

Hi!

Welcome to The 2002-2003 Ocean County YMCA Tiger Sharks Swim Team! You and your parents are about to undergo a terrific experience with a sport you can literally be involved in for the rest of your life. And as a member of the OCY Swim Team, we're proud to say we believe you've joined the best team.

The purpose of this handbook is to explain to new members just what the OCY Swim Team is and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers, year after year. You and your parents should read it cover-to-cover so you'll understand important facts and policies of the team. The handbook is split into three parts: general information, parents, and swimmers section. We encourage you to refer to it often.

Message from Head Coach

I'd like to welcome all of our new swimmers to our team and welcome back to all of you who have returned for another year Tiger Sharks swimming. I am excited to be leading this team into the future.

Swimming is a great sport. It gives everyone on the team a chance to participate. Nobody rides the bench in swimming. A swimmer doesn't have to touch the wall first to be successful. You may not touch the wall first all season and have the greatest season of your life by simply continuing to improve your times. Swimming also helps you learn how to handle disappointment. Most everyone in swimming goes through a period of time where their times plateau or even get worse. There are many reasons this happens, but learning how to work through those periods that you do not improve will make you a stronger person.

Another great thing about this sport is the fact that the amount of work you put in will coincide with your results. Having good practice attendance and a strong work ethic in practice will show in your results. I have a saying that I put on all my workouts. "*None of the secrets of success work unless you do*". There are no secrets to being a great swimmer, there's no magic vitamin that you can take to swim fast, all the knowledge for technique and training is out there. If you want to be a successful swimmer all you have to do is put in good old fashion work!

Most of all to be successful in this sport it takes a **TEAM EFFORT**. From swimmers encouraging each other in practice or meets, to parent spending their time as volunteers, or to the coaching staff working hard to provide the best possible environment for competitive swimming. Together with the staff, swimmers and parents this team can become one of the strongest programs around by producing not only fast swimmers but great people. I look forward to working with you this season.

See you on the deck,

Coach Louis

Why Swimming?

Swimming helps you grow up healthy.

Many physicians and pediatricians consider swimming the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time to develop fitness and swimming skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

Swimming helps you do better in school.

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image. Not everything we do in life is a pleasant experience. Not everything we do is beneficial. Not everything is productive. Not everything is a nurturing, loving experience. Life is full of negative, destructive experiences. Rejection, defeat and failure surround all of us. The trick is to be prepared to deal with this side of life and learn to overcome discouragement.

Why The Ocean County YMCA Tiger Sharks?

The Goal of the team is to use competitive swimming to build mind, body and spirit through the development of honesty, caring, responsibility, and respect for oneself and the team.

You and your coach.

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The OCY coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for children that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself—"to be the best you can be." Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

- The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, she/he will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
- Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the OCY coaching staff. Each groups practice is based on sound scientific principles and is geared to the specific goals of that group.
- The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets OCY swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events an athlete swims.
- At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the athletes performance. (It is the parent's responsibility to offer love and understanding regardless of their youngster's performance).
- The coaching staff shall have sole responsibility for relay team assignments.

Team Structure

The coaching staff has recently updated the OCY Tigers Sharks program. It is the athletes' and parents' responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

The OCY Swim Team uses a "progressive" age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well defined, long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of challenge and commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer's physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. FUN is emphasized at this level. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge must be introduced to the training program. In this respect, "too much too soon" is more often the cause of failure to achieve maximum potential in senior swimming than in the reverse situation.

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is also important that we establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. Unfortunately, this is not always the most convenient approach to take, but it is always the most productive.

At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental, and emotional level of development.

Group Descriptions

Junior Team: (Ages: 9 and under) This level is for children who can legally perform a 25 yard backstroke and a 25 yard freestyle. Stroke instruction and a basic introduction to competitive swimming will be the focus of this group. There are competitive experiences offered. (This group does not compete as part of a competitive team in the dual meets)

Competition Team:

Red: (Ages: 6-10) This level is for youngsters who can legally perform the four competitive strokes and who are ready to learn more advanced stroke skills and technique. Stroke, turn and start instruction are emphasized. Fun and participation while building a love for swimming is the focus.

