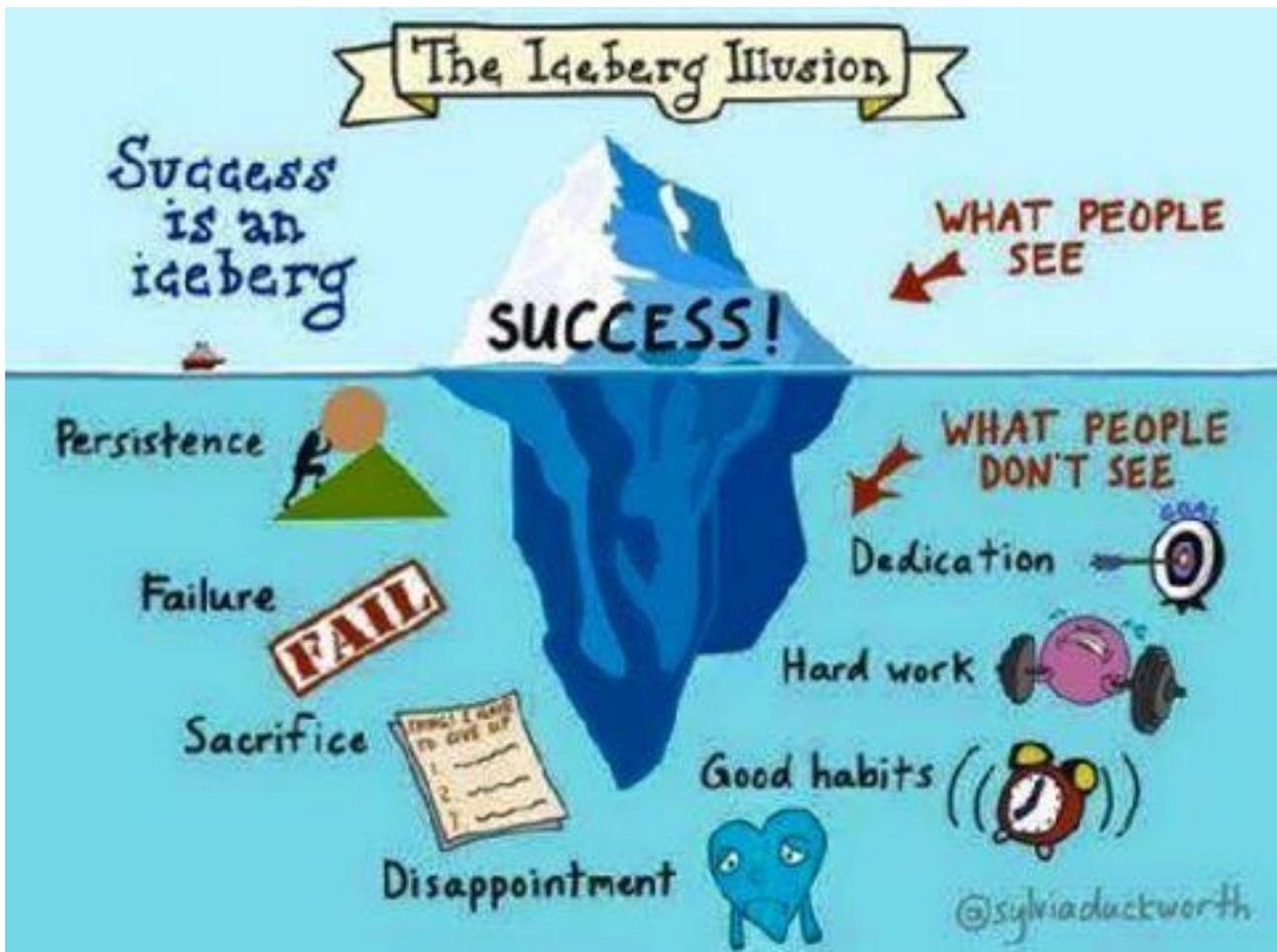


# **2016-2017 Darien YMCA Piranhas**



## **Team Handbook**

Our Mission Statement: Along with the YMCA Core Values, we, the Piranha Swim Club, are committed to excellence and dedicated to developing both the finest of athlete and the finest of citizen through the sport of swimming and our swimming program.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

In this handbook are described the philosophies, policies and general working of the Piranha Swim Team. This Handbook is one of the many mediums we use to educate and inform parents about competitive swimming at the Darien YMCA.

P.3	Introduction
P.4	Team/Coaching Philosophy
P.5-7	Code of Conduct & Commitment
P.7	Bullying Policy
P.8	Photography and Social Media
P.9	Practice Attendance & Dry Lands
P.12	Late Arrivals/Parking Lot Safety/Further Information
P.13	YMCA & USA Swimming/ Swim Meets
P.14	Swim Meets and Attendance
P.15-16	Meet Entry/Scratch Procedure
P.17-18	Parent Commitment & Responsibilities
P.19-20	Explanation of Fees & Refund Policy
P.20	PPA link and Piranha Staff Contact details
P.21	Signature Page

***“For me, winning isn’t something that happens suddenly on the field when the whistle blows and the crowds roar. Winning is something that builds physically and mentally every day that you train and every night that you dream.”***

***~ Emmitt Smith***

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Piranha Swim Team, the Darien YMCA's year-round competitive swimming program. The Piranhas are open to all swimmers of Darien and the surrounding communities. We offer swimmers of varying abilities the opportunity to swim and compete at the YMCA and USA Swimming levels and reach the highest level of swimming available in the US.

