



YMCA SWIM TEAM

Itasca County Family YMCA MISSION: "To strengthen ourselves, families and communities by promoting growth in spirit, mind and body."

YMCA SEA TURTLES MISSION: "To build the athlete's pride in who they are and help them grow into well rounded, strong swimmers through hard work, responsibility, and achieving their goals."

YMCA Core Values: we use four core character values to accomplish the above missions. They are Caring, Honesty, Responsibility and Respect. These values help train and instruct individuals in good moral standards and life-long goals.

A list of Rules to abide by:

- 1) All swimmers must have a current YMCA membership. (Fees for membership and program may be paid in installments, financial assistance is available.)
- 2) The coaches' and lifeguard rules must be adhered to by everyone in the pool area, including bleachers.
- 3) Be ON TIME for practices and swim meets. Parents, please pick your children up from practices ON TIME. Outside of the pool area it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise their swimmers. This includes the locker rooms, and common area/halls of RJEMS.
- 4) Once a child is off the pool deck, coaches are no longer responsible for your swimmer.
- 5) At YMCA Pool: Feet first entries only – unless under direct supervision of a swim coach and at the deep end of pool.
- 6) At Middle School Pool: No diving in shallow end – Diving in deep only when supervised by coach.
- 7) No gum, candy, or food of any kind in either pool area.
- 8) Bring a water bottle to practice – to have at lane. Please put swimmers name on all personal items.
- 9) Take rest when told if you are very tired make sure you let coach know.
- 10) Pay attention, and give full cooperation to ALL coaches, referees, and staff when they are giving directions.
- 11) No negative language is accepted anywhere at YMCA, Middle School, or Sea Turtles Swim Team events.
- 12) Swimmers must conduct themselves respectfully to each other in the locker rooms.

- 13) Use restrooms before or after practice.
- 14) Show respect to fellow swimmers.
- 15) Outside of the pool area it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to supervise their swimmers.
This includes the locker rooms, and common area/halls of RJEMS.
- 16) The lifeguard on duty oversees **everyone** in the pool. Listen and follow their rules and commands.
- 17) I will sign up my swimmer for meets using Team Unify software.
- 18) I will sign up to volunteer at home swim meets when my swimmer is participating in away meets (if pertinent).

Practice times and days

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 6:00pm-8:00pm. Days and times may vary. Please see Sea Turtles practice calendar. All practices are held at the ISD 318 RJEMS swimming pool unless directed otherwise by a coach.

HOW OFTEN DO WE HAVE TO BE AT PRACTICE?

It is encouraged to attend at least two practices each week. Exceptions will be made for illness and unavoidable schedule conflicts. A great deal of your success is totally dependent on you. How hard you work; how often you attend practice; how serious you are and how dedicated you are will show in your times and overall improvement. You will be setting your own season goals. As coaches, we will do all we can to help you attain your goals if you are willing to put in the effort.

HOW DOES A SWIM MEET WORK?

Everyone swims in their own age bracket, (8 and under, 9 - 10, 11 - 12, and so on.) Events are numbered and alternate Boy/Girl and go through all age brackets.

There are four competitive strokes.

- Freestyle, which can be anything, but generally front crawl is swum.
- Backstroke, any type of stroke and kick on back, but we generally see back crawl.
- Breaststroke
- Butterfly
- Medley (is a race that includes all four competitive strokes)

All strokes have set rules for starts, performance of stroke, turns and finishes. When a swimmer has an infraction of one of these rules, he/she is disqualified from the event and will receive no placement. The Individual Medley (I.M.) consists of all four strokes.

There are also three relay events, the Medley Relay, a Short Freestyle relay, and the Long Freestyle relay. In the Medley Relay each of the four swimmers swim one of the four strokes (back, breast, butterfly, and front crawl.)

At a meet each swimmer may enter up to three individual events. **Relays will be determined by coaches.**

NEW for 2025-26 Season:

Varsity swimmers (ages 15 and up) participating in swim meets will focus on individual events. They will not compete in relays unless there are enough swimmers registered in the 15+ age group to form a relay team.

AT A MEET— swimmers can have their event, heat and lane numbers written on their arm PRIOR to warmups. (See attached sheet) There is a warm-up period in the pool. It is VERY important for the swimmer to have a warmup; it stretches their muscles, so they have no injuries, it also gives them a chance to get used to walls and starting blocks at pools which they are not familiar with.