White: (Ages: 9-13) At this level competitive training is introduced. Emphasis is still on stroke technique and proper skills.

Blue: (Ages 10-14) This group is a transitional level in which swimmers move from primarily stroke instruction to actual competitive training. Swimmers are motivated and committed to be their best. Emphasis is on preparation for higher levels of training and competition. Good technique is of utmost importance.

Pre-Senior: (Ages 12 and up) This group is for athletes with the necessary desire and ability to train and compete at the highest levels. Swimmers in this group will train to compete at the local level and regional level with goals of competing at the YMCA National Level.

Senior: (Ages 13 and up for girls, 14 and up for boys) This group is for athletes with the necessary desire and ability to train and compete at the regional level with the focus on competing at the YMCA Nationals.

Swim Year-Round

The Tiger Sharks are moving towards becoming year-round competitive swimming program in which instruction and competition is offered throughout the year. Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress through the levels. Training schedules are designed to provide only slightly more time than is required for a swimmer to accomplish this. Therefore, it is important that each swimmer attends as many practice sessions as is recommended in order to gain the full benefits of the program. Pool availability is a factor. Don't waste this valuable commodity.

There are two competitive seasons

Winter/Short Course Season Training

The winter or Short Course training season begins in early September and continues through the middle of April.

Summer or Long Course Training

The summer or Long Course Season begins immediately following the YMCA National Championship mid-April and continues through to early August. During this time the Team begins to train for long course competitions or Olympic type competitions. The practice schedule will not change until school is out for the summer break at which time the practice schedules will be adjusted to accommodate our athletes and their families. Schedules will be announced at the earliest possible time.

The Long Course Season offers a great opportunity to all the athletes no matter what their level. At the higher levels of the OCY Swim Team the athletes are expected to attend as many practices as possible. All swimmers are encouraged to go back and participate with their summer league teams to "show case" their abilities and also to continue to train with their OCY Swim Team groups for the added quality of instruction and higher level of competition. The coaches know this continued training and instruction can and will help any swimmer to progress to new levels.

Everything You Need To Know About Meets.

The OCY Swim Team engages in a multi-level competition program within both YMCA and United States Swimming. Like our training program, we attempt to provide challenging yet success-oriented competitive situations for athletes of all ages and abilities. The word “competition” is derived from two Latin words; “com” and “petere”. These two words mean, “to strive with.” We believe that athletes become better by striving together, rather than competing against one another.

The OCY does not see the first place person as the only winner. Instead, we look to see who behaves like a winner. We emphasize competition within oneself. Winning ribbons, medals or trophies is not our main objective. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: concentration, listening skills, and working toward realistic goals. Of equal importance, is teaching values and behavior befitting an OCY athlete. Respect for competitors and officials, encouragement of teammates, determined effort and mature attitudes are examples of behavior which are praised and rewarded by the OCY coaching staff.

Classified Age Group Program

Swimmers will be registered in both YMCA and USA Swimming. Our first focus will remain in YMCA. USA Swimming will be encouraged to supplement competitive needs.

YMCA Swimming – YMCA of the USA runs and operates its own competitive swim league. We Compete in the North Jersey YMCA Swim League. The league is divided into several divisions. Each division is comprised of 5 to 7 teams. We compete against each team within our division in dual meets. We usually field two girls teams and one boys team.

USA Swimming - meets are conducted according to the “Classified Age-Group Program.” Swimmers are divided into seven age groups: 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 11/12, 13/14, and 15/18. There are exceptions to these classifications, a Senior or Open category includes any athlete who has met the appropriate time standard regardless of age. Age on the first day of competition determines age for the entire meet.

Within each age group, there are different “ability levels” or “classifications.” Motivational Times for each classification are established and published. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification. This permits fair, yet challenging competition on all levels.

In most cases, an athlete will span several different classifications depending on stroke and distance. Meets may combine classifications to allow swimmers to compete in a more complete

event schedule.

Swimmers are always limited to the number of events in which they may participate. Invitational meets usually set this limit at a maximum of 3 to 5 events depending on the meet host. These limits exclude relay participation.

