



THE YMCA OF LENAWEЕ COUNTY ALLIGATOR SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK 2017-2018

The Mission of the YMCA of Lenawee County, a membership based organization, is to put Christian principles into practice that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

*The theme of the YMCA:
We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.*

*The Character Development Model Reflects our Core Values as:
Caring, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility*

The Core Qualities of the YMCA are:

- *A commitment to stewardship*
- *A devotion to diversity*
- *A sense of unity*
- *A passion for equity*
- *A dedication to quality*
- *A respect for locality*
- *An enthusiasm for volunteerism*
- *A conscious internationally*

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a summary of the YMCA competitive swim program, and to outline the rules and regulations necessary for the smooth administration of the program. The information provided in this handbook will allow parents new to the program to become involved more quickly, as well as provide guidance and the answers to many of the questions parents and swimmers may have. YMCA Competitive Swimming is a very beneficial program in the development of our youngsters. Parent participation in the administration of the program is a critical factor for both the kids and the success of the program.

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THE YMCA PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

The YMCA uses involvement in sports as a way to introduce its ideals and values to the surrounding community and to help individuals grow mentally, physically, and spiritually. Competitive swimming gives each child the chance to attain success, develop self-confidence, and to work to the best of his/her abilities to achieve recognition. At the same time, swimming encourages lifetime habits of fitness, self-respect, and respect for others—principles that serve as the foundation for the YMCA of Lenawee County Alligator Swim Team’s approach to competitive swimming. The Y Gators have a place for swimmers of all abilities.

Our primary focus is on character development in individuals at all skill levels. Essential elements that make up this foundation include:

- Providing an atmosphere of friendship, team spirit, and camaraderie;
- Working with every swimmer on the team—no swimmer is ignored;
- Working on basic skills and teaching good physical habits;
- Teaching fair play;
- Helping swimmers set, evaluate, and achieve individual goals;
- Keeping winning in perspective;
- Encouraging lifetime involvement in sports and physical activity;
- Working with the whole person, body, mind, and spirit.

The Y Gators swim team has a place for swimmers of all abilities.

FAIR PLAY

Interpretation of the “Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports” is based on the fair play concept. The YMCA believes that fair play is the very essence of competition. This fundamental virtue is a special attribute of sport and inherent in it. Competition should be marked by a spirit of truth and honesty, with strict observance of all rules, whether written or unwritten. Fair play implies respect for oneself, one’s opponent, and others involved in conducting the competition. Players, coaches, officials, and spectators share a responsibility for fair play: Fair play sets the game above the prize.

Competition can provide an excellent means of developing a predisposition to play fairly. As this virtue develops, it can influence behavior in everyday life. It is for the development of such virtues that the YMCA promotes competitive sports.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN YMCA SPORTS

Values are basic beliefs about what is good or ought to be, that actually serve as guidelines for decision-making and action. Values education is the process of helping people develop values, becoming conscious of those values, and using them to make decisions.

All sport programs incorporate certain values in the way the programs are conducted and by the interaction of all the participants. YMCA programs are encouraged to include the values of equal participation, family involvement, and working toward realistic individual goals, while keep winning in perspective. Teaching fair play and working with the whole person –spirit, body, and mind. The YMCA character development model of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility will be in place at all YMCA sports events – from practice to meet.

COACH'S PHILOSOPHY

The coach's philosophy is in agreement with the National YMCA competitive Swimming Council's motto of **"Everybody Swims – Everybody Wins"**. Swimmers are individually coached according to their ability within a group concept. The main objective is to see that each swimmer achieves the highest level of accomplishment that he or she can attain during the competitive year. This is highlighted in the team motto: "Winning means improving your time."

Although individual accomplishment is important, no one individual is ever more important than the total team.

The success of each individual is firmly based on the solid parent, coach, and swimmer inter-relationship. Teamwork, goal setting, achieving success through hard work and developing friendships, are a valuable part of your child's development and should be a part of any program.

A successful program combines many aspects of training:

1. Stroke Technique – Improvement in strokes, starts, turns, etc.
2. Diet – Nutrition is an important area of education for your child.
3. Strength Training – Based on age and physical development.
4. Psychology – Believing in oneself and what one can do is a key to success.
5. Goal Setting – It is important that the goals be realistic and within reach of the swimmer's ability.

"Winning Means Improving your Time."

ELIGIBILITY

The Lenawee County YMCA Alligator Swim Team practices and competes during the winter months (September through April) in the State YMCA competitive swim league, which made up of other YMCA sponsored teams that participate in dual meets, invitational and championship meets that are scheduled both home and away throughout the season. The YMCA of USA

(National) and the Michigan South East Cluster are the governing bodies for YMCA swimming in our area.

