** to observe practice Monday through Thursday but are welcome to observe from the observation deck on Friday, Saturday and Sunday providing there is no interaction between the athlete and the parent as well as no interference. If you have a concern with this please contact Jon.
- Parents are not to come on the pool deck while practice is in progress unless invited by a coach. “Coaching” by parents from the balcony will not be tolerated.
- Parents of Junior, Pre-senior and Seniors are permitted to check bulletin boards and family folders which are located on the pool balcony the first and last five minutes of each practice.
- Parents of all other groups are invited to watch practices daily providing there is no interaction between the athlete and the parent as well as no interference.

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

At swim meets and at practice each swimmer is a representative of the Montclair YMCA. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Behavioral violations at the Y, 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- Participants who behave improperly will be disciplined. Athlete who required disciplined action be will individually accord to the infraction. Punitive will include but not limited to time-outs, dismissal for practice/meets, parental noticeable/meetings, suspension, and ultimately could to dismissal from the team. Extreme disciplinary problems may include interaction with the senior aquatic director and vice president of the YMCA.

Swim Caps must be worn in the pool by all swimmers having hair length below the ears.

Showers must be taken before entering the pool, according to New Jersey State Code. The shower should be brief and the swimmer must remember to turn off the shower.

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

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

No gum or food is allowed in the pool area during practice. Swimmers are encouraged to bring water bottles to practice labeled with their name. For health purposes, please do not share water bottles! Athletes are asked to keep pool area clean – discard empty containers, etc.

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 to another swimmer. Feet-first entry at all times is enforced except when instructed otherwise.

Parents, please NO SMOKING in or near the building.

12. COMMUNICATION

The team **WEBSITE** will be the lifeblood of our communications. Info from the website will be on the bulletin board, but for the most part, the website will be our primary tool.

For last minute information we will be assembling an **E-MAIL LIST** for each season individually. If you wish to be on the list, e-mail jpsiegelnj@aol.com at the beginning of each season. It is crucial that you have your full name on the e-mail so we can get you in the address book properly. We will use this list so that cancellations and last minute information can get out at first notice. If you do not use e-mail, you will need to let us know so we can get a phone call into you when we send group e-mails.

Occasionally Newsletters and notices will be posted on the bulletin board in the balcony area located by the “large pool” and will also be put into file folders assigned to each family (filed alphabetically), located in filing cabinets near the team record board also on large pool balcony. These notices are the primary link between parents/swimmers and coaches. They provide important information that should be read thoroughly. It is recommended that all correspondence be filed at home for future reference. It is the swimmer’s responsibility to check for these communications at every practice!

Please feel free to schedule an appointment with anyone on the coaching staff with questions and/or concerns. You may also contact the coaches by phone or email throughout the season. In addition, you are encouraged to contact Jon Siegel via email at jpsiegelnj@aol.com or call Jon at 973-415-6120. As a last resort emergency, you can call Jon on his Cell Phone 973-978-7946, between 10 am and 10 PM please.

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

NOTE – Quite often we receive e-mails that are sent when we are on the way to or already at meets. Please use your best judgment in communicating with us at the last minute and realize that if the coaching staff is at a 2 or 3 day meet we will not be checking e-mails or YMCA Phone messages from the first day. Make sure you 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; e-mail, website or phone chain. Please check your e-mail, the website and your voicemail before venturing out in a blizzard. Y meets have been cancelled because of inclement weather or other emergency situations. USA and Invitational meets are very rarely cancelled (unless a state of emergency is called) but there is usually facility closing information phone numbers and meet host team website

info on the meet page of our website. Obviously if we find out about a cancellation ahead of time we will do our best to get the info out, 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 by a written note to file folder or by email if you will be missing practice or meets for any reason if the absence is to be longer then 3 days. Please do this as soon as you are aware of the dates even if you have already mentioned it to us in passing or on deck. We will not remember. Also, call or e-mail the coach if a swimmer's illness will preclude him/her from competing in a meet.

It is important to avoid sending any information verbally through other swimmers or parents to avoid confusion or miscommunication and all should communicate directly as indicated above.