Types of Meet

Invitational Meets – Invitational Meets are where swimmers with the appropriate qualifications may enter the maximum number of events offered. These meets are open to all swimmers. These meets are held on weekends and are 1 to 3 days in length. With typically 2 sessions a day lasting about 4 hours. Most USA meets follow this format and some YMCA meets are invitational meets. These meets present our swimmers with great opportunities to swim strokes and distances not offered in dual meets.

Dual Meets – Dual meets are one team swimming against another.

Mini Meets – Mini Meets are offered to 9 and under swimmers several times each year. These meets will be one day meets and typically last 4 hours.

YMCA Championship Meets

YMCA Bronze – For all swimmers who do not qualify for Silver States.

YMCA Silver States – Open to all swimmers with cuts who do not qualify for YMCA States or swimmers who qualify in only one event.

YMCA States – This meet is offered to every New Jersey YMCA swimmer. This meet is open to all who meet qualifying times. Qualifying times are established by the New Jersey YMCA swim league. In order for a swimmer to qualify the swimmer must swim faster than the time for the corresponding events.

YMCA East Fields – This meet is the next highest level of YMCA swimming and encompasses the East Field Region. The East Field Region consists of teams from New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and the New England States. Open to all who meet qualifying times.

YMCA Nationals – The highest level of YMCA Swimming. This meet is open to all YMCA Swimmers from across the United States who are 12 years old and older. This is considered an “open meet”, meaning there are no age groups. Swimmers must meet or surpass qualifying standards set by the National YMCA Swimming Committee.

** To qualify for YMCA States, East Fields, or Nationals, each swimmer must represent his/her team in a closed meet (YMCA only) on three separate occasions. To qualify for

YMCA Nationals each swimmer must represent his/her team at YMCA States.

USA Swimming Championships

8 & Under Mini Championships – This meet is open to all 8/unders

9 & 10 Championships – This meet is open to all 9/10 swimmers who qualify.

Silver Championships – This meet is open to all 11 and over swimmers who qualify.

Junior Olympics (JO's) – Considered the USA state championship meet. Open to all swimmers who meet qualifying standards.

Zone Championships – A team is selected by the fastest times in our LSC. The swimmer must compete in two New Jersey sanctioned meets, and compete at Junior Olympics.

Sectional Championships – USA regional competition. This is an open competition (no age-groups). The swimmer must meet the qualifying standards

US Open – This is a national invitational held every December.

US Nationals – This is the highest level of competition in the country.

- The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning which meets swimmers may attend. This policy also includes events swimmers are entered in. It should be understood that the coach's main concern is what is best for the swimmer. Therefore, coaches will make all final decisions as to which events swimmers will be entered. Please check the web as well as bulletin board prior to each meet to confirm each athlete's entries.

Policies & Hints for Meets with Prelims & Finals

There are several USA Swimming policies that govern swim meets with prelims and finals. The following are policies that the coaches must adhere to. Please familiarize yourself with these so that you can have your swimmer at the pool when he/she is supposed to swim.

- Check-In Events: Usually all 400 IM's, 500, 1000, and 1650 yard events and 400, 800, 1500 meter events will be check-in events. Most meet hosts have a set time that all swimmers must be checked-in if they are going to swim these events. If they are not checked-in, they will not be permitted to swim. Once checked-in, if a swimmer misses the event, he/she will be

automatically scratched from his/her next individual event. The coaching staff will make the scratches, and the swimmers should act as the back up. Scratches should be made only with coaches approval. Check in is the individual responsibility of each athlete.

- Relays: Relays are also check-in events. Once they are checked-in, they must swim. The coaching staff will not know when each relay will be swum until after the check-in deadline. Sometimes swimmers need to come back to finals for relays only. Be sure you know if you are in a relay and when it will be swum (at the end of prelims or in finals). Relays are a team effort and it takes all 4 members to have a successful relay team.

- Final Events: Before you leave the pool from prelims, double-check the results to see if you made finals. Someone ahead of you might scratch. Know how many people come back for finals (this will differ from meet to meet).

If you are swimming at finals, ask your coach what time you should be back for warm-up. Again, there is a penalty for any swimmer failing to show up for a final event - he/she may be scratched from the rest of the meet.