The YMCA of USA (national) and Michigan South East Cluster require that all swimmers must:

1. Maintain a full year membership to the YMCA (specifically September to September).
2. Be a YMCA member in good standing 30 days prior to dual meets, invitational meets, and Clusters, and 90 days for District/Regional/State/National Championship).
3. Have participated in at least 3 inter-association meets during the current season for the YMCA of Lenawee County, on separate dates, in order to qualify for championship meets (clusters, districts, states, zones, nationals). Swimmers participating in high school and middle school programs are encouraged to fulfill this requirement as quickly as possible to facilitate their participation in championship meets.
4. All swimmers MUST attend A Districts (unless otherwise specified by coach). Qualifying times must be achieved for State and Regional meets. All swimmers not participating in the State meet will attend the B District meet. A swimmer may qualify for State and Regional participation either through individual or relay participation.
5. Swimmers compete in age groups as determined by the swimmer's age as of December 1 of the current season.

<u>Age as of December 1, 2017</u>	<u>Age bracket</u>
8 or less	8 & Under
9 or 10	9-10
11 or 12	11-12
13 or 14	13-14
15 & Over	15& Over
Any age	Open

GUIDELINES FOR SWIMMERS PARTICIPATING IN USA, HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND SUMMER SWIMMING

The YMCA recognizes that swimmers participating in the YMCA Swimming Program also have the opportunity to participate in a number of other non-YMCA swimming programs. Guidelines have been established by the organizations involved to protect athletes. These must be kept in mind before deciding to add a non-Y program, including school teams, to a swimmer's schedule. Reference to these guidelines at the beginning and throughout the season will assure that each swimmer will be able to meet their goals in all swimming venues

The YMCA does not allow swimmers to represent any team other than their Y or school sponsored team during the YMCA season, which is considered September 1 through April 30.

USA Swimming

The YMCA Swimming and Diving Organization cooperates with USA Swimming and Diving and allows dual affiliation for Y swimmers, provided the swimmer is representing their Y team and that TEAM has dual affiliation. If the swimmer's YMCA does not have this dual affiliation, the swimmer may still participate in a USA competition; however, they must participate as an UNATTACHED swimmer (not representing any team).

High School/Middle School Swimming

The YMCA and the Gators, as members of the local community, actively support their athletes' participation on their high school and middle school swim teams.

MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletic Association) Guidelines

The MHSAA is the governing body for both high school and middle school athletics in Michigan. This organization has also set up guidelines for athletes participating in outside programs. The guidelines for swimming, from the MHSAA Coach's Guidebook Section IV (Eligibility Rules for Athletes), subsection H (Limited Team Membership) follow are:

- 1) Participation in the school program, high school or middle school, begins with the individual athlete's first participation in an organized MHSAA competition.
- 2) Participation in the school program, high school or middle school, ends with the individual athlete's final participation in an organized MHSAA competition regardless of the activities of the balance of the team. Therefore, an athlete who does not qualify for state competition, even if other members of their team do, is considered released from the MHSAA limitations regarding 'outside' competition.
- 3) A member of a school swimming team may participate in a maximum of two non-school meets or contests in that sport for a non-school team (e.g., the Gators) during their school swim season.
- 4) MHSAA limits athlete participation in school related competitions to no more than 2 meets per week, but outside competition (i.e., a Y meet) is not included in this limitation.

YMCA of Lenawee County Guidelines Pertaining to Middle School/High School Swim/Dive Team Participation

The Alligators are proud to have their swimmers participate on their school teams and would like to ensure that the teams can work side by side for the well-being of both the athletes and the respective programs. The YMCA of Lenawee County's guidelines regarding school swim program participation are as follows.

- 1) Swimmers must notify the head coach as soon as they know their intention to participate on their school swim team. This includes providing the coach with meet

dates and practice intentions. This is imperative for the coach to be able to plan the Y Gators' program and know when to count on each swimmer's participation.

- 2) Swimmers must notify the head coach as soon as they know when they will be completing their participation in the school program and returning to YMCA participation.
- 3) Upon returning to the YMCA program swimmers are expected to regularly attend YMCA practices and participate in team events.
- 4) Times achieved during high school and middle school competition are acceptable towards qualification for YMCA championships. It is the swimmer's responsibility to obtain the necessary and acceptable results for YMCA time verification. These must be provided to the head coach at least 3 weeks prior to the championship meet for which they are to be used. It is recommended that if a qualification has been met during a particular school meet, the athlete make the arrangements for the times to be provided to him/her at that time and then deliver them to the coach as soon as possible.

To be accepted for time verification/proo of time; results must meet the following guidelines.

- a. Dual meet results must be signed by both team coaches and the head official.
- b. Results must be a copy of the entire meet, not the individual swim.
- c. Newspaper articles with times are not acceptable.
- d. Hand written results are not acceptable.
- e. Invitational results, if computer generated, do not need to have the participating coach's signatures.

It is the swimmer's responsibility to obtain and submit to the coach the necessary and acceptable results for YMCA time verification at least 3 weeks prior to the championship meet for which they are to be used.

Summer Swimming

The YMCA of the USA Competitive Swimming and Diving Advisory Committee has established the following guidelines for YMCA teams and swimmers participating in summer league competitions.

YMCA swimmers may compete in summer league competition without affecting their YMCA eligibility providing the following guidelines are met.

1. The summer league season runs between the dates of June 1 and August 31.
2. The summer league meets are open only to the teams in that summer league.

3. Summer league invitationals are open only to teams representing summer leagues.
4. Non-YMCA teams in the league are strictly summer league teams that disband at the end of the summer season.