The goal of the Piranhas is to create an environment for developing not only the finest of athletes but also the finest of citizens. We strive to teach life lessons and skills through the sport of swimming and to create lifelong swimmers. As a member of the Piranhas, your family will join a first class organization. Piranha swimming is open to swimmers 6 years of age and older.

As an age group swimmer (6-12 years), focus is on stroke technique, simple sets and having fun. As swimmers get older, even though fun is still a goal of the program, the level of commitment increases to longer and more challenging workouts, early mornings and more meets. Invaluable life lessons are learned and friendships are made throughout the journey.

The Piranhas compete in two seasons throughout the year. The short course (SC) season features meets that are swum in 25 yard pools (like our pool) from September until March. The long course (LC) season features meets that are swum in 50 Meter pools (the Olympic Distance) from March/early April to July. All 10/over swimmers are required to sign up for the full season. 8/Unders can sign up for the winter only (Sept-Mar) or full year. Each season ends with a Championship meet for all levels of swimmers. Please see the *Swim Meet* portion of this Handbook for more details and Championship meet descriptions.

The Piranhas compete as members of USA and YMCA Swimming. USA Swimming is recognized as the highest level of swimming available to athletes at the amateur level, providing regional, National and international levels of competition. (YMCA swimming primarily provides the Piranhas with their dual meet competition and some invitational type meets.) Both USA and YMCA Swimming meets are offered throughout the season, culminating in championship meets. All swimmers are expected to swim in their respective Championship/end-of-the-season meet.

Registration is open to all returning swimmers in good standing (all swimmers must be current on all fees). New members are admitted to the Team after participation and evaluation in the Fall or Spring Stroke Clinic. Eligibility is based on both ability and space by training group. Piranha Swim Team members must maintain current full Darien YMCA memberships.

The Piranha Swim Team is under the leadership of Head Coach Henk Jansen.

Along with the Piranha [website](#), this handbook is one of the mediums we use to educate and inform parents and swimmers. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with our philosophies and policies. Please ask if you have any questions.

# TEAM PHILOSOPHY

Coaches - Coach

Swimmers - Swim

Parents - Support

The Piranhas is a YMCA Swim Team. The Piranhas are here to offer all swimmers of varying abilities the opportunity to swim and learn. We are not here just for the fast kids or the novice kids; we are here for all kids of Darien and the surrounding communities.

Swimming and youth sports are supposed to be fun activities that help kids grow and learn as well as provide the opportunity to build the mind and body. Our sport does this the best!! We love winning and fast times, but those are not the only two aspects of our sport, nor is it the true meaning of youth sports and the sport of swimming.

Swimming can best be described as a “delayed gratification” type of sport. It rewards kids who stick with it and put in the time and effort to improve. Sometimes it takes seasons, if not years, to make major changes and to see the rewards. In swimming you get what you work for not what you wish for.

## COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Along with the core values of the YMCA, Piranha coaches believe in having fun, longevity in the sport and teaching our swimmers life lessons through the sport of swimming. We want all kids to improve, swim fast and win races, but that is not why we coach.

In regards to coaching younger swimmers (typically 12/unders), the Piranha coach’s top three priorities are technique, technique and more technique. When coaching 12/unders, our main focus is to teach proper technique and mechanics for all four competitive strokes along with the drills that reinforce that technique. We strive to teach proper practice and meet etiquette, good listening skills, Team unity and all the other “little” things that help swimmers develop and improve. Even though there is a “training” aspect, our overall goal is fun, learning and longevity.

When swimmers are promoted to the Junior and/or Senior training level, kids will be expected to become role models to the younger swimmers on the Team. They will be introduced to longer, harder practices and will need to make more of a commitment to the Team and sport in order to continue developing and improving. Technique is still a major aspect of training, as is reinforcing the good habits and the “little” things that were taught as age groupers. Learning will continue with race strategy, more drills (as well as the same ones they learned as 8/Unders), how to swim longer sets, proper health and wellness, and commitment to the Team and swimming will be stressed.

Although our sport is measured in time, time is **NOT #1** in regards to measuring success for swimmers. As a coaching staff we want all kids to improve and swim ‘fast’ but we believe if you attend practice regularly, listen to coaches, pay attention to technique and take care of the “little” things, faster times will come. Everyone at the swim meet wants to swim fast, but how many have prepared themselves to swim fast? We feel the best measure of success is if a child is a happy swimmer.

# CODE OF CONDUCT & COMMITMENT

The Darien YMCA Piranha Swim Team abides by a strict Code of Conduct governing all coaches, swimmers and parents. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all those associated with Darien YMCA Piranha swimming treat others with dignity and respect.

The Code of Conduct is a condition of membership for all swimmers, parents and coaches. All members of the Piranha Swim Team and their parents agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and agree to be subjected to the consequences of violating the Code.

All enforcement decisions made by the Darien YMCA are final and are not subject to review. No refunds will be granted to those swimmers dismissed from the team for their or their parents' violation of the Code of Conduct.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

### Swimmers-

1. Respect your teammates, coaches, officials and opponents at all times.
2. Give 100% effort at each practice and meet.
3. Support and encourage your teammates.
4. Set a positive example.
5. Wear the required Spirit Wear at all meets and practices.
6. Display good sportsmanship at all times both on and off the pool deck.
7. Don't be afraid to make a mistake; that's part of learning.
8. Listen to and learn from your coaches.
9. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
10. Promote the Swim Team in a positive light.
11. Have fun!