There are several hints to help each swimmer perform their best throughout the meet. Most notably are the following:

Each swimmer should get as much rest as they can the weekend and week prior to a meet. Get as much rest as possible during the meet itself. Early to bed the night before, and if possible sleep between prelims and finals.

Eat properly and nutritiously, stay hydrated. NO fast food and stay away from the “junk” in the snack bar.

You made a great decision to become a Tiger Shark!

As a member of the OCY Swim Team, if you come to practice and work hard, you'll definitely improve your swimming. And, as you get further into the program, our coaches will help you go as far as your determination and natural talent will take you. But that's only the beginning of what you'll get out of being a Tiger Shark.

OCY team members are really good people. You'll find friends you may have never met otherwise.

The meets are exciting. When you start improving your times and getting your first "cuts" it's a real feeling of accomplishment.

Also, since swimming is such a great way to stay in shape, you'll be able to take pride in your physical appearance. And, you'll strengthen your heart and lung capacity which will be a benefit for your entire life.

So congratulations on becoming a Tiger Shark. We're glad you're here!

Tiger Sharks' Three Golden Rules

These are three basic rules to help practice run smoothly:

Please don't talk when a coach or teammate is talking.

Look and listen when a coach is giving instructions.

If you have to leave the deck, at a swim meet or a practice, ask a coach first.

Three Non-Negotiable Standards

"Be Honest"

"Be On Time"

"Be Prepared"

Practice and Attendance

The following guidelines are to inform parents and athletes of the coaches' policies regarding practice. These policies have been developed to provide the best possible practice environment for all.

1. Each training group has specific attendance suggestions appropriate for the objectives of that group. As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. The coaches do, however, encourage younger swimmers to participate in other activities in addition to swimming. The coaches' expectation level for practice attendance increases as the athletes move to higher groups.
2. For the athletes' protection, they should arrive at the pool no more than 15 minutes prior to their workout time. They should also be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice is over. Athletes should be ready to swim or for dryland no less than five minutes prior to the start of their practice.
3. In case a swimmer is late for practice, it is our hope that the parents will send a note or come in with the child to explain the reason for tardiness.
4. All athletes should plan to stay the entire practice. The last part of practice is very important. Usually, there are also announcements made at the end of each practice. In the event that your child needs to be dismissed early from practice, a note from the parent for each early dismissal is requested.
5. Occasionally, most of a practice group may be attending a meet, in which case you will be notified of a practice change or cancellation.
6. Athletes should enter the building at the lobby doors, scan their membership cards, and go directly to the pool area or the locker rooms to change. Once changed, swimmers should not leave any belongings in the locker rooms, but should bring all belongings onto the deck and place them out of the line of traffic. If early, swimmers should remain on the bleachers. Please do not be found in any other areas or "horsing" around at the YMCA.
7. While at the pool facility, the athletes are the responsibility of the coaching staff.
 - A) During practice sessions, athletes are never to leave the pool area without coach's permission.
 - B) If any athlete needs to complete homework before practice or leave practice early to do homework, she/he must do their homework on the pool deck or bleachers so the

coaches will know where she/he is located.

8. While the coaches emphasize practice attendance, if an athlete is too ill to swim they should not be sent to practice. Dry land activity is not an option to a regular practice session.

Attendance Expectations

We have designed the practice schedule to allow for flexibility, especially in the younger groups. These guidelines for attendance are set to ensure the swimmer the best chance for improvement.

Junior Team	1 Practice per week (75% for award)
Red	2-3 Practices (66% for award)
White	3-4 Practices per week (75% for award)
Blue	4-5 Practice per week (80% for award)
Per-Senior	5-6 Practices per week (85% for award)
Senior	Every practice offered (90% for award)

Attendance Excellence Award

Excellence in attendance is very important in swimming. The OCY staff wants to recognize those athletes who consistently attend practices. The attendance incentive award is the beginning of excellence, when athletes show this level of dedication to their sport, we want to recognize them. Each and every swimmer has the ability to achieve this award.

Your Training Responsibilities As An Athlete.

As an athlete's level of swimming ability increases, so does his/her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be "The Best That They Can Be." As swimmers improve this is a deep commitment that requires great effort on all parts. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her parents, and most importantly to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for their best effort each time they come to practice.

