



York YMCA Competitive Swimming Program – Handbook 2009/2010 Edition

www.swimyorky.org

Dear York YMCA/Tidal Wave Swim Parents,

Our program has come a long way over the past few years. The coaches have seen tremendous growth throughout the program as levels of expectation and performance have skyrocketed. Our swimmers continue to learn that thinking like champions and training like champions lead to championship performances. It has been a lot of fun watching as this transformation takes place, and things are only going to get better.

Welcome aboard!

YORK YMCA - TEAM OF CHAMPIONS

This handbook is intended to answer some of the more frequently asked questions that parents have about our program and swimming in general.

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York YMCA Swimming Program Overview

Drawing from a long-standing tradition of excellence, the competitive swimming program at the York YMCA prides itself on developing great swimmers and strong citizens! Our overall philosophy is grounded in the classical Greek concept of *arête*.

ἀρετή

Arête is often defined as excellence, virtue or goodness. However, a more appropriate meaning is striving for excellence in everything one attempts in life: education, work, relationships and of course, sports. We use competitive swimming to teach life lessons. This includes the important idea that "reaching your highest human potential" is an honorable and worthy pursuit.

We take this lofty concept and bring it down to earth with our team motto: **Self Discipline Breeds Excellence!** We strongly feel that self discipline, which is another way of saying the daily choices one makes, is at the heart of success in all aspects of a life well lived!

To achieve this we strive to:

1. Support the development and growth of each swimmer to their maximum human potential in swimming and in life.
2. Teach life lessons while developing self discipline and character through the sport of competitive swimming.
3. Provide opportunities for our swimmers to compete in the sport of swimming at appropriate levels as they develop.
4. Field teams that will become among the best in the nation.

York YMCA Swimming:

A place where *EXCELLENCE* is valued, encouraged, supported, admired, protected, nurtured, respected, emulated...

WHY SWIM? Because, swimming is FUN!!!

Health: the best low-impact general conditioning available, swimming also increases motor skills and coordination.

Safety: develop skills & confidence for any aquatic activity at the beach, lake, or summer pool.

Lifelong friendships: in a healthy, co-educational atmosphere.

Participation: everyone gets to play -- there are no second stringers, no benchwarmers.

Self-confidence: as swimmers eagerly accept challenges, and make and meet goals.

Opportunity: Swimming champions come in all shapes and sizes: kids don't need to be big to succeed.

A lifetime sport: participants aged one to one hundred.

Qualities of character that lead to athletic & academic success:

Perseverance
Goal Setting
Teamwork
Cooperation
Responsibility

Self-discipline
Time Management
Determination
Dedication
High Expectations

TIDAL WAVES SWIM TEAM - TWST

The Tidal Waves Swim Team is open to swimmers of all levels & abilities. It is the perfect program for those who love to swim but have never competed on a team before, those who enjoy competitive swimming but want a low pressure, relaxed atmosphere, or high school swimmers wishing to stay in shape during the off season. Swimmers compete in local swim meets that give them friendly competition and teach them sportsmanship and teamwork. We are different from other swim teams in that we offer a fun, relaxed atmosphere, but are also very focused on teaching stroke and technique, as well as self-discipline. The team is open to both members of the York YMCA and non-members.

The Tidal Waves Swim Team has the following emphases:

TECHNICAL: learning good technique, efficiency, and beauty in the water.

PHYSICAL: developing speed and endurance through training in all four competitive strokes.

COGNITIVE: learning about swimming and how to train to achieve personal goals.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: learning about goal setting and how to maintain poise under pressure.

SOCIOLOGICAL: learning about team building and relationships; making new friends.

Practice Schedule / Location:

Practice is held Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. & certain Wed. (as communicated by Coach Nate) from 6:15—7:30 PM. at the York YMCA Graham Aquatic Center, located at 543 N. Newberry Street in York. There are no attendance requirements; however, the number of practices attended should be determined by the swimmer's expectation of improvement and success. We recommend at least three practices weekly.

Swim Meets:

The Tidal Waves Swim Team competes in local league and YMCA dual meets. These meets offer a fun, low-pressure atmosphere, where swimmers can race others of similar ability and see just how much their skill and ability has improved since the last meet. Some swimmers may also compete in larger meets such as YMCA Districts, States, and Nationals.

YORK YMCA COMPETITIVE SWIM TEAM - YYST

Rooted in the same overall philosophy as the TWST, The York YMCA Swim Team has the following very similar emphases:

TECHNICAL: learning good technique, efficiency, and beauty in the water.

PHYSICAL: developing speed and endurance through training in all four strokes in an individual medley and endurance based program.

COGNITIVE: learning about swimming, the rationale for training, diet and nutrition, etc.

PSYCHOLOGICAL: learning and practicing the attitudes of a champion; goal-setting; and maintaining poise under pressure.

SOCIOLOGICAL: team building and relationships.

Swim Meets – The York YMCA Swim Team competes in three different classifications of meets. These are League Meets, YMCA Meets and USA Swimming Meets.

- **League Swimming** – Some York YMCA swimmers compete in the Capital Area Swim League (summer) and the Central Penn Aquatic League (winter). For the winter league age is determined as of December 1st; for the summer league age is as of June 1st. League swimming involves approximately 5 dual meets, some home and some away, and a series of championships. Swimmers must compete in at least three dual meets to be eligible for the championships. The summer league has Divisional Championships, an All-Star Meet and a Mid-Cap Meet, whereas the winter league has only Divisionals and All-Stars. Swimmers progress from Divisionals to All-Stars (and in the summer, to Mid-Caps) as follows:
 - **Summer League** –
 - **Individual Events** – Each division winner plus the next twelve fastest times from all the divisions advance to All-Stars and the top six or eight (depending on the host pool size) finishers from All-Stars move onto Mid-Caps.
 - **Relay Events** – The eight fastest times from all the divisions compete at All-Stars and top three or four relays (depending on host pool size) move on to Mid-Caps.
 - **Winter League** –
 - **Individual Events** – The eight fastest times from all the divisions.
 - **Relay Events** - The six fastest times from all the divisions.

- **YMCA Swimming** – Because we are a YMCA affiliated swimming team we have the opportunity to compete in a unique championship program at the regional, state and national level. A swimmer's age is determined as of December 1st.
 - **YMCA Districts** – YMCA teams in the eastern portion of PA compete against each other. Eligibility requirements include qualifying times and a swimmer must compete in three "Closed Y" (Y team vs. Y team) meets. This meet is held in mid-March.
 - **YMCA States** – The top nine swimmers and relays from each event at Districts advance to compete against their counterparts from PA's western district. This meet is held in late March.
 - **YMCA Nationals** – Held in early April in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, YMCA Short Course Nationals has relatively tough qualifying times and swimmers must have competed in the three "Closed Y" meets and a "Closed Y" Championship (for our purposes, either Winterfest, our Tournament of Champions, or Districts).
 - **Dual Meets** – Due to the "Closed Y" meet requirement detailed above we work to schedule Y vs. Y meets with some of the more competitive Y's in our area.
- **USA Swimming** – USA Swimming is clearly the future of both age group and senior level swimming in the United States and it offers many benefits to member clubs and swimmers. Indeed, YMCA Swimming has recognized this fact and is quickly moving towards adopting USA Swimming technical and operating rules. Also, USA Swimming has made the process easier for YMCA Championship meets to get USA sanctioning or approval.
 - USA Swimming is the governing organization of 59 LSC's, or Local Swimming Committees. Ours is the Middle Atlantic LSC. Other LSCs in our Eastern Zone (the next step up in terms of geographic organization are 4 Zones: Eastern, Southern, Central and Western) include: Maryland, Potomac Valley, Virginia, Allegheny Mountain, New Jersey, Metropolitan, Niagara, Adirondack, Connecticut, New England and Maine.
 - USA Swimming offers all levels of swimming competitions –
 - Mini Meets (8 & under where kids swim only against others their own age)
 - A/BB/C Meets (with no qualifying times for C swimmers)
 - Championship Invitational Meets (with qualifying times)
 - Junior Olympics
 - Zone and Sectional Championships
 - Junior and Senior National Championships
 - Importantly, USA Swimming also allows swimmers to gauge progress through comparisons to "Motivational Times" and teams to monitor improvement through the "Virtual Club Championship" program.

For USA Swimming, a swimmer's age is determined by his/her age as of the first day of the meet.

YYST Training Schedule

York YMCA Swim Team offers practices six days a week at the Graham Aquatic Center located at 543 N Newberry St York Pa 17403. There are currently five training levels for our swimmers. These include Senior A, Senior B, Junior A, Junior B and Novice. Swimmers are placed in groups by the coaches according to age, skill level, and commitment.

Current Training Times – Fall/Winter 2009/2010

Senior A	Senior B	Junior A	Junior B	Novice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday - Friday: 4:15 to 7:00 pm Saturday: 8:00 to 11:30 am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday - Friday: 4:30 to 6:45 pm Saturday: 8:00 to 11:30 am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday - Friday: 6:00 to 8:00 pm Saturday: 8:30 to 11:30 am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday - Friday: 6:15 to 7:45 pm Saturday: 8:30 to 11:30 am 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday - Thursday: 5:00 to 6:00 pm

Note: Adjustments to the regular training times will occur to accommodate swim meets.

