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Worthington Area YMCA

Stingray Swim Team

Handbook



2025 – 2026 Season

WORTHINGTON STINGRAYS SWIM TEAM MISSION: To help swimmers grow in character, strength, and confidence while building lasting friendships and a love for swimming.

YMCA Core Values: Our team is built on the YMCA's core values: Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. These values shape how we swim, learn, and support one another, both in the pool and in life.

Goals:

As coaches, we want every Stingray to:

- **Take Pride** – Feel proud of their effort and accomplishments, knowing their best is always enough.
- **Grow in Strength & Character** – Build responsibility, discipline, and respect through hard work and dedication.
- **Believe & Belong** – Trust in themselves, their teammates, and their coaches while creating lasting friendships.
- **Stay Positive** – Focus on progress, celebrate successes, and learn from challenges.
- **Dream Big** – Set meaningful goals, balance priorities, and chase improvement while celebrating progress, big and small.

Together, guided by the YMCA's core values of **Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility**, we can help every swimmer grow in confidence and develop a lifelong love for swimming.

Coaching

Your child will receive coaching that emphasizes skill development, confidence, and character. Our coaches are dedicated, approachable, and supportive—guiding every swimmer to grow in pride, strength, and teamwork while fostering a love for swimming.

2025-26 Coaches: Erin Jans, Sophie Wietzema, Dan Lichter, Gary Plotz

Practice Days & Times

Monday & Thursday

- 5 - 9 Year Olds 6:00-6:45 pm
- 10-12 Year Olds 6:45-7:45 pm
- 13 - 18 year Olds 7:45-9:00 pm

Tuesday

- 5 - 9 Year Olds NO PRACTICE
- 10 - 12 Year Olds 4:00-5:00 pm
- 13 - 18 Year Olds 5:00-6:15 pm

Practice schedule can be found on the Stingrays Swim Team Google Calendar that is located on the YMCA Webpage under [ymcaworthington.org/programs/aquatics/stingrays-swim-team](https://www.ymcaworthington.org/programs/aquatics/stingrays-swim-team)

Communication

To keep swimmers and families informed, the Stingrays use two main communication tools:

- **Constant Contact** – Important announcements, reminders, and newsletters will be sent via email. Please check your inbox regularly to stay up to date. To join the email list, please follow this link: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/LJZInL4>
- **Slack** – Quick updates, meet results, practice changes, and team reminders will be shared through our team Slack channels. Swimmers and parents are encouraged to join and stay active in the group. To join the Slack channel, please follow this link: https://join.slack.com/t/worthingtonst-2lm9066/shared_invite/zt-2rsmxked2-c4VTITEzKf7H9ih6eMHkeg

By using both tools, we can ensure everyone has the information they need to stay connected, prepared, and engaged with the team.

Stingray Swim Team Expectations

Swimmer Rules & Expectations

As a Worthington Stingray, you represent yourself, your team, and the YMCA. These rules and expectations are here to keep practice safe, respectful, and fun for everyone.

General Conduct

1. Follow all YMCA, pool, and swim team rules, as well as directions from coaches, lifeguards, and YMCA staff.
2. Respect your teammates, coaches, officials, YMCA members, and guests—both in and out of the water.
3. Use positive, respectful language. Negative or inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
4. Practice good sportsmanship: cheer for your teammates, congratulate swimmers from other teams, and make us proud by representing Worthington in a respectful way.

At Practice

5. Be **on time** and ready to swim at the designated start time.
6. Stay in the pool and engaged until dismissed by a coach. Once you leave the pool deck, coaches are no longer responsible for you.
7. Swim the full workout with your best effort and a positive attitude—cutting corners only hurts you.
8. Pay attention and listen when coaches are talking. Be quiet and give full cooperation so practice time is not wasted.
9. Bring a labeled **water bottle** to every practice.
10. No food, candy, or gum in the pool area.
11. Use the restroom before or after practice whenever possible.
12. If you are not feeling well or are too tired, let a coach know.