If there are no YMCA teams competing in a summer league, YMCA swimmers may participate for non-YMCA summer league teams provided the league meets the above guidelines.

1. This means YMCA swimmer may compete on the City of Adrian/YMCA Bohn Pool Waverunners during the summer.
2. Swimmers participating on a USA affiliated swim team must wait 90 days between their last meet for that team and participation with a different USA affiliated team (such as the Gators).

TEAM POLICIES

The following policies have been established in order to assure that the Y Gators Swim Team program runs smoothly and to minimize questions and confusions. We request your understanding of these policies and your commitment to the support of them. Please make sure both the swimmer and parents, prior to the participation in the first meet, sign the commitment agreement to these policies, which is included in this handbook.

Practice Policies

1. **PRACTICE LOCATION**: Practices will be held at Adrian High School, Monday through Thursdays (and possibly Fridays) as the pool schedule allows. During school vacations and in case of schedule conflicts practice may be held at the Y. Practices times will vary.
 - a. Practice schedules will be handed out. Please be aware of
2. Do not leave your children unsupervised—children must not be dropped off more than 5 to 10 minutes before practice begins.
3. **POOL SAFETY IS IMPERATIVE**: The safety of each team member is the top priority both of the coaching staff and other team members. The following rules will be strictly enforced:
 - a. NO running
 - b. NO food, beverages (other than water or sport drink) or gum chewing
 - c. NO playing with balls, running, or playing in the hallways
 - d. NO pushing or shoving
 - e. Disrespectful behavior toward fellow swimmers, coaches or YMCA or school staff or corresponding property is not acceptable and will not be tolerated
 - f. Any destruction of or damage to property in the practice facility, host facility, hotels or YMCA will not be tolerated. Destruction will result in suspension or expulsion from the team. The swimmer and his/her family will be held responsible for any financial obligations which result from the destruction of the property.
4. Practice disruption of any kind will not be tolerated and result in:

- a. First offense—verbal warning
 - b. Second offense—phone call or written warning to parent
 - c. Third offense—suspension from the team-time period to be determined by the YMCA and staff.
5. Parents are NOT permitted on the pool deck during practice, or at meets, unless the coach grants permission.
 6. Parents should not attempt to talk to the coach/coaches during practice. While on deck the coach's primary responsibility is for the safety and welfare of the entire team. Parents who need to talk to the coach should wait until after practice or leave a note in the coach's mailbox (see section on Parent-Coach Communication)/
 7. Any swimmer who is suspended from public school activities participating in any practices or meets during the time of suspension. The swimmer may only return to swim practice following termination of suspension AND when authorized by the YMCA Professional Staff Designee and the coach.
 8. Consistent attendance at practice is recommended for a swimmer to attain their goals—1 to 1 ½ hours of daily practice are recommended.
 9. Only plastic bottled water or sports drinks are permitted on the pool deck. Please be sure that the bottles are properly disposed of following practice
 10. Jewelry of any kind is not permitted either at practice or at meets. Coaches will not be responsible for ANY jewelry.
 11. Please notify the coach when a swimmer is unable to attend practice or will be absent due to illness.
 12. **Cancellation of Practice:** The coach(es) will determine when practice must be cancelled due to inclement weather, equipment malfunctions, etc. In the case of inclement weather, the Gators follow the simple rule of **No School = No Pool**. For inclement weather announcements of school closings will be made on WABJ and WLEN as well as through the Adrian Public Schools Honeywell Alert System. In all cases of practice cancellation, the Executive Board of the Parents' Association attempts to alert parents via email in as timely a manner as possible.

<p>Remember: In Case of Inclement Weather, No School = No Pool</p>

Meet Policies

A swim meet consists of swimmers competing in a variety of events in varying distances and/or combinations of the 4 strokes; freestyle, butterfly, breaststroke, and backstroke. The swimmers compete against opponents of the same gender and age, in predetermined age brackets. The following policies apply at all YMCA meets.

Information for these meets and related details will be provided as necessary by way of handouts distributed to each family's folder in the Gator mailbox, available at the practice facility.