Meet Sign-Up Policy– For all meets the coaches will sign up the swimmers and post a “Preliminary” meet entry report. For invitational meets typically swimmers and parents will have about a week to let us know if they plan to attend or not. We prefer to have this communication in writing so there is less chance for confusion. For the dual meets Coach Nate will request that swimmers indicate only if they will participate or not. The coaches will put the swimmers in events.

Escrow Policy - To cover meet fees, swim caps, other team apparel and other costs, both the TWST and the YYST require that parents establish, and keep funded, an escrow account. For TWST members we ask that you keep \$50 in the account; for the YYST we ask that you keep \$100 in the account.

Travel Assistance Policy - The York YMCA swimming team participates in many high level championship and national meets around the country. Being a member of our travel teams is both a privilege and a responsibility. This policy confirms the YY Swimming Team “Travel” meets and the amount of financial travel assistance associated with each of these meets. Additional financial assistance may be provided to York YMCA swimmers by Middle Atlantic Swimming. It must be clearly stated that the coaching staff reserves the right to revise the meets deemed as “Travel” meets as required. Further, it must be clearly stated that the financial assistance associated with any “Travel” meet is in no way guaranteed and is entirely dependent upon having adequate funds in the York YMCA Aquatic Club’s general account.

Travel Meets & Financial Assistance- 2009 Long Course Season; 2009/2010 Short Course Season:

	Meet	\$\$ Assistance	Qualifying Requirements
Senior Meets	Grand Prix Meets	\$150.00	2 to 4 cuts depending on meet level
	USA Senior Nationals	\$150.00	1 cuts
	USA Junior Nationals	\$150.00	2 cuts
	YMCA Short Course Nationals	\$150.00	2 cuts for assistance/1 cut to participate

Note that final determination of meet participation and choice of meets is in the hands of the coaches.

Team Fees

- **Senior A** (approx. 13 & Over): \$100/month (\$95 sibling)
- **Senior B**: \$95/month (\$90 sibling)
- **Junior A** (approx. 9 to 12): \$80/month (\$76 sibling)
- **Junior B**: \$70/month (\$67 sibling)
- **Novices** (8 & Under): \$50/month (\$47.50 sibling)
- **Tidal Wave** (all ages): \$50/month-members, \$60 non-members; \$5 sibling discount.

All payment forms and paperwork must be taken to the York YMCA main branch located at 90 N Newberry St York Pa 17403 for processing. Convenient payment schedule available.

For the York YMCA Swim Team note that your swimmer must also be a YMCA member. Youth memberships are \$19.50/month.

For USA Swimming membership there is an annual fee of \$57.50

Required Equipment

Competition Requirements:

All swimmers are required to wear their designated age group swim suit and YORK swim cap/Tidal Waves swim cap (if wearing a cap) for each swim meet.

YYST Female: 11 years and over – Fusion

YYST Male: 11 years and over – Fusion

YYST Female: 10 years and under - Alliance

YYST Male: 10 years and under – Alliance

TWST Female: All ages and levels – Alliance

TWST Male: All ages and levels – Alliance

Training Equipment Requirements:

All swimmers may wear any suit they desire during training. The YORK cap (if wearing a cap) must be worn. Senior A and B swimmers must bring the following training equipment:

Kickboard
Pull Buoys
Fins
Paddles
Parachutes
Equipment Bag

Meet the Coaches

Michael Brooks

The YMCA of York and York County and the York YMCA Aquatic Club, furthering a longstanding tradition of competitive swimming excellence, proudly announce the hiring of Michael Brooks as their team's new Head Coach. Among many qualified candidates considered for the head coaching position, Michael clearly stands out as the one the Y and the Aquatic Club are certain will lead our program back into regional and national prominence. Michael's demonstrated record of achievement and success speaks for itself and we are certain that success will continue here at the York YMCA.

Michael Brooks comes back to York from the Brophy East Swim Team in Phoenix, AZ where he was Head Age Group Coach. Prior to Brophy, Coach Brooks coached at one of the most prominent teams in the country: The North Baltimore Aquatic Club which has produced 11 Olympians since 1984, including Michael Phelps. He was the Head Coach of NBAC's satellite program here in York.

Prior to assuming his responsibilities with NBAC, Coach Brooks served as the Head Age Group Coach of the Tar Heel Aqua Racers in Raleigh, North Carolina, and as Head Coach of Rams Aquatics in Salt Lake City, Utah. Coach Brooks has coached swimmers to national "top 16" rankings in all events in all age groups! He was honored as the 2003 Maryland Age Group Coach of the Year and on two occasions as the Utah State High School Coach of the Year.

His colleagues in the coaching profession describe him as a perfectionist who is extraordinarily knowledgeable about the sport of swimming and who is committed to instilling in his swimmers a passion for the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their lives. Coach Brooks has received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Carleton College and in History from the University of Utah. He has received a Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Notre Dame.



Andy Stewart

Andy started swimming at the York Y in 1973. At 12 he was the 50 Fly State champ and at 14 the 100 & 200 free state champ. In high school, he swam for Suburban where his teams were District 3 Champions four years in a row and he was a four time All-American. He went to Bucknell University where he studied Business Management and swam for his first 2 years.

Andy currently works for Graham Packaging. Andy and his wife, Judy, have four children: Sada, Tessa, Noah and Coleman, all four of who now swim for the Y. In fact, it was his kids' involvement in swimming that spurred Andy into coaching and he is very glad he did. Working with the kids and coaches involved with York YMCA Swimming is a great privilege!



Nate Gentzler

Coach Nate has been involved with competitive swimming since he was eight years old. He was introduced to competitive swimming by hall of fame coach John deBarbadillo at the York YWCA, where he swam for three years. Nate then joined the York YMCA swim team in 1995, where he swam until he graduated high school in 2002. While in high school, Nate also swam for the West York High School swim team, where he earned varsity letters all four years, and was elected captain his senior year. Nate's favorite events are the 200 and 500 freestyle.

Nate has been coaching for West York High School since 2002, and began coaching for the York YMCA in the spring of 2007. He will be the primary coach at our Southern branch facility in Shrewsbury for the winter 2008-2009 season.

Nate had a very memorable swimming career and wanted to remain involved in the sport, which is why he decided to start coaching. He enjoys teaching both swimming skills and life skills.

Nate still swims daily at 6 AM, along with Coach Clyde and several other members of the "York Y Zoo Crew", and participates in United States Masters Swimming. He works full time as the York YMCA Aquatic Director. When not busy working or coaching, he enjoys hanging out with friends or spending time with his family. Nate is also a volunteer firefighter and EMT.

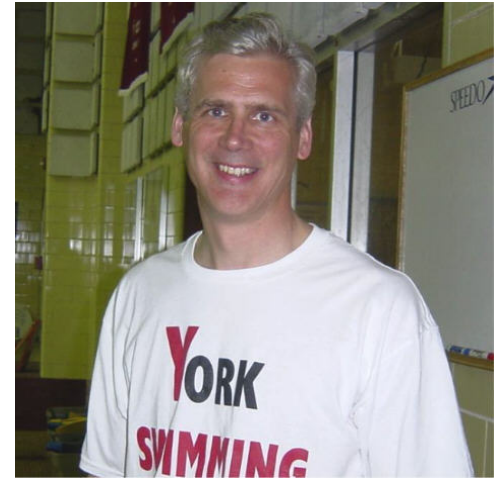


Clyde Vedder

Clyde has been involved in the YMCA swim program most of his life. He was taught to swim and to teach swimming at the YMCA by John deBarbadillo. He began swimming competitively in the Y age group program at age 8. He was coached by Bill Schmidt both at the Y and at York High. He was a collegiate All American for 3 years. In 1976, he won the 100-Yd. Butterfly at NCAA Division III Nationals and in 1987 he was inducted into Dickinson College's Sports Hall of Fame.

He enjoys coaching and developing swimmers of all ages. He and his wife, Beth, reside in Spring Garden Township with their daughter, Emma, who is a swimmer on the Y team.

He still swims daily at the Y, competes in long distance swims such as the Chesapeake Bay Swim, St. Croix 5-miler and local triathlons and when at the beach, bodysurfs with Emma.

**Tim Groth**

Tim is taking some time away from coaching to travel and learn in Europe. We eagerly await his return!



Sandy Zamalis

Sandy joined the York YMCA program in the spring of 2008 with her two children, Jacob and Aleni. She is the primary coach of the novice / 8 & Under group at the Downtown York branch.

Sandy started swimming her sophomore year at Mary Baldwin College on the club team, and from there went on to teach swimming lessons and coach 8 & unders at the Staunton, Virginia YMCA for 2 years. She and her husband, Michael, relocated to the York Area in 1997. Sandy rejoined the swimming scene in 2006 when her kids joined the Spring Grove Swim Club, and began coaching for that team shortly thereafter. There she coached 8 & Unders for three seasons.

In her free time, Sandy is a wife and stay-at-home/home schooling mom.

**Micah Metzel**

Micah is currently taking some time away from coaching to finish his secondary education.



York YMCA Aquatic Club

The York YMCA Aquatic Club is the Parent's Group which supports both the Tidal Wave Swim Team and the York YMCA Swim Team. The Club is governed by an executive committee of elected and appointed officials. The process for filling these positions can be found in the Aquatic Club By-laws which are appended to this Hand Book. Similarly, numerous other committees are detailed in the Club By-laws. We have also listed these committees with descriptions below as they are critical to the success of the mission of the club.