### Parents-

1. Teach and practice good sportsmanship at all meets and practices. You are role models!
2. Respect the sport. Respect the officials. Respect the coaches. Respect other parents, who often serve as volunteers.
3. Do not coach your child. Let swimmers swim and coaches coach, and support both positively.
4. NEVER criticize other swimmers, coaches or officials regardless of the circumstances.
5. Follow the "24 Hour Rule". If you have a complaint resulting from a meet (or practice) situation, speak with the coach on the following day.
6. Notify the Head Referee or the Meet Manager if there is a serious problem at a meet.
7. Emphasize the FUN of the sport and the benefits of training, competing and putting forth effort at all times. Do not emphasize winning or beating another swimmer.
8. Promote the Swim Team in a positive light.

## **Coaches-**

1. Be role models and act with the highest moral character possible.
2. Reinforce the self-image of each swimmer: Be positive and constructive.
3. Emphasize the FUN of the sport and the benefits of training, competing, putting forth one's best effort at all times. Do not emphasize winning or beating another team.
4. Respect the sport of swimming. Respect the officials.
5. Teach the rules of swimming and abide by those rules in practices and meets.
6. Teach and practice good sportsmanship.
7. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.

## **All-**

1. Any conduct, including abusive language and/or gestures, racially insensitive remarks, damage to property or belongings, or any other conduct that reflects poorly on you, the Darien YMCA, and/or the Piranhas is deemed to be unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This rule applies to all swimmers, parents, siblings and guests at all times when at meets and/or practices, on the pool deck, in the locker rooms or any other associated facilities.
2. You represent the Piranhas and the Darien YMCA during any meet or practice, home or away. Any conduct such as shoplifting, destruction of property, illegal consumption of drugs or alcohol, or any other questionable activity will not be tolerated. This rule applies for the entire duration of such meet or practice.
3. The Piranha coaching staff and the Executive Director of the Darien YMCA will deal with unacceptable conduct at their sole discretion, imposing warnings, suspension or expulsion, as they deem appropriate. **ANY SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FROM THE TEAM BASED ON VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT WILL NOT BE ACCOMPANIED BY ANY REFUNDS.**
4. Please note that most meets DO NOT allow photography or videotaping of any kind on deck or at deck level by parents. Some hosts do not allow it anywhere and this exclusion is at the discretion of the meet host. At all meets using USA swimming rules (the majority) there is no photography or videotaping of any kind allowed from behind the blocks or at the turn end of the pool. This applies to coaches as well.

***"Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up."***

**~ Thomas Edison**

## PARENT AND SWIMMER COMMITMENT

**Fees:** I agree to keep my Piranha account and Darien Y membership current and to pay all invoices upon receipt.

**Fundraising:** I understand that the Parents Advisory Committee sets a per swimmer fundraising requirement, as part of the *Swim Challenge*, every other year. On “off” years, the PAC determines if a small fundraiser will be necessary to meet the financial needs of the Team. Families who do not pay on time may have their meet fee account debited to fulfill their respective fundraising obligation. 2016-17 is NOT a Swim Challenge year.

**Refunds:** I have read and understand the Piranha refund policy, as outlined on the Piranha website.

**Volunteering:** I understand that the Team needs my support at swim meets, and I commit to giving my time to facilitate the smooth operation of the Team. I understand that I am obliged to time at least three meets per season (Short course and Long course) for a total of six timing assignments per year. If my family is lacking in volunteer hours I will forfeit my \$150, \$100 or \$50 Volunteer deposit.

**Photography:** I permit the Team and Y to photograph my child and our family to use on Y or Team websites, publications, signage, social media and for submission to local news. I will note here if I do not grant permission.

**Team Handbook:** I have read and understand all Team policies and the Code of Conduct in the Team Handbook and will not violate any said policies which I understand can lead to dismissal from the Team.

## PIRANHA BULLYING POLICY

**Policy:** All members of the Piranha Swim Team have the right to feel safe at the Darien YMCA and attend Team practices/meets free from bullying.

All members of the Team will treat their Piranha Teammates with courtesy and respect.

**Description:** Behavior becomes bullying and hence unacceptable when it is deliberately aggressive, persistent and intended to scare or hurt another person. It may involve hitting, taunting, name calling, rumor spreading or social exclusion, verbally or on social media.

**Consequences:** Bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. Parents and swimmers alike are encouraged to report incidents of bullying behavior as soon as they are known to a Team Coach. Incidents will be investigated and appropriate disciplinary action taken.

# PHOTOGRAPHY

Please note when you sign your registration form for the Team, unless stated, you are allowing your swimmer to BE photographed and filmed for Y and Team use. Photography and film can be used for the Y and/or Team Facebook page, website or any Y or Team advertisement. Although you are allowing your swimmer to BE photographed and/or videotaped there are rules and guidelines set by USA Swimming, Darien YMCA and the Piranha Swim Team that must be followed.

Please note that most meets DO NOT ALLOW videotaping of any kind on deck or at deck level by parents. Some meets do not allow it at all anywhere. The exclusion of photography and taping is at the discretion of the Meet Management. Coaches are allowed to photograph and video for coaching purposes only while on deck. At any and all USA meets or any meet using USA Swimming rules, there is absolutely NO photography or videotaping of any kind from behind the blocks or at the turn end of the pool. This is true for coaches as well.

Anyone who wishes to photograph at Piranha practice or Home meets must get permission from the coaches on deck. **Videotaping at practice** by anyone other than coaches will not be allowed. Videotaping at Home intrasquad meets will be allowed, but you must get permission for any extensive videotaping (taping more than just your swimmer) from the Head Coach or another coach on deck if the Head Coach is not present.