1. Participation in all meets and invitationals (except for A Clusters) is at the option of the child, coach, and parents. Each swimmer is eligible to swim a varying number of events in each meet as dictated by the host of the meet/invitational.
2. **The coach or coaches determine which events, including relays, the swimmers will be placed in.** Placement is based on various factors, including: swimmers' times; the need to complete relays; attendance and/or effort at practice; or an opportunity to provide experience. Therefore, the coach will determine entry time until season entry times are established. It is not acceptable for parents to make demands about their swimmers' assignment to events.
3. **All meet fees must be paid by the specified date or the swimmer will not be entered in the relevant meet.** It is the responsibility of the family to register and pay all fees to enter the meets. No swimmer may participate unless ALL fees are paid.
 - a. **Team Registration fees must be paid by the designated October 20, 2017, or the swimmer will not be allowed to swim in any subsequent meets.** Please contact the YMCA for any special payment needs such as electronic funds transfer (EFT).
4. Meets are usually held on Saturdays and Sundays.
5. Home meets are normally held at a local High School, as determined by the Executive Committee of the Parents' Association.
6. The coach must be informed as soon as possible if a swimmer is unable to attend a meet for which he/she is entered. Invitational events are paid for in advance and the fees are based on the number of events each swimmer is swimming. A swimmer who fails to attend a meet for which they had previously committed is not only denying themselves a chance to compete but may also be denying a related relay team (3 other swimmers who are there for a chance to swim) an opportunity to compete, in addition to costing the team the full relay fee.
7. There will be no refund if a swimmer is unable to attend an event after the fees have been submitted.
8. Parents are responsible for the attendance of the swimmer and a responsible adult must accompany each swimmer. Under no circumstances is a swimmer to drive themselves or other swimmers to a meet. The YMCA, the coaches and the Parents' Association assume NO responsibility for the swimmer in any location other than the competition location (the pool).
9. Jewelry of any kind is not permitted either at practice or at meets, and may result in disqualification at a meet. Coaches will not be responsible for ANY jewelry. Nail or toe polish will not be permitted at ANY meet.

It is not acceptable for parents to make demands about their swimmers' assignment to events.

Swimmers' Responsibilities

EVERY member of the swim team is responsible for complying with the following policies:

1. Possession or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or alcohol products by any team member is prohibited.
2. Inappropriate activities between team members are not permitted.
3. Swimmers agree to conduct themselves in a mature, courteous, responsible, and exemplary manner at all times.
4. Use of profanity or inappropriate language or gestures is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
5. Swimmers will honor the curfew set by the coaches and/or YMCA staff members at swim meets.
6. Swimmers will participate in ALL events in which they are entered unless physically unable.
7. Swimmers recognize that the reputation of the YMCA of Lenawee County is reflected by and dependent upon their behavior and agree to conduct themselves appropriately at all times.
8. Swimmers will treat all practice and meet facilities (pools, locker rooms, etc.) with utmost respect. We are guests on school properties.

Disciplinary Action

The judgment of the coach(es), the YMCA of Lenawee County Professional Staff Designee, and the Director of the YMCA of Lenawee County will prevail in any disciplinary actions that arise from failure to adhere to the rules set forth by the YMCA of Lenawee County and the Alligator Swim Team, and the YMCA Professional Staff Designee and YMCA Director shall have authority to make any necessary interpretations of the rules.

Penalties resulting from violations of the rules may include:

- Suspension from the event.
- Suspension from the team/Y group.
- Forfeiture of all payments or credits for participation in the event/program.
- Dismissal from the Y, the team/group and program. If dismissal occurs while on a trip, the cost of the immediate return trip will be at the participant's parent's expense.
- Any combination of the above.

Rights of Swim Team Members

1. The swimmer has the right to get out of the pool if they are tired, cold or not feeling well. However, while they are resting they are not to disrupt practice in any manner.
2. The swimmer has the right to ask for and receive the protection of the coaches for any problems that occur in the locker room or the pool.

3. The swimmer has the right to be treated respectfully by all parents and coaches.
4. The swimmer has the right to communicate freely with any one of the coaches.

PARENT-COACH COMMUNICATION

During practice, the coaches must concentrate on swimmer safety and helping swimmers develop their technique. This requires careful concentration, so parents are not allowed to be on the pool and are to avoid trying to speak with the coaches during practice.

Please do not try to speak with the coach(es) during practice!

Of course parents do need, and have a right, to talk to the coaches about concerns with their children. We ask that parents do so after practice, if the coach is available to talk then, or else write up their concerns on a “Can We Talk” form (see form in appendix E of this handbook; also available in the team mailbox at the practice facility), and put it in the coach’s folder in the mailbox.

Concerns that have not been answered to the satisfaction of the parent or swimmer may be directed to the Parent’s Association Executive Committee. Personal issues may be directed to a particular board member if deemed necessary by the parent/swimmer. Notification to the Executive Committee can be accomplished through written correspondence that is brought to the YMCA member service desk, or by sending e-mail correspondence to ted@ymcaoflenawee.org Attn: Ted Crockett. All members of the Executive Committee will be alerted and the appropriate committee member(s) will be called upon to make a timely response. Should parents feel that their concern has not been satisfactorily resolved an audience with the Executive Committee may be requested.

Avoiding Conflict

1. Please remember that the team is more important than any individual swimmer. Please do not create conflict within the team by complaining to other parents about the coach or other swimmers. Remember that other parents are not a sounding board for parental concerns, nor should children be subject to this behavior. Concerns that have not been answered to the satisfaction of the parent or swimmer may be directed to the Parent’s Association Executive Committee or Ted Crockett.

Remember that other parents are not a sounding board for parental concerns, nor should children be subject to this behavior.

THE SWIM TEAM PARENTS ASSOCIATION

The YMCA Alligator Swim Team Parents Association is made up of every parent or legal guardian who has at least one swimmer on the “Y” swim team. The Parents Association is a support group assisting the YMCA in the administration of the program. Responsibilities of the parents’ association include: fund raising, swim meet operation, concessions at home meets, and general support of the team as an entity. The success of the Gators swim team requires the active participation of all parents.