COMMITTEES

Executive Committee – President - Andy Stewart, VP - Bill Spaulding, Treasurer - George Dotzel, Secretary - Helen Tuten, Fundraising Committee Chairperson - Michelle Thomas

To receive, discuss and channel all information, ideas and requests to the proper committee within the Aquatic Club. To keep, maintain and update the Parent's Handbook. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Aquatic Club officers. At anytime the Aquatic Club sees fit it may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present and t to regular meeting, delegate to the Executive Committee the decision-making power to decide any pending issues.

Competition Committee – Cindy Ilgenfritz and George Zimmerman

To plan for and administer all swimming meets hosted by the York YMCA. To work in conjunction with York YMCA personnel to organize and administer large invitational and championship meets. To encourage and facilitate obtaining USAS and YMCA meet Director certification for one or more Aquatic Club members.

Finance Committee – George Dotzel and Cindy Dotzel

To oversee the organization and administration of the Aquatic Club finances generally. To create an annual budget and insure that the committees operate within their budgets. To suggest and outline ways of securing additional revenue.

Fundraising Committee – Michelle Thomas

To lead/delegate al fundraising efforts for the Aquatic Club. To arrange cooperative relationships with businesses to make monetary and/or in-kind donations in exchange for advertising their business. To develop relationships with vendors to sell

merchandise at York YMCA swim meets on a percentage basis. To entertain other fundraising ideas.

Membership Committee – Bill Spaulding

To promote the York YMCA Swim Team and the Tidal Wave Swim Team and attract new swimmers to these teams. Promotional activities shall include advertising, circulation of brochures and DVDs, hosting of Open House events, etc.

Officials Committee – Brian Gunn

To provide certified officials for swimming meets hosted by the York YMCA and other meets where officials are requested. To secure rulebooks and other materials necessary enabling the Aquatic Club to conduct official certification clinics for the training and certification of officials. To encourage Aquatic Club members to become USAS and YMCA certified officials.

Orientation Committee –

Obtain listing of new swimmers and parents from the coaches and assist them in becoming familiar with swim team policies and procedures. Assist with completion of registration forms, operation of escrow accounts, attendance at swim meets, how/where to volunteer, tour the facility, review fundraising calendar and use of team website. To publish a York YMCA Swimming Handbook containing swim team policies and procedures. To publish a team contact list and update regularly.

Properties Committee – Joe Eline

To be responsible for all Aquatic Club equipment and property by taking an “ownership interest” in such property. To keep an inventory of all property. To see that Aquatic Club equipment is maintained at a high performance level. To have equipment repaired or replaced when necessary. To insist upon proper care and usage by persons using Aquatic Club property and equipment.

Public Relations/Marketing Committee – Gerry Kucherich

To prepare and provide swim team publicity to media outlets. To prepare pre-meet publicity for all special, large meets. To inform newspaper, radio and TV of all newsworthy events (meets, clinics, Swim-A-Thon, etc.) conducted by the team. To prepare advertisements, in conjunction with the York YMCA PR staff, promoting the swim team. To work closely with the Membership Committee to provide PR support for team growth.

Social Committee – Barb Eline

To plan, prepare for all administer all social activities of the Aquatic Club, including but not limited to the End of Season Party, various parties during the season and the party aspects of fundraising.

Team Travel – Lea Flickinger

To plan for the travel associated with swimming meets that require overnight accommodations. To arrange and communicate the air travel, ground transportation, hotel and team meals for swim meet requiring long-distance travel. To arrange for team hotels for swim meets within driving distance.

Volunteerism

Parental Involvement – Even more than many youth sports, the success of our team depends not only on the kids and the coaches but also on parent participation. Swim meets are run by parents. Parents are needed to officiate, time, operate the computer and the timing system and run the concession stand, among other duties. As our team continues to grow at our new facility we have begun hosting major USA and YMCA meets. Hosting these meets requires the help of all team parents. Below are some of the areas where you can help by volunteering your time, energy and talent.

Timer at swim meet	Meet official	Snack bar cashier
Timing system operator	Meet safety	Snack bar server
Set up or clean up	Donate items for meets	Help plan a team party
Sell tickets for a fundraiser	Fold fliers for distribution	Label thank you notes for supporters
Chaperone a distant meet	Head up a sub committee	Be someone's proofreader
Be a committee chair	Work with your friends at the team store	Be the meet announcer
Work the admissions table	Design t shirts or publications	Distribute fliers to the places you go
Ask how you can help	Look for ways to volunteer	Jump in and help out

Communication

Team information is communicated in a number of ways.

1. Coach Nate has developed swim team e-mail distribution lists on Google Groups for critical, time sensitive info. Please be sure he has your correct e-mail address.
2. The team websites (www.swimyorky.org & www.swimtidalwaves.org) are updated at least every few days with new and significant information, including electronic versions of most info that is put in the MAIL FILES (see below).
3. Coach Michael periodically publishes "The Rambler" which is typically chock full of useful team info. "The Rambler" and other team communications will be placed in MAIL FILES.
4. Every swim family will have a MAIL FILE in the file box (es) located in the GAC Lobby. Important printed documents are dropped into these files. Please check your file DAILY!
5. Meet entries and results are posted on the wall directly above the team table.
6. Monthly Parent meetings are held in the lobby of the GAC on the first Wednesday of every month (except April and August). Many important team business items are decided and important information conveyed. One parent or both should attend meetings. The meeting starts at 5:45 and last until 6:45 pm.
7. Suggestion box located in the lobby of the Graham Aquatic Center – feel free to drop in a note or suggestion on any topic.

YY Swim Team:

- Coach Michael Brooks – mbrooks@yorkcoymca.org
- Coach Andy Stewart – robert.stewart@grahampackaging.com
- Coach Clyde Vedder– cwvedder@morris-vedder.com
- Coach Sandy Zamalis - zamjams@gmail.com
- Coach Nate Gentzler - nater284@gmail.com

Tidal Waves Team:

- Coach Nate Gentzler - nater284@gmail.com; ngentzler@yorkcoymca.org

www.swimyorky.org



Appendix A - Swimming Terms – A Glossary:

- **Age Group** – Most meets group swimmers as follows:
 - 8 & Under
 - 9 – 10
 - 11 – 12
 - 13 – 14
 - 15 – 18
 - Some meets will also have an “Open” age group for swimmers 11 or 12 & Over
 - Winter League and YMCA meets use age as of December 1st; Summer League uses age as of June 1st. USA Swimming competition uses the swimmers age as of the first day of the meet.
- **All-Stars** – A championship meet held on the Sunday after the Divisional Championships during both the summer and winter league seasons.
- **Colorado System** – Electronic timing system that automatically gives a swimmers’ time and place on the score board when the touch pad (or push buttons) is activated at the completion of a race.
- **Competitive Strokes** – The four competitive strokes are Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle.
- **Daktronics** – See Colorado System.
- **DQ** – Disqualification. This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of a rule; for example a one-handed touch in butterfly or breaststroke. A “DQ’ed” swimmer is not eligible to receive an award nor is the time considered official.
- **Divisionals** – The league (summer or winter) championship meet held on a Saturday at the completion of all league dual meets. Each league division holds its own championship and then certain swimmers move on to the League All-Star meet.
- **Entry Fee** – The money paid by the parent or club for a swimmer to compete in an invitational meet; usually a USA or championship meet.
- **Exhibition** – When a swimmer participates in a race but does not receive points. The time is considered an official time.
- **False Start** – A swimmer leaves the block early or moves before the starter’s signal which usually results in disqualification. Eight & Unders are allowed one false start.
- **Flip Turn** – Somersault type turn used in freestyle & backstroke.
- **Free Relay** – A relay race (100, 200, 400 or 800) in which all four swimmers swim freestyle.
- **GAC** – Graham Aquatic Center
- **Heat** – The grouping of swimmers in an event according to time.
- **IM** – Individual Medley. An event (100, 200 or 400) where a swimmer swims one quarter of the race using each of the competitive strokes in the following order: butterfly, back, breast and free.
- **League Meet** – a dual meet between league members for the purpose of team competition.
- **Medley Relay** - A relay race (100, 200 or 400) in which each or four swimmers swim one of the competitive strokes in the following order: Back, Breast, Butterfly and Free.
- **Mid-Cap Meet** – A meet held on the Saturday after All-Stars in the summer. The top six or eight swimmers (depending on the size of the host pool) from the West Shore (CASL) advance to compete against swimmers from the East Shore (Mid-Penn).
- **Official** – An individual with certain certifications which allow him/her to participate in running a swimming meet.

- **Qualifying Times** – Time standards required for participation in certain USA and YMCA championship meets.
- **Referee** – Head official whose has ultimate authority at a swimming meet.
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- **Seeding** – To rank swimmers according to time in heats.
- **Starter** – A certified official who has control over the swimmers once they are called to the starting blocks. It is the starters' responsibility to do his/her best to ensure a fair start.
- **Stroke & Turn Judge** – A certified official whose responsibility it is to watch for infractions and impose a disqualification penalty if required.
- **Swimming Courses** – There are three competitive swimming courses:
 - **Long Course Meters** – A 50 meter pool. Most big national and international competitions, such as the Olympics, take place in this course.
 - **Short Course Meters** – A 25 meter pool.
 - **Short Course Yards** – A 25 yard pool. Most high school and college competitions take place in this course.
- **Timer** – A person who works in a particular lane to record a swimmers' time.
- **USA Meet** – Meets sanctioned by USA Swimming.
- **YMCA Districts** - YMCA teams in the eastern (Eastern District) and western (Western District) portion of PA compete against each other in separate meets. Eligibility requirements include qualifying times and a swimmer must compete in three "Closed Y" (Y team vs. Y team) meets. This meet is held in mid-March.
- **YMCA States** - The top nine swimmers and relays from each event at the Eastern District Meet advance to compete against their counterparts from PA's Western District. This meet is held in late March.
- **YMCA Nationals** - Held in early April in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, YMCA Short Course Nationals has relatively tough qualifying times and swimmers must have competed in the three "Closed Y" meets and a "Closed Y" Championship (for our purposes, either Winterfest, our Tournament of Champions, or Districts).
- **YY** – abbreviation of the team York YMCA

Appendix B – York YMCA Aquatic Club By-Laws

YORK YMCA AQUATIC CLUB

BYLAWS

Revised
August 1, 2008

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ARTICLE 1. NAME

This organization shall be known as the “York YMCA Aquatic Club,” hereinafter the “Aquatic Club.”

ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Aquatic Club is to support the activities of the York YMCA competitive swimming program and to further interest in aquatics within the Association and the community while embracing the York YMCA mission of building healthy spirit, mind and body for all and developing and putting into practice the principles of faith, hope, love, honesty, respect and responsibility.

ARTICLE 3. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The membership shall consist of parents and guardians of swimmers, the coaches, and other adults interested in supporting and furthering the goals of the Aquatic Club.

ARTICLE 4. OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Aquatic Club shall be as follows :

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Assistant Treasurer

Section 2. The Head Swimming Coach of the York YMCA competitive swimming program shall nominate an assistant swimming coach or other Aquatic Club member to serve as President and Vice President. The Head Swimming Coach shall also nominate the Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the Aquatic Club’s annual meeting. The slate of officers who are nominated shall be elected by the Aquatic Club at the annual meeting to serve for a term of one year. In the event of a vacancy, the Head Swimming Coach shall nominate a replacement to fill the unexpired portion of the term and submit such

nomination to the Executive Committee for its approval and ratification by the membership at the next monthly meeting.

Section 3. The President, or in his absence the Vice President or the Head Swimming Coach, shall preside at all meetings of the Aquatic Club. He shall appoint the chairs of the committees and chair the Executive Committee. He shall also perform all duties incident to such office.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all the Aquatic Club meetings and perform all duties as are usually performed by a secretary.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds acquired by the Aquatic Club, to pay all expenses incurred and to issue invoices and collect obligations due and owing to the Aquatic Club. He shall present written financial statements and escrow account reports to the Aquatic Club at its monthly meetings. The Treasurer shall maintain a checking account in the name of the Aquatic Club at a local bank of his selection. All checks over Five Hundred (\$500.00) Dollars shall be cosigned by the Treasurer and one other officer. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer in his duties. In addition, the Treasurer shall provide copies of the written financial statements to the Chief Financial Officer of the York YMCA on a monthly basis and maintain copies of all receipts and accounting records and make the same available to the York YMCA upon request for audit purposes.

Section 6. The President shall designate two members of the Aquatic Club, one of whom shall be an officer other than the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer, to perform an annual audit. The audit shall include verification of the figures on the financial statements, confirmation that all deposits shown as paid-in have been deposited into the Aquatic Club's bank account, verification that the Aquatic Club's cash-on-hand is consistent with the bank statement, confirmation that all checks written were paid for authorized expenses and examination of all other financial records as are deemed necessary and prudent to complete a proper audit.

ARTICLE 5. OFFICERS' PERSONAL

LIABILITY AND INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1. An officer of the Aquatic Club shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken or failure to act, unless by such action or inaction: (1) the officer has breached or failed to perform the duties of his office pursuant to the standards of fiduciary care prescribed in the Pennsylvania Directors' Liability Act, that is, performed his duties in good faith, in a manner he reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Aquatic Club, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances; and (2) the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness, subject to exceptions provided by said Act for the responsibility or liability of an officer under any criminal statute or the liability of an officer for the payment of taxes.

Section 2. The Aquatic Club shall indemnify and save harmless any officer from and against any claims or liabilities (including reasonable attorney's fees) and any judgment, decree, fine or penalty imposed on him for any act or omission committed or incurred while acting as such officer, and reimburse him for all legal and other expenses reasonably incurred by him in defense thereof at such times and upon such terms as provided by governing law; provided that there shall be no obligation to reimburse, partially or wholly, such person for claims or liabilities determined by a court to have constituted willful misconduct or recklessness.

Section 3. The Aquatic Club shall have power to purchase and maintain errors and omissions insurance on behalf of the Aquatic Club and its officers against the liabilities and expenses referred to in this bylaw.

ARTICLE 6. DUES

Section 1. Dues shall become due and payable on September 1 of each year. In the event of non-payment by September 30, dues shall be deducted from the member's escrow account, if applicable. Otherwise, non-payment shall be cause for removal from membership.

Section 2. Regular dues are twenty (\$20.00) dollars annually per family or couple. Dues for college students shall be five (\$5.00) dollars and there shall be no dues for members on active military service.

ARTICLE 7. MEETINGS

Section 1. The meetings of the Aquatic Club shall be conducted on a monthly basis. The meetings shall be conducted in the Laucks Room of the YMCA and shall commence at 5:30 P.M. or at such other time and place as may be convenient for the membership.

Section 2. An annual meeting shall be held on the date and at the time fixed, from time to time, by the officers, provided, each successive annual meeting shall be held on a date within thirteen months after the date of the preceding annual meeting. Annual meetings may be held at the same time as a monthly meeting.

Section 3. Parliamentary procedure shall prevail as defined in Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 4. Nine members of the Aquatic Club shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 8. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting.

Section 2. Any proposed amendments or revision to the bylaws shall be distributed in writing to the membership at a regular meeting of the Aquatic Club and shall be left open for discussion until the next monthly meeting at which time a vote may be taken.

ARTICLE 9. COMMITTEES

Section 1. The standing committees of the Aquatic Club are as follows:

Competition
Executive Committee
Finance
Fundraising
Officials
Public Relations/Marketing
Properties
Social
Team Travel

Section 2. The duties of the standing committees are as follows:

a) Competition Committee. To plan for and administer all swimming meets hosted by the York YMCA. To work in conjunction with York YMCA personnel to organize and administer large invitational and championship meets. To encourage and facilitate obtaining USAS and YMCA Meet Director certification for one or more Aquatic Club members.

b) Executive Committee. To receive, discuss and channel all information, ideas and requests to the proper committee within the Aquatic Club. To keep, maintain and update the Parent's Handbook. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Aquatic Club officers. At anytime the Aquatic Club sees fit it may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present at a regular meeting, delegate to the Executive Committee the decision-making power to decide any pending issue.

c) Finance Committee. To oversee the organization and administration of the Aquatic Club finances generally. To create an annual budget and insure that the committees operate within their budgets. To suggest and outline ways of securing additional revenue. To work closely with the Treasurer on all of the above items.

d) Fundraising Committee. To lead/delegate all fundraising efforts for the Aquatic Club. To arrange cooperative relationships with businesses to make monetary and/or in-kind donations in exchange for advertising their business. To develop relationships with vendors to sell merchandise at York YMCA swim meets on a percentage basis. To entertain other fundraising ideas.

e) Officials Committee. To provide certified officials for swimming meets hosted by the York YMCA and other meets where officials are requested. To secure rulebooks and other materials necessary for the training of officials. To take such steps as may be necessary enabling the Aquatic Club to conduct official certification clinics for the training and certification of officials. To encourage Aquatic Club members to become USAS and YMCA certified officials.

f) Properties Committee. To be responsible for all Aquatic Club equipment and property by taking an "ownership interest" in such property. To keep an inventory of all property. To see that Aquatic Club equipment is maintained at a high performance level. To have equipment repaired or replaced when necessary. To insist upon proper care and usage by persons using Aquatic Club property and equipment.

g) Public Relations/Marketing Committee. To prepare and provide swim team publicity to media outlets. To prepare pre-meet publicity for all special, large meets. To inform newspaper, radio and TV of all newsworthy events (meets, clinics, Swim-A-Thon®, etc.) conducted by the team. To prepare advertisements, in conjunction with the York YMCA PR staff, promoting the swim team.

h) Social Committee. To plan, prepare for and administer all social activities of the Aquatic Club, including but not limited to the End of Season party,

various parties during the season and the party aspects of fundraising activities.

i) Team Travel. To plan for the travel associated with away swim meets that require overnight accommodations.. To arrange and communicate the air travel, ground transportation, hotel and team meals for swim meets requiring long-distance travel. To arrange for team hotels for swim meets within driving distance.

Section 3. Other committees may be constituted from time to time should the need arise.

ARTICLE 10. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Section 1. The Aquatic Club shall establish policies and procedures from time to time by majority vote at its monthly meetings.

Section 2. The policies and procedures established by the Aquatic Club shall be incorporated into a Parent's Handbook, when applicable.

ARTICLE 11. AWARDS

Section 1. The Aquatic Club may present awards as deemed appropriate from time to time.

Section 2. The Aquatic Club shall present an annual award or awards to qualified recipients from the Bill Schmidt Fund in accordance with the fund's criteria and selection methodology.

ARTICLE 12. NON-PROFIT STATUS

Section 1. The Aquatic Club shall take all steps necessary to insure it is an auxiliary and/or affiliated organization of the York YMCA, allowing it to enjoy the same non-profit and 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status as defined in the Internal Revenue Code as does the York YMCA.