Coaches will video using Team iPads to analyze technique and stroke correction at practice and sometimes at meets. Coaches may take photographs and/or video using iPhones for Facebook or for website use. Any video or photo taken with a personal iPhone must be deleted once the photo or video is posted. Videos will only be posted on Facebook and Instagram.

All cameras, camera phones and picture taking devices may not be used in the Team area by 12/unders. Any posting of swim picture on Social Media by any swimmer must have consent from all parties in the picture.

**There is absolutely NO photography allowed in the locker rooms at the Y or at any swim meet venue, NO EXCEPTIONS!!**

If you DO NOT want your child photographed or filmed for YMCA or Piranha use please let the Piranha Office know as soon as possible.

Any violation of this policy can lead to suspension or expulsion from the Team.

# SOCIAL MEDIA and TEXTING

The Piranhas use Facebook as one of their mediums of communication. The Piranha Facebook is for up-to-date information and the posting of pictures and videos taken at swim meets and/or practices. Negative comments and “airing of dirty laundry” will not be permitted on the Piranha Facebook page. Such acts can lead to suspension and expulsion from the Team. Please read the above for the Piranha Photography and Videotaping policy and how it pertains to social media.

Any negative Social Media Posts by swimmers against other swimmers or coaches will not be tolerated. Any “unauthorized” postings may lead to suspension or expulsion from the Team.

The Piranha Head Coach texts with the swimmers in the Senior training group and any swimmer who is on a travel meet trip for swimming and Piranha Team purposes ONLY (this is stated in the Senior swimmer registration letter). The Head Coach WILL NOT text with swimmers under the age of 13 even if he/she is in the Senior Training group or on a trip. “Social” texting will not be allowed or tolerated. Any texting between coaches and parents can be done but only with prior mutual agreement.

If you do not wish to have the Head Coach text your swimmer please let him know.

## **PRACTICE ATTENDANCE**

Specific attendance requirements and suggestions for each training group are included in the training group descriptions within this handbook. A swimmer’s promotion and improvement is contingent on commitment; age and ability are a distant second and third on the list of reasons for promotion. Although we try to keep swimmers grouped by age, eventually a swimmer’s lack of attendance and dedication to the Team will catch up with him/her in many ways. Swimmers who are committed and attend practice as outlined for their group will find themselves rewarded in their advancement through the training groups, their development as a swimmer and improvement in their times. Swimmers must earn promotion. We cannot promote a swimmer who has not demonstrated he/she is ready for advancement.

## **DRY LAND SESSIONS**

The Piranhas will be offering Dry Land sessions for the benefit of our swimmers. Swimmers will be expected to attend both dry lands and swim practice on the days they have both. Choosing to do dry lands and not swim practice will not be permitted. Swimmers must show up dressed properly for dry lands i.e. sneakers, shorts, t-shirt and bathing suit underneath clothing. The coaches and/or fitness staff reserve the right to disallow a swimmer to participate if he/she is not dressed properly, especially footwear. Please note this is for the safety of your swimmer.

The main focus of the Piranha dry land program will be helping your swimmer in the pool. First and foremost swimmers will practice safety, proper technique and dry land etiquette. The Y instructors and Piranha coaches will set up programs that best fit the age and ability level of the training group. Exercises will be geared toward core body strength, stability, stamina and coordination. As swimmers progress through the dry land program, strength training will be added. This usually happens in the Junior I or Senior training group when swimmers are ready.

# **WORDS OF WISDOM FOR PIRANHA PARENTS**

## ***PARENTS AS SPECTATORS***

As a parent of a swimmer, your best contribution is as #1 fan and supporter. Parents are not allowed on deck during practice but are more than welcome to watch practice from the lobby windows. It is recommended that you watch practice [or really pay attention] once every few weeks. When watching practice intently every day, improvement is difficult to gauge. At meets, unless you are a volunteer needed on deck, you are not allowed on deck but can remain in the designated spectator areas.

## ***LEAVE THE COACHING TO THE COACHES***

The coaching staff wants every swimmer to become the best swimmer he/she can be. It is the YMCA's responsibility to hire quality coaches. Please give the coaches the respect and space they need to do their job effectively.

## ***COACH-SWIMMER-PARENT RELATIONSHIP***

A good relationship between a swimmer and coach is imperative for positive results. The coaching staff works hard to build and develop a positive relationship and gain your swimmer's respect. You, as parents, are the ultimate word for your child. When conflicting opinions are discussed openly with swimmers (or other parents) this can be severely detrimental. Any issues of concern you may have should be taken up with the Head Coach.

## ***PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE TEAM***

As a Piranha you will be expected to support and promote the Darien YMCA and Piranha Swim Team. There is nothing more disruptive to a Swim Team than parents and/or swimmers who speak negatively about the program to other parents and swimmers. Please be a positive member of the Team and the Y.

## ***PLATEAUS***

Swimmers are often observed to improve steadily for a period of time and then reach a point where improvement in performance does not come as easily, essentially "hitting a plateau". When referring to plateaus, it is usually not a question of 'if' but 'when.' Every swimmer goes through this at some point. This is usually not an easy time for a swimmer, but with patience, motivation, encouragement, rest periods, etc., most swimmers will bounce back. Our goal is to encourage our swimmers through these times so they will still be around to enjoy inevitable future successes.

## ***"A DIAMOND IS A HUNK OF COAL THAT STUCK WITH IT"***

Many of today's elite swimmers didn't shine from the start. Years of training, sacrifice and hard work resulted in future success. Often swimmers who rise quickly face more hardships than those swimmers who progress steadily. For most, success requires hard work and sacrifice.