Swimmers will be required to bring specified training equipment (i.e., goggles, fins, paddles, etc.) to workouts. It is the athlete's responsibility to make sure these items are properly adjusted and that spares are available. Equipment adjustment and repair will not be accepted as excuse to miss part of a training session.

Behavior Expectations

These expectations are not only for team functions. When you are out in public or participating in other activities (ex: High School Swimming or Summer League) these expectations need to be followed. Remember that you represent the OCY Swim Team at all times.

1. Any athlete who is known to use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco is subject to suspension from the team.
2. Never interfere with the progress of another swimmer during practice or otherwise.
3. At all team functions, whether practice, meets, or social gatherings, we expect each swimmer to behave in such a way that their action reflects positively on themselves and the team.
4. "Deck Changing" is not allowed by any OCY swimmer.
5. "PDA" (public displays of affection) is not allowed between our athletes or with people outside our program.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Drugs and Alcohol are a major concern threatening our nation's youth. The OCY Swim Team wishes to take a proactive approach concerning this issue with the young people in our program. It is the coaching staff's position that drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products have no place in athletics.

We encourage all of our parents to go over this issue with your children. Together, we the coaching staff and you, can help to educate our swimmers, your children, to make wise choices.

Disciplinary Action

The OCY staff will ask all of our swimmers to adhere to a Team Code of Conduct before practice begins. If we find that the Code of Conduct is breached it will lead to, but may not be limited to, the following:

- A. Restriction from any further team activity for that day
- B. Restricted from future team activity for a designated period
- C. Dismissal from any team for a designated period of time
- D. Dismissal from the team entirely

Meet Sign-Ups

Dual Meet Entries: Coaches will enter swimmers in all dual meets. There will be no sign up sheets. Every swimmer will be expected to attend all dual meets. If your swimmer cannot attend a specific meet, please contact Coach Louis by the Wednesday before the dual meet.

USA and Invitational Meet entries:

Some basic information that you need to know are:

- There is a Meet Sign Up Deadline
- There is a Meet Deadline
- The coaching staff picks the events for swimmers at all meets

Each Swim Meet has a general protocol that swimmers and parents follow in order to enter into the Meet.

- Swimmers are not automatically entered in meets.
- Parents and swimmers must enter the meets by signing the meet entry sheet posted on each location bulletin board.
- The coaching staff cannot accept e-mail, phone, fax or verbal sign ups
- The meet schedule is available on our web site and other printed communications.

STEP 1: Promotion and Sign-up

Prior to each Meet.

- Staff post a meet Sign-up Sheets along with the Meet Information Sheet.
- The Meet Information Sheet contains DEADLINES, Location, Dates and Times of all sessions, Order of Events, Athlete Costs, and Travel Information (when applicable).
- Meet Sign up deadlines are posted on the web site, Newsletter, and the team bulletin board.
- There is a finite period to Sign up: usually (1) week to (2) weeks.
- To Sign-up, simply check the day(s) of the Meet your athlete will be attending and then sign the box with your signature.

STEP 2: Double Check and Correct

After the sign up deadline.

- The staff will post all athlete entries on the team Bulletin Board, plus a copy is posted via the teams Web Site.
- The entries should be posted within 24 hours of the meet sign up deadline.
- The parent and athlete must review and check their entries.
- Things to check for are: athlete entered on the wrong day(s) and athlete not entered.
- It is the parents and athletes responsibility to let their Coach know of any discrepancies immediately.
- Meets charge a Penalty for late entries and changes after meet deadline

Conduct At Meets

- Whenever and wherever an OCY Swim Team member wears any item of the team uniform, the individual should remember that his/her actions and words reflect on the team they represent, and they should behave accordingly. Let your actions reflect the pride you have in the Ocean County YMCA.
- As a matter of courtesy to the officials and meet hosts, it is preferable that swimmers and parents alike stay off the deck and competition venue, unless they are competing or serving in an official capacity.
- Similarly, as matter of courtesy, all questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff only. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through proper channels.
- As a matter of pride, leave our team area in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each session of a meet.
- With regard to which events a swimmer competes in, the coaching staff shall have the final word. Team members are never to scratch or late enter an event without first consulting one of the coaches.
- In a meet with preliminaries and finals, it is expected that any swimmer qualifying to swim in the finals will do so.