Appendix C – IM & Distance Base Training

THE YORK YMCA'S DISTANCE-BASE TRAINING PROGRAM

The York Y's swimmers and their parents will have noticed that with my arrival, our training program is very different and has two prongs: distance training, and individual medley training. Since many swimming programs are built on contrary principles, here are a few of the myriad reasons we do what we do:

1. biological development

Basic fitness. It's no surprise that swimmers routinely win their schools' physical fitness contests, hands down. Through daily practicing, our swimmers are superhumanly fit.

Kids are aerobic sponges. Age group swimmers, at early stages of their physical development, have little muscle mass. Because sprinting capacity is generally linked with muscle mass, skinny young swimmers are not really built for sprinting yet. But their aerobic (endurance) capacities seem almost infinitely elastic and are susceptible to huge increases, which distance/endurance training ensures. Put simply, kids are physiologically "built" for distance events, and we are taking advantage of that. The strength, and sprinting ability, will come later. But for now, endurance training will help them more than sprinting, and it will build a firm foundation for their speed.

Further, if we don't give the kids distance training when they are young and developing, when their bodies are most receptive, it is very difficult to make up the deficit later. They will be trying to build a house on sand. Early distance work lays the foundation for future success.

Flexibility and versatility. There is no way to tell, based on race results or temporary "favorite" strokes, what an age group swimmer's eventual specialty will be. But an early and steady diet of sprinting limits a swimmer to sprint events later on, even if his body isn't suited to sprinting. Early endurance training gives a swimmer the flexibility to choose any event. It is a truism that you can race down from what you train, but not up: if you train for sprints, you will not be able to swim a good distance race; but if you train distance, you will be able to drop down and sprint fairly well, especially when speed is maintained by regular short sprint sets.

As proof by example, no great distance swimmer has come up through a sprint program. On the other hand, many of the world's great sprinters started their swimming careers as distance swimmers, or at least were trained in distance programs. Distance training early on gave them the endurance to be tough as nails at the end of 100's and 200's, and it gave them the base to allow them to train hard and recover fast when their bodies decided they were sprinters.

Motor learning theory. We are aiming for technical precision and efficiency in stroke mechanics. This is easier attained at the (relatively) slower speeds of distance training. Once we have "grooved" long and strong strokes into a swimmer's brain and body, then we are ready to build the tempo and work on speed. But if you routinely subject a young athlete to high-stress race pace work, he will develop short and choppy strokes. He will be fast for a 25 but not for much longer, and those "dead-end strokes" will be set in stone, resistant to change no matter how many hours of "stroke work" he does.

Distance means repetition but low stress. Sprint training means intense stresses on the body. When sprinting is combined with early specialization, as it usually is, then you have a recipe for "overuse" injuries. Endurance training, especially when combined with individual medley training, is easier on the body in that the stresses are smaller, and the variety of strokes ensures that no single stroke pattern gets overworked.

Quicker recovery. Though swimmers may straggle out of an endurance practice feeling half dead, their bodies recover very fast from the aerobic training. By the next day, they are new and improved. With distance training, kids don't get destroyed and broken down as they do from high-stress sprint training. So they are never far from their speed, and we see more constant improvement, in practices and in meets.

2. motivation

Variety. You can never ever be bored when training distance, since there is always so much to think about: pacing, technique, time goals, turns, breathing patterns, race strategies, racing with your teammates, etc. There is more variety possible with distance training than with sprint training. Distance training, properly executed, uses the brain intensely; and getting the brain fully engaged in what you are doing is the key to keeping swimming, or anything else, interesting.

Improvement. When athletes quit swimming, the foremost reason is that they didn't see any improvement. With distance swimming, improvements are easier to make and easier to spot. As noted above, kids are physiologically suited to distance swimming and with a reasonable effort seem to improve from day to day. And longer distances show speed gains more obviously: a half-second improvement in a 50 yard repeat is easy to miss, but a 5 second cut in a 500 is obvious. Swimmers can see that they are getting faster from week to week. These improvements keep kids in swimming longer.

Success. When swimmers are successful, they tend to like swimming more, and they get jazzed about working hard and being fast. And like it or not, distance events and standards are soft nowadays: qualifying for and doing well at JO's, Zones, Juniors, and Seniors is easier in the distances than in the sprints. Success awaits anyone willing to do the yards.

Variety overcomes plateaus. Every athlete hits a plateau now and then, and these plateaus are hard psychologically. If a swimmer focuses on a specialty stroke, a plateau in that stroke means her entire swimming is stalled. But when swimmers are training in all four strokes, *something* will be clicking right at any given time, no matter how mired in the mud one stroke might be.

Versatility, II. By training distance, swimmers can race well in any event from a 50 to the mile. With distance and IM, the advantages are even greater: swimmers are solid in every stroke and every distance, so they can score in just about everything. Versatile swimmers are also more valuable to the team: they score more team points, and help fill in the team's gaps.

3. qualities of character

Work ethic. Distance training demands consistent hard work. Consistency, persistence, and toughness are great qualities to instill in a person, and they infuse other areas of a swimmer's life. While sprinting often rewards size and strength, which are mostly determined by heredity, distance swimming, on the other hand, rewards not the supremely talented, but the TOUGH. And

being tough is within anyone's grasp, even if your parents didn't make you six foot six. Guts prevail.

Long-term thinking and training. It takes years to make a distance swimmer: no get rich quick schemes will play out. Distance swimmers tend to be patient and methodical, they are willing to delay gratification, they proceed step by step.

Self-knowledge. Distance swimming is as much an intellectual and moral undertaking as it is a physical one. Swimmers are constantly bumping up against self-imposed limits and driving past them. They face down their demons every day.

4. pragmatism

It works. Both now and historically, at national championship meets, the strongest teams are distance/aerobic oriented. This is a recipe for national caliber swimming.

Michael Brooks
York YMCA, Head Coach
Fall 2006

Appendix D – Better Swim Parenting

A Few Suggestions on HOW TO BE A BETTER SWIMMING PARENT

By Michael Brooks
Head Coach, York YMCA Swimming

NOTA BENE

WE all want what is best for the child. That is sometimes hard for coaches to understand. That is also sometimes hard for parents to understand. Much of the historical tension between coaches and parents can be avoided if we agree on two golden rules: first, let's cut each other some slack and not jump on and over-react to the first unsubstantiated third-hand rumor that comes down the pike. And second, let's communicate, often, and not just when we may have a problem.

TEACHING VALUES

YOU are key to your child's swimming. A parent's attitude toward swimming, the program, the coach, and his child's participation, is key towards the child's attitude and success. The young swimmer takes cues from his parent. If the parent shows by word, deed, facial expression, etc., that he does not value swimming, that he doesn't appreciate having to drive to practice or sit in the stands during meets, that "it's not going to matter" if the child skips practice, that morning practices are just "optional" and that the child would be better off with the extra sleep, then the chances are very good that the child will lack commitment, have little success, then lose interest in swimming. Support your child's interest in swimming by being positively interested.

ALLOW your swimmer to be resilient. Failure, and facing that failure, doesn't cause kids to melt. Failure isn't such an evil thing that parents should try to shield their kids from it. Allow them to fail, then teach them to get up off the canvas and try harder to succeed the next time. If parents are continually sheltering their swimmers from the storm, cushioning every fall, making excuses for them, finding someone else to blame, the children never learn anything. Even worse, they never learn that they are responsible both for their failures and for their successes. Allow them to stand on their own, and you will be helping them immeasurably down the road.

MOLEHILLS really are molehills. At times I may appear unsympathetic or even harsh because I won't let kids stop for "emergencies": for leaking goggles, for kids passing them, for side-aches, for stretching, for repeated bathroom breaks, etc. Many kids think that the slightest obstacle is an overwhelming reason to stop and should be listened to and followed as the voice of God. I think not. I am trying to teach focus.

When a swimmer is in the middle of a set, the only thing in life that matters or is worthy of attention is the set. Little “bothers” are to be overcome or ignored. And once a swimmer gets in the habit of overcoming these “little bothers,” he finds that they aren’t so overwhelmingly important after all. If we are continually stopping for “emergencies,” we will never get anything done. If a study session is continually interrupted for sharpening pencils, then getting a better notepad, then getting a drink of water, then taking a little break when a favorite song comes on the radio, then answering the telephone, almost miraculously the math assignment doesn’t get completed.

DON’T worry, be happy??? I don’t want a swimmer doing cartwheels after an awful performance. It’s okay for them to be upset about, disappointed with, even angry about having done poorly. Feeling lousy for a few minutes won’t kill them, it won’t forever damage their self-esteem, and if they are thinking correctly it will motivate them to try harder and do better the next time. I want to teach them standards of good and bad performance, so that when they really do well, they will feel appropriately pleased. If they are simply showered with praise willy nilly, they never know the difference.

TEACH them to dream big – a world of infinite possibilities. If you try to temper your child’s dreams, if you teach her to settle for the ordinary, you may indeed save her from many a heartache and many a failure. But you also rob her of the opportunity of achieving great things, and the opportunity to plumb her depths and realize her potential. Winning big means failing many times along the way. Each failure hurts, but these temporary setbacks create the strength for the final push. Instead of having children avoid failure by never taking risks, teach them how to think correctly about failing: risk-taking and failure are necessary for improvement, development, motivation, feedback, and long-term success.