## ***THE COACH IS A PROFESSIONAL***

As coaches, our job is to develop swimmers. We will ensure a safe training environment and do what we can to make swimming fun and a good character building activity. Please help us by reminding your swimmer to use appropriate and respectful behavior with their teammates and other users of the facility, especially in the changing rooms and common areas of the Y.

### **OLYMPIC "DREAMITIS"**

Often during a swimmer's career sudden improvements will be apparent. This is very exciting for swimmer, parent and coach alike. Sudden successes are stepping stones on a long, long path which includes hours of practice and sacrifice. We encourage parents to be supportive but to not get struck with Olympic "dreamitis" every time your swimmer wins.

### **YOUNG SWIMMERS**

We are committed to offering a program of competitive swim training and competition for our young athletes. To ensure these young athletes will continue swimming we stress fun with learning. The youngest swimmers can be the most inconsistent athletes on the Team and this can be frustrating to parents, swimmers and coaches. Patience and encouragement help to minimize the frustration.

### **"ALL AN EQUAL MEMBER, BUT SUPPORT OUR CHAMPIONS"**

We expect all Piranha swimmers and parents to support each other no matter a swimmer's level of ability. Our program attempts to field a Team that provides for all swimmers fairly. Because of the intensive training regimen and travel required to compete at the Senior level, our older, top level swimmers require additional coaching time, pool time, and administrative and financial support. The fee structure for each Training Group reflects the commitment in all areas.

***"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."***

***~ Michael Jordan***

# LATE ARRIVALS/EARLY PICK-UPS

Darien YMCA staff do all they can to ensure a safe environment for their patrons. When a child is dropped off at practice there is an implied assumption that the child will be supervised and safe. All swimmers should be on deck, sitting on the bleachers with their caps on five minutes prior to scheduled practice time. Scheduled practice time is in-water time. If practice is scheduled 6:15-7:15p swimmers will be jumping in the water at 6:15p already secure in the knowledge of what they are supposed to do. When swimmers arrive late and leave early it is a safety concern for the staff. Coaching staff are not in the locker rooms or lobby (although the Y always has staff in the lobby) to supervise. Any swimmer who needs to leave early from practice must bring a note for the coach to ensure the coach that someone will be at the Y early to pick up your swimmer.

Although less important than safety, swimmers arriving late to practice are also a distraction to those swimmers already in the pool. It takes time away from the group for the coach to explain what is going on, and often a few more moments to regain control of the group. Please assist us by making sure that your swimmer is on time for practice.

# PARKING LOT SAFETY

All YMCA patrons are required to abide by the following practices when picking up and dropping off at the curbside. Your cooperation in creating a safer environment for all is greatly appreciated.

1. The semi-circle is for **ACTIVE PICKING UP/DROPPING OFF ONLY**. This means that if your child is not at the curb ready to get in the car, you **CANNOT** stop and wait.
2. We do not condone 'circling the parking lot' while you wait. Our lot is dark early in the afternoon in the winter and very busy. The extra traffic activity will create additional risk.
3. Children should only be allowed to exit/enter your car when you have safely pulled up to the curb. Children should never be let out when you are in the 'through lane'.
4. NEVER park your car along the curb and leave it unattended. This area is a designated Fire Lane. Leaving your car unattended against the curb is dangerous and illegal.
5. NEVER park your car, even if you remain inside it, in the Disabled Parking spaces.

ALWAYS stop and take a good look around when at the drop off area Stop Sign. Please be mindful that there is a lot of pedestrian traffic here and throughout the entire parking lot.

Further information:

## UNIFORM

<http://www.darien-ymca.org/piranhas/piranha-swim-team-gear-2/>

## COACHING STAFF

<http://www.darien-ymca.org/piranhas/piranha-swim-team-coaching-staff/>

## TEAM STRUCTURE

<http://www.darien-ymca.org/piranhas/piranha-swim-team-training-groups/>

# YMCA SWIMMING & MEETS

The YMCA of the USA is the governing body of YMCA swimming in the United States. YMCA swimming provides the Piranhas with dual meet competitions (Piranhas vs. one other team) and competition for all ages at the State, Regional and National level. As a YMCA team, Piranhas compete against other YMCA teams in the CT YMCA Swimming League as well as a State Championship meet late in the season. The short course season usually consists of 2-3 YMCA meets and there are usually no Y dual meets during the LC season. Swimmers are grouped by age for competitions, and the age group a swimmer competes in is determined by their age the day the meet begins. Usual age groupings are as follows: 8/Under, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15/Over, Senior.

**TRAVEL:** At the culmination of the winter season, Piranhas who meet the certain qualifications will travel to the YMCA National meet in Greensboro, North Carolina. In addition to achieving qualifying time standards, a swimmer must be at least 13 years of age and have swum in the equivalent of four YMCA meets during the season. There are a sufficient number of Y meets on our schedule to meet this requirement. Swimmers are responsible for participating in these Y meets. Meets will not be added to the schedule for kids who neglected to participate in the required number of meets. Also, a swimmer must be in good financial standing with the Team and the Y, have shown that he/she is a dedicated "Senior" member of the Team and mature enough to handle an overnight trip. The coaching staff reserves the right to select which swimmers attend the Y Nationals meet based on the standards listed above. Swimmers travel as a Team to YMCA Nationals and other National-level overnight trips.