Receiving Awards in Public

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary to be prompt and to cooperate fully with dignity and respect at the presentation. If the swimmer owns a full club uniform, it should be worn when accepting the award. It is also customary for our swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and to receive like congratulations with poise and a “thank you.” Good Sportsmanship is Essential.

If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmers to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image you present is a reflection of the team.

Team Trips

Out of town trips are not only fun but they are also an important aspect of a swimmer's development while advancing through the age group ranks.

Conduct Expectations For Team Trips

You are a unique athlete who travels to meets and spends a lot of time representing the OCY; even when not swimming. You not only represent the OCY, you represent yourself and your family. We always behave so that other teams wish to return to our meets and also invite us back to theirs.

The disciplinary actions taken with regard to violations of this Code of Conduct are at the discretion of the Coaching Staff. They may include, but are not limited to:

- Meet/ Practice Suspensions
- Team Suspensions
- Return Home from Team Trip (at Parent's expense)
- Team Activities Suspensions

As such:

1. ALL Swimmers are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and directions of the Staff/ Chaperones (where applicable.)
2. The possession of any non-prescribed and/or restricted substances (eg. Tobacco products, alcohol, illicit drugs) is absolutely forbidden.
3. Swimmers are prohibited from Public Displays of Affection.
4. Swimmers are prohibited from possessing any improper media at Team Functions. These include, but are certainly not limited to, CD's/ Music with parental warnings or improper material, R-rated movies and/ or magazines/ pictures. The Staff, upon incident, has complete arbitration on the material in question and will take the matter up with the Parents.
5. ALL swimmers will behave with the utmost RESPECT for other swimmers, teams and facilities. This includes adhering to ALL curfews.
6. All required forms and monies are to be turned in on time, before said travel trip(s) in order to attend. Any exceptions to this rule are to be taken up with the Head Coach in advance of the travel date. There are no refunds for trip expenses unless all expenses are met. (Many meets require a minimum to travel.)
7. Swimmers must remain with the team for all Team Activities for the duration of the trip, unless granted permission from the Head Trip Coach after confirming said exceptions with parent(s). This includes returning from a Team Trip with parents and not with the Team.

Parent Guidelines

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a person loses some of their ability to remain detached and objective on matters concerning their children. The coaching staff's experience has found that the following guidelines will help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective.

Developmental Rates: Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn, and this requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches, who must both, remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great or greater than that of the fastest learner.

The Coach is the Coach!: We want your child to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces the best possible results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable and often times insurmountable confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your child's coach.

At First...: When an athlete first joins the team and starts practicing, it is possible for him/her to worsen rather than improve. In the case of team members in the Junior Team, Red, White, and Blue groups, this is likely due to the emphasis placed on stroke technique. It takes a great deal of the athlete's attention to master these skills. These new sets of habits are the basis for later improvement. As training proceeds in the Pre-Senior and Senior levels, additional stress is placed upon the muscles. The muscles will at first break down under the demand of additional work, and this can explain an initial lack of improvement. As the need for improvement is realized, the muscles will gradually strengthen and the athlete's performance will improve.

Plateaus: Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every athlete's career. Plateaus can be both in competition and in training. A plateau signifies the swimmer has mastered lower-order skills, but they are not yet sufficiently automatic to leave the attention free to attack newer, higher-order skills. It is important to explain to the athlete that plateaus occur in all fields of physical learning. The most successful athletes are those who work through this momentary delay in improvement and go on to achieve greater performance, approaching their personal potential.

Ten and Unders: 10-and-unders are the most inconsistent swimmers and this can be frustrating for parent, coach and athlete alike. We must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport.

Competitive Drive: Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal and perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced early development. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also

important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as youngsters prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to experience as adults.

Be the Best kind of Parent: It is the coach's job to offer recognition, encouragement and constructive criticism of an athlete's performance. It is the parent's job to supply love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves.