WHAT success is. Only one swimmer can win the race. Often in the younger age groups, the winner will be the one who has bloomed early, not necessarily the swimmer with the most talent or the most potential to succeed in senior swimming. It is expected that every parent wants his child to succeed, wants his child to have a good and learning and valuable experience with swimming. Every child can succeed – only make sure you define success correctly: being the very best you can be, striving for improvement in every aspect of swimming. That leads to lasting success. And lasting enjoyment.

DON’T reward success by bribery. “Bribing” your swimmer to perform well by promising presents, money, special meals, etc. for meeting various standards is highly discouraged. While bribery may work in the short run – the swimmer may indeed swim fast this afternoon – the long term consequences are never good. You have to keep upping the ante, and you must ask yourself: why does my swimmer want to swim fast? What is really motivating him? Is this good? What is a twelve year old going to do with a new car?

FUN, fun, fun. If “fun” means mindless entertainment and sensory bombardment, then wasting hours playing Nintendo is loads of fun, and swimming is by definition “not fun.” If “fun” means working hard and challenging yourself, taking pride in accomplishing difficult goals, and discovering talents you didn’t know you had, then swimming is fun and Nintendo by definition is “not fun.” The meaning of fun is very

much an open question for children, and one where parents and coaches have much influence over their charges. Are we building a nation of energized achievers or lifeless couch potatoes?

WORK, work, work. Persistence and work ethic are the most important qualities leading to success in swimming and everything else. And if a work ethic is not created and cultivated when a swimmer is young, it very likely will never appear. It is so rare as not to be an option that a kid who is a slacker from ages seven to fourteen will suddenly change his spots and become a hard worker. Love for and pride in hard work **MUST** be inculcated early on, and again parents and coaches have much influence in creating this attitude.

NO little league parents. Kids sometimes make mistakes at meets. If your child is disqualified at a meet, don't complain, don't whine, don't make excuses. Your child's DQ is not a reflection of the quality of your parenting. The official is not blind, he does not have a vendetta against your child or your family or your team, and he is not incompetent. In fact, he has a much better vantage on your child's race than you do, and he is looking on dispassionately. You are sitting up in the stands where you can't see precisely, and you are paying attention to everything except the exact angle of your child's left foot as he kicks in breaststroke. If a DQ is questionable, as sometimes is the case, the coach – and not the parent – will take the proper steps. And even then, DQ's are almost never over-turned, so don't get your hopes up.

By the by, most DQ's aren't surprises to the coach. If a swimmer rehearses an illegal turn forty thousand times in training despite a coach's remonstrances, then that illegal habit will likely show up under the stress of a race. As Joe Paterno said, "Practice good to play good."

BURNOUT is over-rated. So many times parents and kids will say, "I don't want to commit to swimming because I don't want to get burned out." But for every one case of "burnout" caused by a swimmer's spending too much time in the water and working too hard, we will see a hundred cases of "pre-emptive burnout": in order not to be burned out, the swimmer only comes to practice when she feels like it, doesn't work out very hard, skips team meets with regularity, and generally makes no commitment to the program or to the sport. Not surprisingly, the swimmer swims slow, makes little to no improvement, and sees her formerly slower competitors whiz right by her. Then we wonder why she "just can't get jazzed about swimming."

Sitting on the fence and remaining lukewarm on principle has nothing to recommend it. Discipline and commitment are good things, not things we should downplay, hide, apologize for, or (worst of all) stop demanding because it may be unpopular. If you want to enjoy swimming even more, commit more of yourself and swim fast! You do not become excited about an activity you don't do well at.

HOME and pool must dovetail. Traits of discipline, respect, high expectations, and commitment at home directly relate to the child's characteristics at practices and meets. This is yet another area where family support is crucial to the success of the swimmer. Parents should review, carefully, the Credo and other formative memos about the values the team espouses. **If the current at home is flowing in the**

opposite direction from the current at the pool, there will be big problems. If a family does not buy into the program, they will be very unhappy here.

A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES

THE patience of Job. Your swimmer's career in the program is a long haul, with many peaks and valleys. Usually, the new parent and swimmer come to the sport with little experience, so the first sign of a problem looks like the Grand Canyon, impossible to get across, and the first sign of success looks like Mount Everest – we're on top of the world. It's best not to get too worked up. You will see this again, over and over.

TAKING the long view. The training that will make an eight year old the area's fastest 25 freestyler is not the training that will benefit that swimmer most in the long run. Making decisions now that will benefit the swimmer over the long haul of a swimming career calls for prudence, and it means sacrificing some speed now for huge gains later. Now we make them beautiful in the water, now we make them fit, now we teach them to expect great things, and later we make them superfast. Our destination is not two weeks down the road, but several years.

McDONALDS v. Michelin Three-Star. The fast food mentality, the attitude that "I want it NOW!" (even if it tastes like cardboard) is anathema to what we are about. Think of the swimming program, and your swimmer's career in the program, as a fine meal in the very best French restaurant: more courses than you can count (phases and seasons), served in a very particular order (developmentally determined), each patiently savored (the cumulative effects of years' worth of daily training), completed by dessert and coffee (Nationals). We are not in search of a quick Big Mac. We want the best, and we are willing to wait.

HOW KIDS WORK

KIDS are inconsistent. There is nothing that any coach or parent can do to change that. A ten-year old swimmer who knows better will in the pressure of a meet do a flip-turn on breaststroke. Another young swimmer will take twenty seconds off her best time in a race this week, and next week add it all back, with interest. One week it will seem that the butterfly is mastered, and the next week that we've never even been introduced to the stroke. A senior swimmer will take ten seconds off her best time one race, then an hour later add ten seconds in her next race. It's enough to make your hair turn grey. Learn to expect it and even to enjoy it.

SO you thought she was a backstroker. Age groupers change favorite or "best" strokes approximately every other day. A stroke will "click" suddenly, and then later just as suddenly un-click. There is no explanation for this phenomenon. A stroke the child hated becomes her favorite by virtue of her having done well at yesterday's

meet. These are good arguments for having kids swim all four strokes in practice and meets, and for not allowing early specialization.

NO cookie-cutter swimmers. Kids learn at different rates and in different ways. One swimmer picks up the breaststroke kick in a day; it takes another swimmer a year to master the same skill. If you pay close attention, you could probably write a treatise on motor learning after watching just one practice of novice swimmers. Be careful of comparing your swimmer to others, and especially be careful of comparing your swimmer to others in her hearing. **Never never never measure the continuing success of your child by his performance against a particular competitor, who is likely to be on a completely different biological timetable from your child.** Doing so makes you either despondent or arrogant.

WHY doesn't he look like Michael Phelps? Little kids are not strong enough or coordinated enough for their strokes to look like the senior swimmers, no matter how many drills they do or how many repeats. And parents shouldn't stress about a little thing that a swimmer struggles with for a time, such as a proper breaststroke kick. Kids seem to get these things when they are ready, and not until. We are winning the game if they steadily improve their motor control, steadily improve their aerobic conditioning, and steadily improve their attitudes. They will look like Michael soon enough.

HOW they do versus what they do. Especially at younger ages, how fast a child swims and how well he places in a meet have little significance for how that swimmer will do as a senior. Many national caliber athletes were not at all noteworthy as ten year olds. Competition times and places often tell you not about the amount of swimming talent a child has, but about how early a developer he is. **What is truly important in determining future swimming success is what happens everyday in practice: Is he developing skills and technique? Is he internalizing the attitudes of a champion? Is he gradually building an aerobic base and building for the future?** The work done is cumulative, with every practice adding a grain of sand to what will eventually become a mountain.

TIMES are the least of our worries. Many young swimmers spaz out when they swim, especially at meets when they race. But you learn technique and control best at slow speeds. Don't rush, take it slow, and get it perfect before you try to go fast. Even in meets, for the little ones I am much more interested in how they get down the pool than in how fast they do. Technique and tactics are more important than the numbers on the watch; if the technique and tactics are improving steadily, the time on the watch will improve steadily, too, and without our obsessing over it.

BUT he swam faster in practice!?!? Younger kids are routinely swimming as fast in practice as they do in meets. From one perspective, this makes no sense. Why should a swimmer do better on the last repeat of 10 x 400 on short rest, after having swum 3600 meters at descending pace, than she does when all she has to do is get up and race one rested 400? She swims faster when she's tired? Sometimes, yes. After all, in training she is well warmed up, her body has run through the spectrum and swum faster and faster, so her aerobic systems are working at full steam and her stroke rhythm

is perfect and grooved, and she is energized from racing her teammates and shooting after concrete goals without the pressure she often feels in meets. Practice is much less threatening than meets.

NOT even Ted Williams batted a thousand. No one improves every time out. Don't expect best times every swim; if you do, you will frustrate yourself to death in less than a season, and you will put so much pressure on your swimmer that she will quit the sport early. You would think that if a swimmer goes to practice, works hard, and has good coaching and a good program, then constant improvement would be inevitable. Wrong. So much more goes into swimming than just swimming.

THE Rubber band effect. It would be easier for the swimmer, his parents, and his coach if improvements were made slowly and gradually, if all involved could count on hard work in practice producing corresponding improvements in competition every month. This "ideal", however, is so rare as to be nonexistent. Often improvements are made in leaps, not baby steps. Improvement happens by fits and starts, mostly because improvement results as much from psychology as from physiology. It is harder this way, because less predictable. Further, swimmers and their parents tend to become a bit discouraged during the short "plateaus" when the improvements that the child is making are not obvious; then, when the rubber band has snapped and the swimmer makes a long-awaited breakthrough, they expect the nearly vertical improvement curve to continue, which it will not do. Fortunately, because our program emphasizes aerobic training, the long plateaus common in sprint programs are rare here.