# USA SWIMMING & MEETS

USA Swimming is the governing body for Swimming in the United States. USA Swimming provides competition for swimmers of all ages, levels and abilities at the State, Regional, National and international levels. Meets are offered throughout the winter and summer seasons, and both seasons culminate with Championship meets. In order to swim in meets, a swimmer must be a registered member of USA Swimming. Connecticut participates as a LSC (Local Swimming Committee) of USA Swimming. Our Club code with USA Swimming is PSDY.

USA Swimming Meets are conveniently held on weekends and meet locations are primarily in the Greater New Haven, Middlesex and Fairfield County areas, but meets can take place in other areas of Connecticut, New York and New England. Swimmers are grouped by age for competitions, and the age group a swimmer competes in is determined by their age the first day of the meet. Usual age groupings are as follows: 8/Under, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15/Over, Senior.

At the end of the winter and summer seasons, Connecticut hosts a variety of USA Swimming year end championship meets including Regionals, Age Groups, Seniors and 8/Under Championships (winter only). Description of these meets can be found in this handbook. In order to compete, a swimmer must have swum in at least one CT USA sanctioned meets during the respective season. In order to swim in Age Groups and/or Seniors (meet for 13/Overs) a swimmer must also meet a qualifying time standard.

**TRAVEL:** In the summer the Piranhas travel to the Speedo Sectional Championship meet and/or the USA Junior National Championship Meet. These are USA Swimming sanctioned meets hosted by USA Swimming. In order to swim in one or both of these meets, a swimmer must be 13 years of age or older and meet a qualifying time standard. Also, a swimmer must have demonstrated that he/she is a dedicated "Senior" member of the team, mature enough to handle an overnight trip and in good financial standing with the Darien YMCA and Team. The coaching staff reserves the right to select which swimmers attend these meets based on the standards listed above. Swimmers will travel as a Team and room with other Team members at these meets.

## **SWIM MEETS & ATTENDANCE**

Each season the Piranhas will offer USA and YMCA meets. These meets predominately take place on the weekends at different sites throughout Fairfield County and the Greater New Haven area. A schedule will be available at the beginning of each season and meet information for each meet detailing events to be swum. Start times, location, directions, etc., will be available on-line and on the bulletin board located in the lobby of the YMCA.

The coaching staff decides in which meets the Team will compete. All swimmers are encouraged to attend all meets in which the Piranhas participate, unless told otherwise by the coaches.

There will be sign-up sheets posted online as google docs for all winter SC and summer LC meets. It is the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to sign up for a meet. The coaches will not accept email confirmations for meets. If a swimmer is signed up for a meet and fails to attend, he/she will be responsible for the meet fees. Meet fees apply to all USA and YMCA Invitational meets. Generally, there are no meet fees for dual meets.

At the end of each season, USA and YMCA Swimming offer championship meets for all swimmers of varying levels of ability. There are qualification standards for certain championship meets.

Transportation to swim meets is the responsibility of each swimmer.

The Piranhas is a competitive swim team. Because we are a competitive Swim Team, all members of the Darien YCMA Piranha Swim Team will be expected to attend meets faithfully.

All Team members will need to attend at least one CT USA in-season meet for the winter season (meets between September and the end of February) and one CT USA in-season meet for the summer season (April-July) to be eligible for any CT USA Championship meet; Piranha Intrasquad meets and Y meets do not count towards these requirements. Times achieved at those meets may count as long as the proper number of officials are working. Also, any swimmer who does not meet these criteria will risk losing his/her spot on the Team the following Fall.

Swimming in meets is a part of the developmental process for swimmers. Learning how to race, how to split races properly, how to 'win' and how to 'lose', is as much a part of swimming as learning proper stroke technique. A swimmer is missing a huge part of the sport if he/she does not compete. Please make time for swim meets.

# MEET ENTRY/SCRATCH PROCEDURE

The preparation of a Piranha meet entry is a complex and time-consuming effort. Variables to be considered are many:

- Is a swimmer attending all, none or some days of a multi-day meet?
- Which events has he/she swum recently/not swum recently?
- What is the meet order of events, to avoid back-to-back swims?
- Which events is he/she close to qualifying for championships, or for which events does he/she have the qualifying time?
- Which events can a swimmer manage? Is he/she ready for a certain event?

These variables are considered for every one of our approximately 160 swimmers for each meet. Your coaches do their best to create the best opportunities for each swimmer. The procedure is detailed, and may generally be categorized into the Meet Entry Process (weeks and months before the meet) and the Scratch Process (days before and day of the meet).

## Meet Entry Procedure

- 1) Meet Schedule is published. Parents need to study the meet schedule and block off days/weekends in their calendar.
- 2) **Sign-up sheets are posted online** (Google doc). These sheets detail meet dates and session times (this info can also be found in the meet schedule page on the home page), as well as the sign-up deadline. Sign-up Sheets are available online from 2-8 weeks prior to the sign-up deadline. The coaches encourage all swimmers/parents to mark 'yes' or 'no' next to the swimmers' name indicating whether or not the swimmer will attend the meet. 'Unmarked' swimmers will be treated as a 'no' and not entered in the meet. If your swimmer's name is missing from a sign-up sheet, please write it in and mark the appropriate 'yes' or 'no'.
- 3) Because of the time required to complete the process, the coaches may begin the meet entry preparation while the sign-up sheets are still up.
- 4) Sign-up sheets are removed following last practice on the day of the posted sign-up deadline.
- 5) Final adjustments are made to the entry on the morning following the sign-up deadline and the entry is sent in by noon of that day. Once submitted, an entry is final. No additions can be made. Deletions (scratches) will not happen until meet day.
- 6) The entry will then be linked online through the meet matrix and posted on the bulletin board.