The activities and policies of the Parents Association are governed by the Association’s Constitution and Bylaws. As members of the Association, all parents are entitled to a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws, to vote for members of the Executive Committee, and to run for election to the Executive Committee.

The success of the Gators swim team requires the active participation of all parents.

The Executive Committee

The executive committee of the YMCA of Lenawee County Alligator Swim Team works with the Director of the YMCA, the YMCA Professional Staff Designee, and the coaching staff to provide a quality well-rounded and competitive program for swimmers of all levels, keeping in mind that no one individual is more important than the team.

It is also the responsibility of this committee, in coordination with the YMCA administration and the coaches, to ensure that this competitive swim program is conducted in the finest sportsmanship-like manner and in the best interests of each swimmer by encouraging participation in wholesome competition.

Current Members of the Executive Committee are:

President	Daniel Judson
President-Elect/VP	
Secretary	
Treasurer	Elizabeth Rising
YMCA Professional Staff Designee	Ted Crockett

Courtesy (non-elected and non-voting) Members of the Executive Committee:
Meet Manager(s)

It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to:

- a. Call any meetings necessary for the administration of the Swim Team.
- b. Determine and execute all fundraising activities in cooperation with the YMCA administration.
- c. Budget and allocate money for the administration of the Alligator Swim Team Parents Association.

- d. Perform any administrative duties pertaining to the Swim Team Parents Association. NO parent or Board member OTHER THAN the TREASURER has the right to check the financial file of the members.
- e. Organize the home meet.

The YMCA of Lenawee County's Professional Staff Designee, in conjunction with and through the Parents Association, will handle ALL communication with schools. The Professional Staff Designee is responsible for:

- a. Attending all parents' meetings and assisting with fund raising activities.
- b. All pre-season public relations, securing of practice facility, and YMCA registration.
- c. Referring communications regarding national, state and local YMCA policies to the coach.
- d. Handling any disciplinary actions in addition to the coach.
- e. Handling disbursement of coach's fees and hiring of coaching staff.

Communication

Information regarding upcoming events, practice changes, meet announcements, special activities, etc., is distributed through the mailbox folder system. It is the responsibility of the swimmer and/or parents to check the folder on a regular basis. Important information will also be posted on the pool wall if necessary.

Information and meet changes will be provided through informational flyers provided in swimmer's mailboxes, parent meetings, email, or via the telephone.

The coach will announce cancellation of practice, and the Executive Committee will try to inform parents in a timely manner via email. In the event of inclement weather, announcements will be made on WABJ and WLEN, or you may contact the Y. In case of inclement weather, the schedule follows the **NO SCHOOL = NO POOL** rule. School holidays also follow the Adrian Public School System calendar as the practice pool is at an Adrian School facility except when other arrangements are made.

Concerns that have not been answered to the satisfaction of the parent or swimmer may be directed to the Parent's Association Executive Committee. Personal issues may be directed to a particular board member if deemed necessary by the parent/swimmer. Notification to the Executive Committee can be accomplished through written correspondence that is brought to the YMCA member service desk, or by sending e-mail correspondence to Ted Crockett (ted@ymcaoflenawee.org). All members of the Executive Committee will be alerted and the appropriate committee member(s) will be called upon to make a timely response. Should parents feel that their concern has not been satisfactorily resolved an audience with the Executive Committee may be requested.

Fundraising

One of the most important responsibilities of the Parents' Association is fundraising. The team fees pay the coaches' salaries but do not meet all the financial obligations of the team, so the Executive Committee organizes fundraisers throughout the year. The Constitution and Bylaws of the Parents Association stipulate that **all** Gator families must participate in each fundraiser (unless otherwise specified by the Executive Committee) or pay a compensating fee. **Non-participation in fundraisers may result in your swimmer being barred from competition.** Fundraisers help to support:

- The purchase of equipment (including flags, time clocks, stopwatches, etc.).
- The purchase of ribbons and awards for home meets.
- Travel and lodging costs for coaches.
- Training/accreditation costs for coaches and officials (parents are encouraged to become trained as officials—each team is expected to assist with meet officiating, and officials are required in order to hold a home meet).
- Championship meet fees.
- Annual banquet and awards ceremony.
- Facility rental fees (home meets and practices).
- Meet Manager software (mandatory meet entry system)
- Assistance in championship travel costs (by confidential application).
- Partial offset of uniform (team suits and caps) if funds are available.

All Gator families must participate in each fundraiser (during the swimmer's season) or pay a compensating fee.

Non-participation in fundraisers may result in your swimmer being barred from competition.