THERE is a lot more to swimming than just swimming. This will become especially apparent as the swimmer gets older, say around puberty. But even for the young kids, inconsistency is the rule. What's going on in a swimmer's head can either dovetail with the training or completely counteract the hours and hours in the pool. Again, if a swimmer has been staying up late, not allowing her body to recover from training, or if she's been forsaking her mother's nutritious meals for BigMacs, fries, and shakes, that swimmer's "hidden training" will counteract what she's been doing in the water. Again, if a swimmer is in the dumps and can't see straight after breaking up with his girlfriend, the best coach and the best program in the world will not save today's race.

TERMINAL strokes and "coachability". Often young swimmers, especially "successful" younger swimmers who are very strong for their age, have terminal strokes – i.e., strokes that are inefficient dead-ends, strokes that will not allow for much if any improvement, strokes that consist of bulling through the water and not getting much for the huge outpouring of effort and energy. For kids with terminal strokes, it is time to throw away the stopwatch, slow down, and learn to swim all over again. Often this adjustment period is characterized by slower times, which is difficult for the swimmer and for the parents. Difficult, but necessary, because this one step backwards will allow for ten steps forward soon enough.

Note that for the stroke improvement to be made, the swimmer (and parent, supporting the coach's decision) must be **coachable**: they must trust that the coach is knowledgeable and thinking of the swimmer's best interests, and they must be willing to

trust that the changes that feel awful at first (because the swimmer's body is used to doing things a certain way, that way feels comfortable, and any other way is going to be resisted) will help him be a better swimmer. This coachability, this trust, is unfortunately rare. Most kids choose not to change horses in the middle of the stream, and both the horse and rider drown. Terminal stokers are soon caught by swimmers who are smaller but more efficient.

BIGGER is better?? The subject of early and late bloomers is a sensitive one, but nonetheless very important for parents to understand. Early and late bloomers each have "virtues" and "challenges."

To begin with **early developers**. They get bigger and stronger earlier than the other kids, which means they are more likely to win their races. That early success is the virtue. However, because they can often win without having to work on their technique or train very hard, often they do not develop a solid work ethic, and often their technique is poor as they bull through the water. Note that from the child's immediate perspective, NOT working hard and NOT working on technique is a rational choice. After all, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it": what he has done has obviously been working, since he has been highly successful, so why should he listen to the coach tell him that he needs to work harder or change his stroke? He beats all the other kids who listen to the coach, work harder, and change their strokes!

So our pragmatist reaches the ages of thirteen to fifteen and suddenly the other kids whom he used to destroy in meets are catching up to him and even passing him. The size and strength advantage that he had relied on has deserted him, and he has no technique or work ethic to fall back on. He is not long for the sport: many early bloomers quit when their easy successes dry up. We avoid this future problem by not allowing the early bloomers to bask in the temporary limelight, but training them for their long run benefit, and educating them about how they should judge their own performances both in meets and in practices.

On to the **late bloomers**. They are smaller and weaker than the others, so they get crushed in swimming meets. If the coach, swimmer, and parent emphasize places and winning, then there is little chance that this late bloomer will stay in the sport. This, too, is rational: "Why should I keep swimming? I'm obviously lousy, even though I'm working my guts out and doing everything the coach asks. I'm still getting killed! Coach is a bozo and I'm just not meant to be a swimmer."

That is the obvious downside. However, if the coach and parents can help the swimmer find enough rewards from swimming, for instance improvement, meeting personal challenges, friendships, etc., to stick it out through the lean years, and if she relies on technique and hard work to overcome the temporary physical deficit, then she is in the driver's seat in a few years. It is usually the case that the late bloomers end up bigger and stronger than the others – it just takes them longer to get there. And the qualities in the water and in their heads serve them well in senior swimming.

Note well: it is almost impossible to tell how talented your swimmer is, or how much potential your swimmer has for swimming, by looking at 10 & Under meet results. Races will often just tell you who is bigger and stronger, and that probably won't last.

PUBERTY complicates everything. You would think that because they are getting bigger and presumably stronger, your swimmers would be getting faster. Yes, and no. Whether fair or not, in the end puberty is highly beneficial to almost all boys, but with girls can be more ambiguous. Boys lose fat and gain muscle, getting bigger and stronger; girls, too, gain in height and strength, but they also add fat deposits. With proper nutrition (that does not mean starvation diets or eating disorders) and proper

training (lots and lots of aerobic work, consistently), these questionable changes can be kept to a minimum, with no long-term harmful effects.

In the short run, during puberty kids are growing, but they are growing unevenly. Arms and legs and torsos don't have the same proportions as they did last week, either of strength or length, so coordination can go haywire. Strokes may fall apart, or come and go. Also, various psychological changes are affecting swimming and everything else. Interests change and priorities are re-ordered. All these changes can cause the child's athletic performances to stagnate. It can be a highly frustrating time for all involved. Fortunately, it doesn't last long, and the swimmer emerges from a chrysalis a beautiful (and fast and strong) butterfly.

THE perils of getting older. Aging up is sometimes traumatic. Formerly very good ten year olds become mediocre 11 & 12's overnight. And often, the better they were in the younger age group, and the higher their expectations of success, the more traumatic the change is for them, because the more their "perceived competence" has suddenly nose-dived as they now race against bigger and stronger and faster competition. They are bonsais racing sequoia trees, and the standards of judgement have ratcheted up dramatically. The fastest kids are much faster than they are, to the point that they think they cannot compete, so they figure, "Why try? Working hard isn't going to get me far, anyway. I may as well wait until my 'good year.'" Often we see a tremendous jump upwards in practice intensity as swimmers approach their last meet in an age group (they want to go out with a bang), then a tremendous plummeting in that intensity as they become just one of the pack. This is in despite of the coach's discussing the matter with the swimmer.

A Special Note about Swimmers New to the YorkY Program. When they first join our program, no kids are hard workers. This sounds harsh, but it is true nonetheless. Compared with all other local swimming programs, we swim longer and harder and have much higher expectations. Swimmers have never really had to work very hard before, relatively, so they don't know what it's like. What used to be strenuous is now defined as easy swimming. Swimmers have never really had high goals before, relatively, so they don't know how to make them or how to bring them about. What used to be fast isn't any longer, and their new teammates are talking about strange things called "NRT's" and "Quad A's". It takes several months for a swimmer's body and mind to adapt to the new demands and new expectations. Often the initial shock to the system is difficult, but it is made superable by extra support and encouragement from parent and coach. And then they bloom. Many parents have remarked to me on the changes that the program has wrought in their children: we have a new child who is ready to take on the world, who is confident in his abilities, and who has new and much higher expectations of himself.

SUPPORT, NOT PRESSURE

THE Rock of Gibraltar. As they succeed then fail then succeed again, kids will ride emotional roller-coasters. One of your most important functions as a swimming parent is to provide emotional support during the tough times, of which there will be many. Let them know that they are still loved, no matter how poorly they think they swam. And don't let them get cocky when they win.

DON'T coach your kids. If the swimmer is hearing one story from his coach and another from his parent, we have one confused swimmer. A swimmer must have trust in his coach and in the program, and he will not if his parents are implicitly telling him that they know best. **If you have concerns about the coaching or the coaching advice, talk to the coach directly. If in the end you feel that you cannot support the coach or the program, your best course is to find a team whose coach you trust. Your swimmer has a coach; she needs you to be a parent.**

THE next Ian Thorpe?? No matter how good your swimmer seems to be as a ten year old, don't get your hopes too high. Don't expect an Olympian (you are allowed to hope for an Olympian), and don't judge his every move (or swim) by Olympian standards. **In order to make it to the Olympics so many things over such a comparatively long time have to go right, so many decisions have to be made "correctly" (and can only be seen to be correct with hindsight), and so much plain good luck is required, that the odds are heavy against it. Further, many kids are physically talented, but few have the mental talent: the poise, drive, and persistence to develop the gifts they are given.** How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, practice, practice. As psychologist Howard Gruber, who has made a life-work out of studying great achievers, has argued, the difference between the very good and the truly great isn't talent but much harder and consistent work.

IN praise of famous kids? Don't puff up a 10-year old, or we will end up with a monster on our hands. Don't get too impressed, don't praise too highly – leave room for when they get a lot better. No matter how fast a child swims, it is still a child swimming, and the level of accomplishment is very low compared to how high she will reach five or ten years from now. **Don't treat him like a superstar, because the more you treat him like a superstar, the less likely he will become one.** Pampered kids aren't tough.

Similarly, be careful not to brag about your swimmer to other parents. No one likes to hear continuous talk about someone else's kid, and if your swimmer is really good, it will be apparent to everyone without your having to tell them. Dale Carnegie said, "Talk about them, not about me." Translate this into: "Talk about their swimmer, not about mine."

EVERY Soviet victory a victory for Soviet socialist ideology? How your child swam in the 50 fly ten minutes ago is no reflection of your value as a person or as a parent. A first place ribbon does not validate your parenting techniques, or the quality of your genes. Alternately, a slow swim should not bring into question a family's commitment, financial and otherwise, to a child's swimming. Swimming is hard enough for a child without having to carry around her parents' self-esteem on her shoulders when she races. Also remember that what goes around comes around. The better you allow yourself to feel about a victory now, the worse a loss will feel next meet, or the next event.