## Meet Scratch Procedure:

The scratch process is the last minute removal of swimmers from a specific session of a meet. This process ensures that every lane is used throughout the meet. Lanes with 'no-shows' slow a meet down and remove competition for those swimming beside empty lanes.

- 1) Coaches receive a scratch sheet immediately prior to each session of the meet in their coaches' packet. A scratch sheet lists all swimmers entered in that session of the meet.
- 2) Coaches must mark all swimmers on the sheet who are absent and turn the sheet in to the Timer's Table by a specified deadline (usually 15-20 minutes after the start of the first warm-up). At the Timer's Table, the swimmers' marked absent are removed from the meet. Heat

Sheets and Timer Sheets are then printed and posted around the pool deck. Once a scratch sheet is turned in a swimmer cannot be re-entered.

**Warm-up times are posted in advance and swimmers are asked to arrive at the pool 10-15 minutes prior to those posted times.**

If you are entered in a meet and you know that your swimmer will be unable to attend a certain day of the meet, please let the coaches know. This applies in the days/week before the meet for reasons such as injury or illness. It helps to take the guesswork out of whether a swimmer is running late or not on deck the day of the meet. Coaches hate to scratch a swimmer and then have him turn up 40 minutes late ready to swim. Once scratched, a swimmer cannot be reentered.

If you are running late for warm-up and still plan to attend the meet, it is VERY important that the coaches know so you are not scratched. Please exchange cell numbers with several teammates, so you can call someone who you know is going to the meet from the road when you are running late. An alternative plan is to note the pool Emergency numbers found on the Piranha website for each meet or in the Piranha newsletter, and leave a message for a Piranha coach. The best way to get info to a coach is the aforementioned but the coaches will be checking emails using their phones as long as there is good cell service. They are unable to respond but they can check.

***“The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.”***

***-Vince Lombardi***

# **PARENT COMMITMENT & RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **UNATTENDED SWIMMERS**

Swimmers under the age of 16 MAY NOT be left unattended at meets. Parents must arrange to have another consenting adult (not a coach) responsible for an underage swimmer alone at a meet.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

Within the Piranha Parents Association (every parent of a swimmer on the Team is a member of the PPA), there is an opportunity for everyone to volunteer no matter your skills, interests or availability. These opportunities include running bagel or pizza parties after practice, becoming a swim meet official, running a sign making party and much, much more.

## **MEET VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

Piranhas instituted a MANDATORY timing/meet volunteering requirement for all Piranha families. This applies regardless of your level of meet participation. Each family (not per child), will be required to work a minimum of three timing/meet volunteer shifts during the Short Course season and three during the Long Course season. Each “season” is defined by the respective start date of the season up to and including CT Regionals. Please note for Age Group championships and Senior championships those parents of entered swimmers must fulfill those requirements. A “shift” is defined as a predetermined amount of time a person times/volunteers at a meet, usually no more than 2 hours. The Piranhas usually divide assignments into 2 shifts, but can divide into 3 or 4 shifts, if necessary. A “shift” DOES NOT include timing for your own swimmer at Distance meets. An on-line sign-up sheet is emailed in advance of a meet and parents can sign up to time using this on-line system.

Each year-round family (with their registration) has paid \$150 towards this volunteer requirement. The family will receive a full refund of \$150 at the end of the year if all timing commitments (six) are met. A “Winter-only” swimmer pays \$100 (which is defined as a 9/under who opted to swim for the Short Course season only) and will receive \$100 back when their Short Course season requirement is fulfilled. If you do not fulfill your requirement, you forfeit the amount.

Families can “volunteer it forward” by working more sessions in the Short Course which give that family credit for the Long Course.

Every meet the Piranhas attend MUST have parent volunteers to ensure a smooth running meet and the Piranhas always have to put forward their fair share of volunteers. USA Swimming and the Piranhas cannot operate without these volunteers.

Active Piranha USA Officials will not be required to adhere to these requirements.

## **MEETS**

At home meets, jobs range from Timing Coordinator to selling programs. At away meets, according to the size of our entry, we are assigned a proportionate number of jobs (mostly as timers) and will be fined if our volunteer requirement is not met. Working at a swim meet is a good way to meet

other parents and increase your understanding and enjoyment of the swim program. Most parents actually find it more enjoyable to participate than to sit in the bleachers. Please make your presence known to the Timer Coordinator to help the Team avoid a fine and ensure that no parent ends up working for an entire session. Volunteers for meets may also be contacted by an Age Group Meet Chair or Timer Coordinator. Remember, many hands make light work.

Any of the following jobs fulfill the meet volunteer requirements:

- Timer Coordinator (home)
- Timers (home & away)
- Runners (home)
- Posters (home)
- Marshal (home)
- Ribbons (home)
- Program Sales (home)
- Heat Winners

## MEET VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

### AWAY MEETS

- **Timers** - assigned to time a lane at either home or away meets (shifts are usually no more than 2 hours). When the Piranhas are given a timing assignment, it is for the entire meet. No leaving until you are relieved or the meet has ended. **IF YOU TIME AT A MEET BUT DID NOT SIGN UP PLEASE NOTIFY THE PIRANHA OFFICE OR THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR IN A TIMELY FASHION AFTER THE MEET.**