APPENDIX A: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- Make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. Their goal should be to improve themselves, not necessarily to win. This will allow the swimmer to do his/her best and avoid developing a fear of failure based on anxiety of disapproval or disappointment from family.
- Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement. Learn to hide your feelings if your child disappoints your expectations.
- Try your best to be completely honest with yourself about your child's athletic ability, his/her competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level.
- Be helpful; don't coach your swimmer on the way to the pool, on the way back, at breakfast and so on. Sure it's tough not to do. But it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks, and other contradictory instruction. **YOUR CHILD ALREADY HAS A COACH, THEY NEED A PARENT.**
- Do not compare your swimmer's skill or attitude with other teammates. This can only cause tension and resentment.
- Teach your child to enjoy the thrill of competition-help them develop a healthy feel for competing, to be 'out there, and having fun!'
- Get to know the coaches so that you can be assured of their philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge. If questions or concerns arise, contact the coach away from the swimmer and avoid criticism of the coach(es) in front of your child. Your swimmer needs to trust the coaches to get the most benefit from swimming and the team environment.
- Always remember that children tend to exaggerate both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over reacting

(Adapted from the Grand Rapids Area (RAYS) Team Swimming Handbook)

APPENDIX B: ATTENDING A SWIM MEET

- Each swimmer is responsible for getting to the meets. Information, including lodging, directions, and maps are often included in meet information. Swimmers should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to their warm-up time.
- *Be aware that flash photography is not permitted at meets.*
- Good sportsmanship is expected from parents, fans, and swimmers.

What to Bring to a Swim Meet

- Official Gator Swimsuit
- Official Gator Swim Cap
- Healthy Snacks
- Goggles (an extra pair would be helpful)
- Towels (three or more)
- Sleeping Bag or Blanket
- T-Shirt and Shorts
- Sweatpants, Sweatshirts
- Money for Concessions, etc.

Helpful Hints if You Have Never Attended a Swim Meet

- Kids, families...everywhere!
- Invitationals are divided into morning and afternoon sessions...generally, but not always 8 & under, 9 & 10, 11 & 12-year-old swimmers in the morning and the 13 & over swimmers compete in the afternoon.
- Dual meets are organized by stroke, and then age group so the swimmer must be there throughout the entire meet.
- Plan to arrive 15 minutes before your warm-ups start. This way you can become comfortable with the facility, find the coach, and get ready to participate.
- Make sure that you know your event numbers. You can get that information from heat sheets that are sold and usually posted in the swim area. The coaching staff will write these numbers on the swimmers hands, when the swimmer checks in with the coach.
- Keep your eyes on the marshalling board! Marshalling is where swimmers are given their lane assignments for a particular event. Swimmers must remain in marshalling until they have completed the event or they risk disqualification.
- Swimmers should remain on the deck and in the team area during their section of the meet. The coach should be able to reach you at any time if a change is made, please let the coach know if you need to leave the area for any reason.
- Remember we are the Gator team; make sure you cheer for each and every member of the team.

APPENDIX C: HOME MEET PLANNING

Initial Organization

1. **Sanction:** The team must receive a sanction for the meet from the Southeast Michigan YMCA Cluster.
2. **Facility Permit:** The team must receive a permit to use the meet facility. Depending on location this will be either Adrian or Tecumseh Public Schools.
 - a. Any use of facilities must be cleared with the YMCA Executive Director. Building Permits are necessary and sponsorship is granted to the YMCA'S representative only. Only the YMCA can secure these building permits.
3. **Officials:** At least one Level II official and one Level I official are required to host a meet.
 - a. Ideally the team will have multiple Level 1 officials so that we can have at least two stroke/turn judges at each end.
4. **Lifeguard:** A certified lifeguard is required to run a meet—this is a paid position unless a volunteer can be found.
5. **Meet Organizer:** One person (or committee) to organize meet and ensure that all tasks necessary to a successful meet are completed.
6. **Meet Supplies:** Award ribbons, stopwatches, etc., are kept in a Tupperware box, traditionally kept by the team's Meet Manager.
 - a. **Ribbons:** Early in the season the Executive Committee should ensure that the team has a sufficient number of award ribbons.
 - b. **Bell and lapcounters for 500 free:** Borrowed from host facility.
7. **Heat Sheets:** When all entries have been submitted, the Meet Manager should print heat sheets. These are made available to coaches and officials, and can be sold to the audience.
8. **Concessions:** The Meet Organizer should designate a person (or committee) to be in charge of concessions. This involves organizing donations of concession items and overseeing the operation of the concession stand (the concession organizer should have plenty of people helping in the operation of the stand).
 - a. **Food Handling Permit:** If non-prepackaged foods are sold at the concessions stand the team must A) have a person with a food handler's license, and B) receive a permit from the Lenawee County Health Department. The amount of money made from concessions may not outweigh the cost of the permit, so the Executive Board should carefully consider whether getting a permit is worthwhile.
9. **Prizes:** The Gators give inexpensive trinkets/toy items to each participating swimmer, one each following their first event. We also can give heat winners an inexpensive prize.
10. **Raffles:** If the team chooses to do raffles as a fund-raiser a person or committee will be necessary to organize and operate this (including securing donated items for raffles).