14. HEALTH FORMS

It is required that each swimmer has a yearly physical. The completed form must be turned into the folder labeled "Health Forms" in the filing cabinet located on the large pool balcony or mailed directly to the Y, Attention to: Montclair YMCA Swim Team, by the first meet of the season. Please make us aware of any illnesses or injuries that could affect their participation. Swimmers will not be allowed to participate in the meets without a completed health form. A copy of the health form may be found on the team website under "flyers and forms."

15. GOALS

Goal setting is an extremely effective motivational training tool. At the beginning of the season, each swimmer will be asked to set three goals that he/she could realistically accomplish during the season and discuss them with their coach. Senior athletes will have goal meetings with their coaches in Sept./Oct. Goals are tracked by the coaching staff throughout the season.

16. SOCIALS

From time to time, social gatherings and special events are offered by the Parents' Association to encourage team bonding between athletes and families. Please check the website for information about gatherings. If you have any ideas for appropriate outings in a social setting or would be willing to run a special event, talk to Jon.

17. SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAM

The Montclair YMCA is a year round experience. Like many sports annual participation in the activity is crucial to long term success, particularly for athletes over the age of 10. It is expected that all athletes in our programs aged 10 and older participate in our spring and summer programs and it is highly recommended for our 9 and under athletes.

The Spring program, which we consider the start of our annual training plan. This is the most comprehensive stroke work the athletes will get in all year. By the end of the Spring all athletes should be well conditioned with improved strokes and should be prepared to begin the summer program.

The summer program is run both indoor (at the Y) and in a 50 Meter outdoor facility. We participate in competitions in both USA and YMCA meets but there are no dual meets. A separate fee is charged for the spring and summer session for some groups. More information on this program is issued in the spring and more detail is contained in the training plan in this handbook.

18. SWIMMING IN COLLEGE

Like any other commitment driven extra-curricular activity, swimming for the Dolphins can help a student athlete greatly during their college search as successful academics and athletics generally go hand in hand. Being part of a team such as ours proves goal setting, work ethic, dedication, determination, time management and a desire to succeed. Many Montclair Y high school graduates have chosen to continue competitive swimming at their respective colleges. During the junior year in high school, those interested are encouraged to meet with Jon to start the selection process keeping in mind academic abilities and demographic choices, while exploring competitive swimming opportunities.

In recent years Montclair Y graduates have gone on to swim for: Williams, Binghamton, Amherst, Boston University, Brynmar, Bucknell, Duke, Fairfield, Florida Atlantic, University of Chicago, Colgate, Columbia, University of Connecticut, Franklin & Marshall, Georgetown, Hamilton, Ithaca, Lafayette, LaSalle, Lehigh, Montclair State, NYU, The College of NJ, Notre Dame, University of Miami, UMASS, Northeastern, Providence, Purdue, Rowan, Rutgers, Seton Hall, St Peters, Syracuse, University of Pennsylvania, University of Rochester, University of Rhode Island, Union, Wheaton, William & Mary. Several of our swimmers have received athletic scholarships for their swimming.

19. Expectations of Athletes

The following portion of this handbook is dedicated to what the coaches collectively expect from our athletes. Please be aware of this portion as it is important that the athletes know where we are coming from. Athletes who do not adhere to these guidelines will be asked to re-try out and risk their spot on the team.

Improvement – We expect that all athletes in our programs want to improve. Realize that in order for improvement to occur you must increase your frequency and intensity of workouts. In short you have to come more then you did last year and work harder then you did yesterday to make that happen.

Practice Attendance- All training groups have a set number of practices that the coaching staff recommends – you are expected to stick to these. If you need to come late or leave early to practice your deck coach needs to know and approve this at least 24 hours in advance in order for that practice to count towards your requirement.

Meet Attendance- All swimmers are expected to be at all meets and fully participate in all events registered for. Contact JON if you can not be there as far in advance as possible and at the very latest the Wednesday prior to the meet. After that, only in the case of emergency is it acceptable to miss a meet. If you fail to show up to a meet you are scheduled to be in and fail to let us know well ahead of time may receive a two meet suspension, regardless of the importance of the next two meets. Swimmers who "blow us off" have already made the decision that they will not be in the next two meets. Encourage each other to attend every meet you are slated to swim.