Attitudes and Models: Parent's attitudes and models often dictate those of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents' desires. For example, be enthusiastic about taking your child to practices and meets, fundraising projects, meetings, etc. - don't look at these functions as chores.

Helpful Insights: If parents can offer insight on their child that will enable that child's coach to work more effectively with the child, please be sure to contact that coach.

Questions?: If you have questions about your child's training or team policies, contact your child's coach directly. Criticizing the coach in front of the youngster or other team members undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.

Disagreements: No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team, or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach, and handled by the coach.

Illness & Injury: The coach should be informed as soon as possible of an illness or injury.

Self-Motivation: Be sure that your child swims because he/she wants to. People tend to resist anything they "have to do." Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful people.

Competition: The etymology of the word "competition" goes back to two Latin words, "com." and "petere", which mean together to strive. Avoid "playing" your child against their nearest competitors, thereby creating vendettas within the team and swimming community. Close competition provides two great services for the athlete; it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.

Parents, Here's Your Role.

To have a successful program, there must be complete understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. The progress your child makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is amazing how much an athlete can progress in one year; however, there will be some ups and downs. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section carefully as you join our program.

Communication

An important link of the parent, coach, athlete triangle is the parent-coach communication line. Parents are kept informed of team activities through a variety of communication avenues. Please note that information is not always repeated in all of the following forms of communication. Therefore, it is imperative to check all available communication avenues regularly.

Avenues of Communication

Swimmer Files: Each active swimmer has a file located in the pool area. These files are an information channel through which we distribute all paper information and meet awards. Swimmers and Parents are responsible to check their file at each practice. A wise parent will check their swimmers swim bag about once a week to retrieve the information that came from the file.

Newsletter: The staff produces a Newsletter at the end of each month. General information, plus articles from various sources are a part of the Newsletter. There will always be a calendar for meet sign up deadlines and practice schedule changes and a copy will be posted on the Bulletin Board.

Bulletin Boards: The bulletin board provides information for athletes and parents. All meet information and sign ups are posted there.

Web Site: The Ocean County YMCA Swim Team Web Site can be found at _____ on the World Wide Web (WWW).

Email: We will notify you by email about any change on the website/bulletin board

Proper Lines of Communication

During the year, you may have questions that you need to ask. The following is a guide to the correct "Lines of Communication" to follow:

- A. If you have a question about your swimmer, you should refer to his/her practice group coach. If your question is still not satisfactorily answered, your question should be directed to the Louis Petto, the Head Coach. If your question is not sufficiently answered, you should then direct your concerns to our Senior Aquatics Director Brian Kilpatrick.
- B. If you have questions regarding fees, etc., please refer them to the Head Coach.
- C. If your question is regarding your athlete's official times, or files, please call your child's coach.
- D. Meet Entry Fund questions should be directed to the Team Administrator, Gretchen Surette

External Communications

The OCY will use all types of media, newspaper, magazines, TV, etc. to gain recognition for our athletes and team. If you have contacts with the media, we request that you FIRST get

approval from the Head Coach.

During Practice

1. Parents should avoid contact with coaches during scheduled practice sessions.
2. Parents are allowed to observe practice from the top set of bleachers. Please be considerate and keep conversations at a low volume level. Do not try to communicate with any swimmer from the bleachers. This is not only distracting to the athlete, but can also be very confusing and distracting to the entire team as well as the coach.

Out of Town Meets

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer's development while advancing through the age group ranks. We have established the following policies for the safety of the swimmer and peace-of-mind of his/her parents.

- Buses: We supply buses to all away Y-league dual meets. Everyone participating in the meet is expected to ride the bus, This is a great opportunity to socialize and build team unity off the pool deck.
- Parents are to be responsible for arranging transportation and lodging to away meets, with the exception of team organized trips. **DO NOT ASK YOUR SWIMMER TO HANDLE THIS JOB.**
- Parents are encouraged to attend out-of-town meets with their swimmers and/or to chaperone on team trips. These trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike and are rare opportunities to participate in a special way in each young swimmer's career.
- Please don't ask coaches to transport swimmers in personal vehicles. They are not allowed to do this.
- Any swimmer riding in a car is responsible to the parent/driver for his behavior and is expected to adhere to the Team Code of Behavior at all times.
- A medical release and emergency telephone number should be given to the parent/driver with whom your swimmer is riding in case emergency medical treatment is required.
- An appropriate contribution is expected from each passenger in a car to the driver/owner to help defray gasoline and other expenses such as meals.
- Please do not allow your child to go to an out of town meet un-chaperoned. If your child needs medical attention, there is no adult to help. Therefore, we suggest asking another adult who is going on the trip while your child is out of town. And, we strongly

suggest giving a medical release to that adult.