MEET WORKERS

- **Head Coach**
 - Must be on deck.
- **Starting Official and Clerk of Course** (can be same person or different people) (**Level II Official**)
 - Must have completed both level I and level II official training.
- **Meet Coordinator:**
 - General organizer; makes sure all stations have sufficient workers.
- **Marshalling (2-3 people):**
 - On deck at all times.
 - Must have a heat sheet.
 - Need paper to post numbers of events being marshaled, duct tape, markers and pens.
 - Post event number cards by sequence of 10 on a wall so swimmers and audience can see upcoming event numbers to be marshaled.
 - Hand event cards to swimmers and organize swimmers to keep meet running smoothly without delays.
 - Time cards must be sorted by event number and color.
 - Blue cards to boys.
 - Pink cards to girls.
 - Marshallers will group swimmers by event, with the lowest event number closest to the blocks.
- **Lane Timers – (12 people minimum), 2 people at each lane.**
 - Time the races and record event finishes. (Need stopwatches, pencil, clipboard, these are provided by Parents Association.)
 - Starting Official will instruct in stopwatch operation.
 - Record swimmers' finish time on card.
 - Visiting teams are usually willing to supply a few timers.
- **Runner – (1-person minimum)**
 - Collect cards from the timers as soon as all swimmers in each heat have finished, and deliver promptly to the scorer's table.
- **Scorers – (Meet Manager or someone trained with Meet Manager™ software, plus assistant)**
 - Calculates and record swimmer's placement on score sheets using Meet Manager™ software.
 - For backup, in case of computer failure, need pencils, pens, calculators, score sheets from teams and scrap paper.
- **Ribbon Writers – (2 people minimum)**
 - Seated near/at scorer's table (need pens, pencils, separate containers for each team for ribbons, stickers.)
 - Record swimmer name, event and time on place ribbons.

- Separate ribbons by team.
- **Gopher**
 - General messenger between work stations and meet coordinator; delivers water to meet workers.
- **Locker Room Supervisor – (1 male and 1 female)**
 - Periodically check and assist in locker room.
 - Last adult to check locker room after all swimmers leave.
- **Concessions** – Coordinator, several workers.
 - It's always good to have upcoming events posted by the concession area so that parents can watch their swimmers.
- **Prize Table Attendant and assistant (can be a child).**
 - Each swimmer gets one prize (after their first event); these are inexpensive trinkets/toy items.
 - Assistant gives heat winners' prizes.
- **National Anthem performer** (or play recording)

Volunteer Signup for Home Meet-[Put Date of Meet Here]

▪ **Officials Positions**

- *Starting Official and Clerk of Course* (must be certified as a level 2 official)
 -
- *Stroke/Turn judges* (must be certified as a level 1 official—if that's pending, please list your name).
 -
 -
- *Starter*
 -
- *Head scorer*
 -
- *Assistant Scorer*
 -

▪ **Non-officials Positions**

- *Timers* (We need two per lane!)
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
- *Head Timer* (just means you start two stopwatches; in case a timer fails to start theirs)
 -
- *Marshaling* (preferably 2 people):
 -
 -
- *Runner* (grabs time cards from timers to give to scorers)
 -
- *Gofer* (general messenger between work stations and meet coordinator; delivers water to meet workers):
 -
- *Concessions* (organize contributions, man table, carry water to officials/timers, sell chuck-a-ducks and other fundraising items)
 -
 -
 -
 -
 -
- *Announcer*
 -
- *Ribbons*
 -
 -
- *Prize table*
 -
- *Raffle ticket sales* (if a raffle fundraiser is held)
 -
- *Locker Room Supervisors* (1 male, 1 female; periodically check, and assist in, locker room):
 -
 -
- *Lifeguard* (Must be a certified lifeguard—meet cannot be held without a lifeguard. This is a paid position unless a certified person volunteers.)

APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMINOLOGY

To help our new families better understand the ‘lingo’ within the swimming community; a glossary containing many of the terms commonly used within our sport follows. Enjoy!!!

- ❖ **AGE GROUP** – The term typically used to describe club swimming, due to the bracketing of swimmers into age groups for competitions. YMCA brackets are: 8 & Under, 9-10,11-12,13-14, 15 & Over and Open (no age restriction). In YMCA swimming, the age of the swimmer on December 1 determines the age bracket in almost all meets. Other swimming sanctions (USA swimming) use the swimmer’s age on the day of the meet, or the first day of the invitational as date for age bracketing.
- ❖ **ABC MEET** - A type of meet where the swimmers are differentiated by ability into A, B and C division based on previously determined time standards.
- ❖ **DISQUALIFICATION - DQ** - A rule violation within a race which when called does not allow a swim to be recognized.
- ❖ **DUAL MEET** - A competition between two teams with all age groups competing in one session.
- ❖ **FALSE START** – A disqualification that occurs when a swimmer leaves the starting block before the official start command.
- ❖ **HEAT** – Events with many swimmers may consist of multiple heats. Which are individual races. The finishing times of all the swimmers in all heats are then compiled to produce the final order of finish for the event.
- ❖ **INVITATIONAL** – A competition between many teams, commonly held with different age groups swimming in different sessions. Qualifying time standards are sometimes used in this format.
- ❖ **LONG COURSE METERS** – This is the term used to describe pools or competitions held in a 50 METER, Olympic sized pool; being a pool where one length of the pool is 50 METERS long and serves as the international standard in competitive swimming. Some competitions offered during the summer season are held in long course meters.
- ❖ **MARSHALLING** – The term or area used to gather swimmers together before their race, usually organizing the swimmers into their heats and lane assignments.
- ❖ **OFFICIALS-** The certified individuals, trained in recognizing technical legalities in strokes, starts, and turns, which control the operation of a swim meet. Some of the different officials include the meet referee, starter, and turn judge.
- ❖ **PERSONAL BEST** – The term used for a swimmer’s fastest personal performance in a particular event.
- ❖ **PRELIMS/FINALS** - A format used in meets, typically championships, where all swimmers compete in the preliminaries. The top 8 or 16 swimmers return later to compete again in the finals. The result from the swimmer’s LAST swim is used to determine the place in the event. So if the swimmer made the finals, only the time recorded in the FINALS is used to determine the final score.