Tardiness- Swimmers should be on time to practices and meets. It is imperative that athletes partake in a warm up session before participating in strenuous workouts. Lateness means missed warm ups. Missed warm ups mean injuries. BE ON TIME. Anyone who is late to meet warm-ups will be scratched. Lateness and chronic lateness will be dealt with in a variety of ways including but not limited to having to sit out for a period of time, or the whole practice, parental calls and or meetings

Full Practices- We expect that athletes come on time and not leave early for practices. Warming up and Warming Down is crucial as well as time management. Get your schedule in order so you can be at practice.

Dual Meet- Dual meets are required. If you know of something well ahead of time, let the coaching staff know ASAP via e-mail or written note. It is unacceptable to tell us a few days before a meet that you cannot be there.

Attitude/Will/ Determination- Dolphins must have the willingness to work hard, do well, try new things, break old habits, have fun, work with others, and be leaders. Simply, Dolphins must have the will to succeed and be part of a team. Swimmers and parents are expected to have a positive attitude all season long.

Respect- Dolphins need to have respect for many things including ourselves, each other, coaches, the YMCA, Montclair Beach Club, other YMCAs... etc. Dolphins respect other people's belongings, the buildings we visit as a team and the actions and activities we partake in while wearing team apparel.

Good Behavior- It is imperative that Dolphins behave in a manner worthy of respect. We will not do anything that could bother, hurt, dishonor or disrespect anyone, or damage the facilities we are privileged to use. Use your judgment and before you act, ask yourself if this action could get my team or myself in trouble.

Goal Setting- All swimmers will be required to submit goals within the first two months of the season. Goals will be worked on all season long

Equipment/Swimmer- It is necessary that all swimmers bring healthy, well-rested, well-fed bodies to practice along with a good attitude. This should include goggles, a cap, fins, hand paddles, a bathing suit, towels, a water bottle etc... Swim items should be on the pool deck during practice and not in the locker room.

Communication- We expect that all athletes communicate with the coaching staff regarding anything that will affect their swimming – illness, injury, academics, swim camp, high school swimming, summer league swimming, private lessons etc.....

Time Management – We expect that all athletes learn to manage their time to be able to fulfill the expectations that this program has on them. While we encourage other activities outside of swimming please remember that balancing your time is perhaps the most crucial element that can be developed from competitive athletics. We expect that if athletes are having a struggle with time management they help us to help them by scheduling meetings with the coaching staff to make it all work and before it becomes a problem.

Vacation and Absences – We expect that families will plan their vacations and individuals will plan their absences (intensive courses such as SAT Prep, lifeguard courses etc....) at appropriate times of the year as to not affect the goals that a swimmer may have. Whenever possible plan for April and August after the competitive season is over when the team is on break.

Continuity- It is expected that swimmers over the age of 10 swim with us in the spring and summer. You will be afforded the opportunity to swim in spring meets and long course meets with the team. Swimmers who have made qualifying times for LC Championship Meets will be allowed two weeks off in the spring – otherwise they MUST maintain their regular practice requirements. Swimmers who make qualifying times for LC USA meets will be required to train with the team in the spring and summer – or they will be required to swim as unattached if they decide to go to these meets at all.

Separation- It is expected that all swimmers who leave the team, either during, after or before a new season let us know that they are leaving. It is requested that you let us know why as well. If you do not wish to do this face to face, please write an e-mail or a letter. We feel strongly that this is a responsibility that all people must face in life. We won't hold it against you, but we have an onslaught of swimmers who are looking for greener grass, then find out that they left for a worse situation, then wish to return to the team. It is very hard for us to allow a swimmer to return to the team after leaving for another team when they did not discuss it with us before they left.

Rules of Swimming

It's expected that all swimmers familiarize themselves with the technical rules of the sport. There are rules in the rulebook that athletes are unaware of which they are held accountable for. Rules such as prohibition of deck changing, spitting, swearing, throwing goggles, and unsportsmanlike conduct are rules that violations will have the athlete(s) removed from competition yet they are generally unaware until it happens.

Uniform-

At swim meets the team cap and either the team or a plain black suit is required. If you are or have been on our national team you can wear a white national team cap, but if not you must wear a RED TEAM CAP.