Meet Entry Fund (MEF)

In order to simplify and streamline the Swim Meet Entry process for invitational meets and USA meets, the team maintains an Meet Entry Fund Account for each family with registered swimmers. Entry fees for meets are nominal for each event plus there may be a small entry fee as well. The hosts team at each meet charge these fees. These fees are deducted from your MEF account. There must be money in your MEF Account for your swimmer to be entered in a meet. Keep a record of deposits to your MEF account; if you have no balance the coaches can not enter your child into meets. You may contact the administrator, Gretchen Surette if you have questions regarding balances.

ALL PAYMENTS MUST GO THROUGH THE FRONT DESK

THE COACHING STAFF WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY FEES OR MEF MONEY.

Family Responsibilities For Swim Meets

Tiger Shark athletes are not the only members of the team who participate in swim meets. Part of being a member of the OCY Swim Team family is participating as a family in team activities, social and business.

The responsibility for hosting meets is shared equally by parents from all team levels. Hosting meets requires significant numbers of volunteers. As in previous years we will be hosting several meets. We believe our parents and athletes will pitch in as they have in the past and help build a reputation as a quality organization in assisting in hosting our swim meets.

If Your Swimmer Is Entered In A Meet, You Will Be Expected To Participate In the Meet.
Mark your calendars early to be available for these dates.

Volunteerism

There are opportunities for everyone on this team -- not just the swimmer. Our goal is to continually work towards making the Tiger Sharks a stronger family program. Your support is appreciated and will be expected.

There is a continuous need for volunteers to run our swim program and parents are known for coming through. There are many opportunities to participate in the Tiger Sharks besides actually getting in the water! We hope that you are already aware of many of our ongoing functions and have joined in on the fun. Through better communications, mini-courses on various subjects surrounding swimming, and more information, we hope to make each of you more aware of our team needs. You will be surprised at the amount of satisfaction you get from

being a Volunteer.

Parent Support Group

The OCY Tiger Sharks need the support of our parents to help run a quality program. From Timing at swim meets to helping organize a holiday party our volunteers are vital to our success. Here is a list of areas that we will need your support:

Training Group Managers: these people will assist the coaching staff with the practice groups. Some of their responsibilities will include: Managing the phone chain, assisting committee chairs in getting volunteers, assisting coaches with group social activities, and act as a mentor for new swim team parents in the training group.

Team Managers: Assisting the coaching staff with setting up dual meets and staffing them with parent volunteers. Each team (Boys, Girls A, Girls B) will have its own team manager.

Officials Chair: This person will organize the team officials for meets and certifications.

Concession Chair: This person/persons will organize the concessions at our meets.

Meet Management: This person/persons will organize the volunteers needed to run meets. (Timers, runners, security, parking, clean-up, marshals)

Travel Coordinator: Coordinates hotel plans for out of town meets so that the team can stay together in the same hotel. Try to get group discounts.

- Any trip that is a team organized function (Team Trip), the travel plans will be handled by the coaching staff.

Banquet Coordinator: This person/persons will organize our team banquet

Finally, a few tips from the "Parents' Handbook" to help clear things a bit more:

- 1) Understand development-particularly, Long Term Development.
- 2) Be realistic in expectations. Not all kids progress at the same speed at the same particular time in their life.
- 3) Emphasize effort and performance, not outcome. The athlete only has control over their performance.
- 4) Rewards should be Sincere and Generous-especially verbal rewards.
- 5) Swimming is simply an arena to learn about Commitment, Hard Work, Coping with adversity, YMCA core values, etc.
- 6) Communicate regularly with the coach about concerns, etc.

Good luck with this terminally murky topic. Remember, the overall goal is to keep them enjoying this great sport.