Once your swimmer has finished all his/her events, you may leave any away meet. Please stay to help with tear-down during home meets. Your swimmer should check out with the coach before you go.

Each family is required to volunteer at ALL home meets (includes section and state meet). Your volunteerism is an essential part of the success of our swim program. Running a meet takes approximately 55 volunteer parents. There are plenty of jobs for everyone. We have:

- timers
- announcer
- computer/clock workers
- ribbon stickers
- call board
- sheet runner
- stroke and turn officials, and starters (Itasca YMCA will pay the fee for official training)

Our home meets are also our biggest fundraiser. Please help by buying from our concession stand. We try to provide healthy options for you and your swimmer. We coaches thank all those active parents for their continued support – and those who may be reluctant – step up now and become actively involved – you'll love it.

DO WE HAVE TO BUY A TEAM SUIT?

We would love to see all swimmers in team suits at the swim meets. If you have a financial hardship, please let us know and we may be able to provide your swimmer with a suit. Team suits should be saved for swim meets. We do recommend you still have a separate practice suit for your swimmer as daily practice is rough on the life of a suit. Last year's team suit makes for a great practice suit.

We have team swim caps available for purchase at the Y. Swim caps keep hair out of the eyes and face – a must for meets, recommended for practice.

PACKING LIST FOR SWIM MEET

- Suit
- Goggles (extra pair if one gets lost and goggles can be purchased at the YMCA)
- Team Swim Caps (an extra if one rips and caps can be purchased at the YMCA)
- Two towels – keep one dry for shower after meet
- Footwear – deck sandals/slides to wear from gym to pool deck
- Blanket/sleeping bag for your swimmer to put on floor to sit upon while waiting for their next event (you'll want to be able to easily wash this item)
- Cover-up to wear over wet suit to keep your swimmer warm in-between events – fleece works best – cotton absorbs water and stays wet
- Constructive entertainment ~ Playing cards, books to read, games, Legos, markers, crayons, and paper, etc. We do not recommend electronics such as cell phones or tablets because these items can get lost and stolen easily and distract the kids so much that they miss their event. (Bring valuable items at your own risk)
- Beverages & snacks – families may bring small coolers with water, sports beverages, or juice (in NON-GLASS CONTAINERS). The coaches encourage your swimmer to wait to eat until they are done competing. A full stomach of food will make them swim slower, and possibly make them feel sick since the stomach will stop digesting food when one is actively swimming. Good meet treats are Jello, apples, juice, and non-sugared dry cereal.

- Toiletry items for shower after the meet
- Clothes to wear home from the meet
- No nail polish or jewelry will be permitted at most meets, especially the big Sections and State meets

Northern YMCA Sectional Swim Meet & State Swim Meet

The Minnesota State YMCA Swim League is made up of 20+ YMCA swim teams from around the state. We belong to the Northern Section with Brainerd, Duluth & Superior YMCA. The swim season wraps up with a Northern Section meet. Swimmers at this meet will qualify for the YMCA State Meet held 2 weeks later at the U of MN aquatic center.

We really would like every swimmer to be at the section swim meet and do their best. This is the BIG meet we train ALL season for – we want to see 100% attendance for the Section meet.

- **Swimmer must be a YMCA member.**
- You must be a registered member of the YMCA Swim Team to swim in the Sections swim meet.
- You must have swum in three regular season meets to participate in the section meet.
- You must have ALL SEASON FEES PAID.
- You must have your entries to the coaches by the entry deadline.

Relays for the section meet are selected by swim times of the swimmers – The “A” relay will be the top 4 fastest times for the freestyle event in that age category. The “B” relay will be the next fastest. For the medley Relay – the “A” Relay will be the fastest combination of top split times for each stroke. If a swimmer cannot make the state meet, the relays will be rearranged by the coaches. Coaches determine the relays – it takes a lot of planning and strategy when putting relays together.

The top three places at Sections automatically qualify for State, and then the next top three times in the state from all the section meets, qualify for the state. Coaches are notified after the section meet about swimmers who qualify.

I, _____, read and understand the **Sea Turtles Swim Team Handbook**.
(parent/guardian)

I will contact the coaches or YMCA Sea Turtles administrator with any questions about the handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature_____

Date_____

Updated August 21, 2025