In the Pool Area

13. Enter the pool safely—feet first unless under direct supervision of a coach. Diving is only allowed in the deep end with coach instruction.
14. All pool rules apply at all times, even during practice: no running, no roughhousing, and never swim without a lifeguard present.
15. Showers should be taken before entering the pool.

In the Locker Rooms

16. Be respectful of others using the locker room.
17. Shower in the designated areas and dry off before leaving to keep the floor safe and dry.
18. Coaches are not in the locker rooms—you are responsible for your behavior there.

At Meets

19. Sign up for meet events by **8:00 PM on the Monday before each meet** (with coach assistance if needed). Swimmers are able to sign up at practice or online through a Google Form. Meet signups start the Thursday before the upcoming meet.
20. Be on time for warm-ups, listen to officials and coaches, and show respect to all swimmers and volunteers.

Other Expectations

21. Alcohol, tobacco, and drug use are not tolerated. YMCA and Minnesota State High School League guidelines will apply if violations occur.
22. While there are no set academic policies, swimmers are expected to keep their grades in

good standing and balance swimming with school responsibilities.

23. Most importantly—**have fun!** By following the rules and respecting each other, swim season will be a positive experience for everyone.

Discipline Process

1. 1st infraction = verbal warning (parents may be notified depending on severity).
2. 2nd infraction = removal from practice. Swimmer may be asked to sit out or leave the pool area, and a parent/guardian will be contacted.
3. Ongoing or serious infractions = meeting with swimmer, parents, coaches, and YMCA CEO to determine next steps. Severe issues may result in loss of practice/meet privileges per YMCA guidelines.

Swim Team Supervision Policy

In addition to the YMCA's general supervision policy:

- **Swimmers ages 0–9:** A parent/guardian must remain in the facility during practice and meets. Coaches are responsible for swimmers only while they are on the pool deck. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child in the lobby, locker rooms, gym, or other areas of the YMCA.
- **Swimmers ages 10 and older:** May be in the facility without adult supervision. While waiting for practice, swimmers should remain in safe areas of the YMCA and follow all facility rules. Coaches are responsible for supervision only on the pool deck during practice; once swimmers leave the pool deck, they are no longer under coach supervision.

Locker Room Reminder:

- Coaches are **not** responsible for supervision in the locker rooms. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's behavior and safety while in locker rooms before, during, and after practice or meets. Swimmers must behave respectfully and follow YMCA rules in all locker room areas.

This policy helps ensure the safety of all swimmers and maintains appropriate behavior throughout the facility.

Parents

We value your partnership in helping every swimmer grow in pride, strength, confidence, and a love for swimming. Here's how you can support your Stingray:

- **Be on Time for Practices and Meets** – Arrive promptly to practices. For meets, coaches will let you know what time to arrive before warm-ups so swimmers can get their numbers, check in with their coaches, and find a spot in team camp.
- **Sign Up for Meets** – Register your swimmer by 8:00 pm the Monday before each meet.
- **Stay Involved** – Read this handbook with your child so they know what to expect. Attend meets, cheer, and participate where possible.
- **Communicate Openly** – Any questions or concerns should be directed to the Head Coach/Aquatics Director.
- **Support Home Meets** – Our meets rely on parent volunteers. We aim for about 45 volunteers to run a home meet successfully. Opportunities include:
 - Set up / Tear Down
 - Clerk of Course / Meet Supervisors (organize swimmers)
 - Timers
 - Stroke & Turn Judges
 - Starters
 - Administration / Head Table / Computer

- Concessions
- Locker Room / Team Camp Supervisors
- Greeters / Meet Information
- **Ensure a Positive Environment** – Help supervise locker rooms and team areas after practice and during meets, supporting respect for all members and guests of the YMCA.

By volunteering and staying engaged, you help create a fun, safe, and supportive environment where swimmers can thrive in the pool and in life.