JEKYLL and Hyde. Coaches often undergo miraculous transformations. It is always interesting to watch parents' changing attitudes and behavior towards the coach when their children are "succeeding" or "failing." When the child swims well, the coach is a good chap and everyone's happy. When the child bombs, the coach is an Untouchable who should not be looked in the eye. Sometimes this change occurs in the space of half an hour. Precious few parents treat me the same no matter how their children perform.

PROBLEMS, POTENTIAL AND KINETIC

UNEQUAL Justice for all? Sometimes parents ask, “Why don’t you treat the kids equally, with one standard for all?” For the same reason that most parents don’t treat their own children exactly the same: because kids have different capabilities, personalities, and motivations, and what works for one child doesn’t work for all. Second, because with talent comes responsibility. When a very fast swimmer, whom the others look up to and follow, messes around in practice, he drags the whole group down with him. This will not be tolerated. Higher expectations accompanying talent should be taken as a compliment.

THE wisdom of Solomon. Coaches make many decisions. You won’t agree with them all. For instance, relays. As a general rule, every parent thinks his child should be on the “A” relay. But only four swimmers can be on the relay team. The coaches will choose the four kids whom they think will do the best job today. That is not always the four with the top four “best times.” Sometimes it includes a swimmer who has been very impressive in practices, or someone who is on fire at this meet, or someone who hasn’t swum the event in a meet in a while and so hasn’t officially made a fast time but who has let the coaches know by practice performance and otherwise that he deserves to be in the relay. **Trust the coaches to act in what they consider the best interests of the team as a whole, and understand that this sometimes conflicts with what you see as the best interests of your child at this moment.**

MEDDLING isn’t coaching. A lot of coaches, especially younger ones, will “overcoach” as a rule, especially at meets. “Overcoaches” are in the kids’ faces all the time, giving them twenty thousand instructions before they race, timing them incessantly during the warm-ups of a championship meet, controlling every little thing. Many parents are impressed by this show of active coaching. However, overcoaching is destructive, at practice and at meets. At practice, swimmers need instruction -- that is agreed. But they also need to be allowed to try things, to find out what works and what doesn’t, to watch other swimmers, with perhaps a few leading questions from the coach. You don’t teach an infant how to walk; he watches you, he tries it, he falls, he falls again and again, and in no time he is charging around the house making mischief.

And when you get to a meet, the general rule should be, the less said the better. In a stressful environment, the more information you try to force into a kid’s head at the last minute, the more likely you are to jam his circuits entirely (similar to “cramming” for an exam in school). He will head to the blocks not knowing which way is up. If a coach has been doing the job in practice, the swimmer will know how to swim his race before he gets to the meet. A couple of cues or reminders, and only a couple, and the swimmer can hop on the blocks without his mind cluttered by overcoaching.

TALK to the coach. Communicate your concerns about the program or your child’s progress within it with the coach, not with your child. Never complain about a coach to a child. The last thing a ten year-old needs is to be caught in the middle between two adult authority figures. Further, when you have a problem or concern, please do not head to other parents to complain, head to the coach to discuss. There is nothing guaranteed to destroy a program faster, and to send good (even great) coaches running for the door quicker, than a group of parents sitting together every day in the stands comparing notes about the things they don’t like.

SEMPER fidelis. Don't criticize the team to outsiders, don't criticize the coach to outsiders, don't criticize other parents to outsiders, don't criticize your own swimmers to outsiders, don't criticize others' swimmers to outsiders. If you can't find anything good to say, don't say anything at all.

LEAVE this campsite cleaner than you found it. Before you complain about any component of the program, ask yourself: what am I doing, positively and actively, to help the team function better?

DON'T try to be a swimming expert. With the internet rage, the amount of really bad information available at the click of a mouse is overwhelming. And not being a coach, not being immersed in the sport twenty-four hours a day, not having much historical perspective on technique and training, and generally not knowing where the website you just stumbled onto fits in the jigsaw puzzle of the sport, you are in no position to judge what you find critically.

THERE are no "age group parents" and "senior parents." There are only swimming parents. Once a portion of the team's parents begins to think of itself as having a different interest from that of the group as a whole, the team has begun to rip itself apart. The rose bud is not distinct from the rose in full flowering; they are the same things at different stages of development, with identical interests.

KEEP me in the loop. It happens quite frequently that I cannot understand why a swimmer is responding to the training as he is. It seems to make no sense, if we assume that the only variables are the ones that I am in control of in training. Why is he so tired? Why is he so inconsistent? It is easy to forget that everything happening in the swimmer's life during the twenty-one hours a day when he is away from the pool affects his swimming as much or more than the three hours of training when I am ostensibly in charge. Let me know if there are problems at home or at school that will affect your swimmer's training and racing performance. You don't need to give me all the details, but in order to coach your swimmer individually, I have to know what is happening individually.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

SWIMMING is a mystery. Most of the time only God really knows why a swimmer did so well or so poorly. Coaches can point to the easy answers, superficial indices (stroke count, stroke rate, splits, etc.), which are probably more often effects than they are causes. Who can explain why a swimmer whose workouts have been horrid and who hasn't gotten much sleep, will come alive at a meet and set the water on fire? Why a swimmer whose workouts have been wonderful and who has been doing everything right, will come to a meet and look like death warmed over? Or why a swimmer who has been a rock for years will come mentally unglued at the big meet? Sometimes hard work isn't rewarded with good performances. Sometimes lazing around and skipping practices is. This is hard for coaches, swimmers, and parents to accept. Not everything in life makes sense, and not everything in life is fair. It doesn't take a

reflective coach very long to figure out that he isn't in total control here. Ponder the Greek tragedies.

A work in progress. These recommendations/suggestions may sound set in stone. But my thinking on most of these subjects is evolving, since these subjects are complicated and since kids are, too. These are topics that we should all consider as open to discussion. Being a good coach is just as difficult as being a good parent, and it involves thinking through and judging correctly about the same issues. Most parents are confused at least part of the time about whether or not they are doing the right things with their kids. And most coaches are equally uncertain about whether the methods that worked for one swimmer will work with another.

Michael Brooks
York, PA
4th edition, revised
April 2007

Appendix E – York YMCA Swimming Credo

The York YMCA Swimming Program Credo

YORK Y EXCELLENCE: *αρετη*

- =WE are committed to excellence. We have a burning desire to succeed.
- =WE believe that excellence is only achieved through commitment, self-discipline, and hard work. There is no easy road to excellence.
- =WE believe that excellence is a way of life. Swimming is one aspect of a life well and beautifully lived.
- =WE have high expectations of ourselves and of those around us.
- =WE can do anything we set our minds to.
- =WE believe in our own capabilities. We refuse to limit ourselves by thinking small.
- =WE are not normal, or average, or mediocre. And we will not pretend to be.
- =WE rise above the crowd. We are not afraid to distinguish ourselves.
- =WE never settle for mediocrity.
- =WE are never satisfied. We know it can always be done just a little better. We are in quest of perfection.
- =WE are improving every day: getting fitter, stronger, faster, tougher, smarter, better.
- =WE enjoy our excellence: working hard, testing ourselves, improving, excelling. We push the envelope daily.
- =WE become worthy by striving after high and worthy goals.

YORK Y PRIDE

- =WE are proud to be members of the York Y Swim Team.
- =WE all work to make York Y a team we can be proud of.
- =EACH swimmer is responsible for the success of the team.
- =EACH swimmer is responsible for the reputation of the team. So we carry ourselves with dignity, knowing our behavior and our words reflect on our teammates.
- =WE treat one another the way we wish to be treated – with respect.
- =WE behave like ladies and gentlemen.
- =WE don't whine when we lose, and we don't gloat when we win. We embody quiet confidence.
- =WE are confident because we have done everything right, we have done more than was asked, we are physically and mentally stronger than the rest. We are York Y.

YORK Y SUPPORT/UNITY

- =WE support our own and our teammates' excellence.**
- =WE encourage positive peer pressure: we help our teammates to be their best.**
- =EVERY swimmer on this team is important and has a role to play in helping the team to reach its goals.**
- =WE respect one another. We value one another. We look for the good in one another.**
- =WE know that teams only succeed when their members pull for one another and care for one another.**
- =CHAMPIONS hang around champions.**

YORK Y RESPONSIBILITY

- =WE set a good example for others to follow.**
- =WE make no excuses.**
- =WE take responsibility for our actions. We don't look for someone else to blame.**
- =WE make things happen. We are in control of our destinies.**
- =WE don't hope for miracles. We create them by hard work.**
- =WE leave nothing to chance.**

YORK Y PERSISTENCE & DEDICATION

- =WE are in for the long haul. We don't look for quick fixes or instant gratification. We know there is no substitute for hard work.**
- =SUCCESS is determined by thousands of daily decisions to excel.**
- =Anyone can set goals; we are special because we are willing to work to achieve our goals.**
- =WE make our daily decisions guided by our long-term swimming goals.**
- =WE embody consistent persistence. We finish what we start.**

YORK Y COURAGE

- =WE relish challenges.**
- =WE see opportunities everywhere. And we take advantage of them.**
- =WE know that succeeding means taking risks. We are not afraid of losing, because we learn volumes from every loss.**
- =WE value the Worthy Opponent above all others; he alone pushes us to our limits and shows us our weaknesses. He brings out our best, and helps us become better.**