- ❖ **SEED TIME** – The time used to enter a swimmer into an event; usually the swimmer’s personal best, this time determines heat and lane assignments.
- ❖ **SHORT COURSE YARDS** – the term used to describe pools or competitions held in a 25-YARD pool, that being where one length of the pool is 25 YARDS long. This is the most common course found in the United States and is used for most age group competitions.
- ❖ **STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS** – (can be either YMCA or USA, but they have separate meets) An end-of-season meet with qualifying time standards in which all teams of the sanction (Y or USA) in a particular state participate.
- ❖ **STROKE** - There are 4 strokes in competitive swimming (Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Butterfly). The IM or Individual Medley is a combination of all four strokes swum in the order of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.
- ❖ **TIME STANDARD** – Qualifying times that must be previously achieved to participate in certain meets, typically used for championship meets such as State, Zone and National level competitions.
- ❖ **USA SWIMMING** - The official governing body for a different sanction of swimming in the United States.
- ❖ **YMCA CONFERENCE** – An end-of-season meet with no qualifying standards, open to all swimmers within a cub that fulfill membership eligibility requirements. The ALLIGATORS are part of the East Michigan Cluster, consisting of all the YMCA teams on the eastern side of Michigan.
- ❖ **YMCA DISTRICTS-USA FESTIVAL** – An end-of-season meet with no qualifying standards.
- ❖ **YMCA SWIMMING AND DIVING** - National competitive swim organization consisting of all YMCA teams and the governing body determining the rules of the sport within the organization.
- ❖ **ZONE** - (Championship meet, either USA or Y) An end of year meet with qualifying time standards in which qualifiers from several states compete. (The Gators are in the Great Lakes zone, consisting of; Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia and part of Illinois.)

APPENDIX E: APPROXIMATE SEASON SCHEDULE

Although specific dates for events can change and the Gators may or may not choose to attend certain meets, this is an approximate season schedule for the Gators, based on a previous season.

Please note: Meet locations in the Detroit Metro area are subject to change—locations listed here may not be the same this year.

Practice

Mid-September: Practice begins.

Typical Regular Season Meet Schedule

(Please see attached form for actual schedule)

Mid October: First meet (at Birmingham: Saturday Fall Festival Meet and Sunday Fun Meet)

Late October: Flint Fall Classic

Early November: South Oakland Y Invitational

Late November (just before Thanksgiving): MC Sports Thanksgiving Classic in Grand Rapids—
this is our annual get-together meet, where many families stay at the Staybridge Suites
and we have a potluck dinner on Saturday night.

Early December: Sturgis Invitational

Mid-December: Holiday Invitational in Waterford

Early January: Winter Invitational in Waterford

Mid-January: Marlin Invitational in Macomb

Late January: Y Gators Home Meet

Championship Meets

Mid February: Eastern Michigan League Meet

Mid/late February: 8 & Under State Meet

Mid/late February: Michigan District Meet

Late February: State Meet

Mid/late March: Great Lakes Zone Meet (Ohio or Michigan)

Early April: Nationals (North Carolina)

The actual schedule will differ.

This is only to give an example of what the season schedule is like.

APPENDIX E: "Can We Talk?" Form



"Can We Talk?"

Name: _____ *Date* _____

Phone Number and/or email address _____

Suggestion and/or Concern _____

Thank you for your thoughts.

This form has been developed to communicate suggestions, comments and/or concerns to the YMCA of Lenawee County Alligator swim team Executive Committee. The Executive Committee includes the Parents Association officers, a designated YMCA staff member, and the head coach.

Please place the completed form in the "Can We Talk" folder in the team mailbox, which will be available at the practice facility. Your comments will be communicated to the appropriate member of the Executive Committee.

**INTENT TO COMPLY AND ABIDE
AS A YMCA ALLIGATOR SWIM TEAM MEMBER AND PARENT**

This form must be completed at the time of registration, before the swimmer will be allowed to participate

I have read, and I understand and agree to abide by, the swim team policies, practice policies, meet policies, swimmer and parents' responsibilities, disciplinary action policy, rights of the swimmer, and expectations of parents/Parents Association, team communication and other pertinent rules and regulations as outlined in the YMCA of Lenawee County Alligator Swim Team Handbook.

Parent/Legal Guardian Name _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____

Swimmer Name _____

Swimmer Signature _____

Swimmer Name _____

Swimmer Signature _____

Swimmer Name _____

Swimmer Signature _____

Please Return completed and signed by September, 25th 2017