### HOME MEETS

- **Timer Coordinator** – At the meet, the Timer Coordinator will organize all the timers. Timers will have already been notified that they are timing and for which shift. At the meet, the timer coordinator checks in with the volunteer table, collects and distributes stopwatches and receives lane assignments. The timer coordinator locates our timers, informs them of the location of the timers' meeting and makes sure each shift of timers knows who is replacing them and when. If a timer is a no-show, the timer coordinator needs to find someone to take their spot or replace them themselves. When the meet is over, it is very important that you email [piranhaswimdarien@gmail.com](mailto:piranhaswimdarien@gmail.com) with the names of the volunteers WHO DID NOT SIGN UP but timed anyway.
- **Timers** - assigned to time a lane at either home or away meets (shifts should not be more than 1 1/2 – 2 hours). The Piranhas are assigned a timing assignment for the entire meet. No leaving until you are relieved or the meet has ended. **IF YOU TIME AT A MEET BUT DID NOT SIGN UP PLEASE NOTIFY THE PIRANHA OFFICE OR THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR IN A TIMELY FASHION AFTER THE MEET.**
- **Runners** - collect the timing sheets from timers and deliver to the scorer's table.
- **Posters** - post the results as events finish periodically throughout the meet.
- **Marshal** - one male and one female; periodically check the bathrooms.
- **Ribbons** - gather ribbons from the swim office. Apply name and place sticker to the back of the ribbons and sort by club.
- **Program Sales** – sell programs and signs in volunteers.
- **Heat Winners** – hand out awards to swimmers who win a heat.

Officials for both home and away meets are coordinated separately. Our Officials reduce our timing commitment!

## **CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON**

All parents of swimmers in Championship Meets (Age Groups and Seniors) will be expected to fulfill the respective meet volunteer requirement. If your child is swimming in finals, you may need to work during both trials and finals.

## **MEET VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS**

Approximately every Monday before a meet in which your child is entered to swim, you will receive an email from the Piranha Timing Coordinators. This email provides a link to an on-line sign-up system (we have been using Google Docs), which is essentially an electronic sign-up sheet for volunteers. On the document there will be shifts and the number of volunteers needed. Simply sign up for a shift and exit out of the document---it is saved automatically. If the shifts don't fill up by the end of the week, reminder emails will be sent out. Please note the "Meet Volunteer Requirements" mentioned above.

## **EXPLANATION OF FEES**

<http://www.darien-ymca.org/piranhas/piranha-swim-team-fees/>

### **OTHER FEES & REFUNDS:**

**MEET VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENT FEE:** As explained above, each family pays a set amount, decided upon by the PAC, with their registration towards this fee. When families fulfill their meet volunteer requirement the amount is returned at the end of the year. Please see page 14 '*Meet Volunteer requirement*' for details on this requirement.

**FUNDRAISING:** Each Piranha family is required to participate in the Team's fundraisers. Every other year, the Team runs a Swim Challenge, a large effort swim-a-thon for which all Piranhas are obliged to collect pledges at minimum levels. The minimum required level of financial participation will be determined by the PAC during its annual budgeting process. On alternate years, the PAC will determine if a smaller fundraiser is required to meet their goals in support of the Team. Fundraiser participation is a requirement of Team membership. Any family who fails to raise the required amount will have the said amount deducted from their meet fee account. Any swimmer in arrears of fundraising requirements will not be permitted to practice until account is settled.

**REFUNDS:** A swimmer who withdraws from the team within the first three weeks of the season will receive a full refund of all fees **paid** less USA swimming fee, a \$25 administrative fee and any balance in their meet account. From that point on until January 1<sup>st</sup>, any swimmer will receive a 40% refund of paid Training Fees less a \$25 administrative fee and any balance in their meet account. After January 1<sup>st</sup>, no refunds of paid Training Fees will be provided, but a swimmer can request their Meet Fee Account balance less a \$25 administrative fee as long as said swimmer does not owe any Piranha training fees or owe fees of any other kind to the Y. PPA and USA fees are non-refundable at any time after the first two weeks of the *winter* season.

For brand new swimmers who sign up in the Spring (not returning Piranhas who decided to take the winter off), a swimmer who withdraws from the team within the first two weeks of the season will receive a full refund of all fees **paid** less a \$25 administrative fee and any balance in their meet

account. From that point on until May 22<sup>nd</sup>, any swimmer will receive a 40% refund of paid Training Fees less a \$25 administrative fee and any balance in their meet account. After May 22<sup>nd</sup>, no refunds of paid Training Fees will be provided, but a swimmer can request their Meet Fee account balance, less a \$25 administrative fee, as long as said swimmer does not owe any Piranha training fees or owe fees of any other kind to the Y. PPA and USA fees are non-refundable after the first two weeks of the *summer* season.

## **PIRANHA PARENTS' ASSOCIATION (PPA)**

<http://www.darien-ymca.org/piranhas/piranha-swim-team-ppa/>

## **PIRANHA STAFF CONTACT DETAILS:**

### **Henk Jansen, Head Coach**

Office: 203-655-8228 x1397

Email: [piranha@darien-ymca.org](mailto:piranha@darien-ymca.org)

### **Michael Jordan, Assistant Coach**

Office: 203-655-8228 x1353

Email: [mjordan@darien-ymca.org](mailto:mjordan@darien-ymca.org)

### **Liz Blau, Assistant Coach**

Office: 203-655-8228 x1308

Email: [lblau@darien-ymca.org](mailto:lblau@darien-ymca.org)

### **Mary McCarthy, Competitive Swimming Administrator**

Office: 203-655-8228 x1329

Email: [swimadmin@darien-ymca.org](mailto:swimadmin@darien-ymca.org)

***"Funny thing about life – if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you often get it."***

**~ Somerset Maugham**

***I have read and understand, and my family will abide by, all the policies detailed in this handbook. I also understand that my child will not be allowed to participate in meets until this form is handed in.***

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**