Required Fees and Expenses

- **YMCA Membership:** Each swimmer must have a current YMCA membership per the YMCA Swim League. Membership **cannot be cancelled for one year** from the start of the swim team season. (Example: For the 2025–2026 season starting October 2025, membership cannot be cancelled until October 2026.)
- **Swim Team Registration Fees:**
 - Swimmers 9 & under: \$165
 - Swimmers 10–12: \$195
 - Swimmers 13 & up: \$225
- **Section Fees:** Included in registration fees.
- **Financial Assistance:** Scholarship dollars are available through the YMCA Membership Director for families in need. Applications must be submitted **before registration**. Reimbursement will not be issued if registration has already been paid.
- **Payment Deadline:** Membership and registration fees must be paid in full by **Monday, October 20th.**

Miscellaneous Swimmer Expenses

- Parents should plan for additional expenses not covered by registration fees:
 - Team suit (optional)
 - Goggles
 - Swim caps (team cap optional)
 - Transportation to away meets
 - Food donations for home meet concessions
 - Individual/team pictures (optional)

What the YMCA Pays For (Covered by Registration Fees)

- 100% of coaches' salaries
- Section fees for all section swimmers
- Lifeguard salaries

What the Swim Team Pays For

- Officials' certifications
- Coaches' certifications/trainings
- Regional registration fees for qualified swimmers
- 100% reimbursement of coaches' travel expenses (hotels & mileage)
- Any unsubsidized transportation costs
- Equipment needs (practice gear, technology for meets, stopwatches, ribbons, etc.)

Team Fundraising Event Ideas

- Concession sales at home swim meets (parents volunteer food and/or time)
- Service group donation requests

Individual Fundraising: Optional. Must be organized by parents and approved by the YMCA.

Senior Year Swimmers: The Stingray swim team covers the cost of a large poster to display during home meets; swimmers may take it home at the end of the season.

Swim Meets

Swim meets are an exciting opportunity for Stingrays to showcase their skills, support teammates, and have fun in a structured, competitive environment. Meets are held on Saturday's throughout the season. These are optional to attend. If swimmers want to swim at the Section Swim Meet and have the opportunity to qualify for the State Swim Meet, they must attend a minimum of 3 meets over the season.

How Meets Work

- Swimmers compete in age brackets: 8 & under, 9–10, 11–12, 13–14, 15 & older.
- Events alternate Boy/Girl and progress through all age groups.
- Swimmers may enter up to **three individual events**; relay events are set by coaches.
- The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. Medley events include all four strokes. Rules for starts, turns, and finishes must be followed—infractions result in disqualification.

Before and During the Meet

- Arrive at least **20 minutes before warm-ups** to check in, get event numbers, and attend the team meeting. Coaches will communicate what time swimmers should get there since each meet is different!
- Warm-ups are essential for preventing injuries and getting familiar with the pool.
- Stay in the **team area** during non-event times to support teammates.
- Watch the **calling board** and be near the starting blocks **six events before your race**.
- Parents should encourage good sportsmanship, help swimmers get to events, and communicate absences to the Head Coach/Aquatics Director at least **two hours before warm-ups**.
- Respect all facilities and staff; our conduct reflects the Stingrays and the YMCA.

Swim Meet Packing List

- **Swim suit** – One piece suit for girls & swim jammers preferred for boys
- **Goggles** – Bring an extra pair in case one gets lost or breaks. Coach Erin always has extras if needed.
- **Team swim caps** – Bring an extra in case one rips. Coach Erin always has backups if needed.
- **Two towels** – Keep one dry for showering after the meet.
- **Footwear** – Deck sandals or slides to wear from gym to pool deck.
- **Blanket or sleeping bag** – For your swimmer to sit on while waiting between events. Should be easy to wash.
- **Cover-up** – Fleece works best to keep swimmers warm; cotton stays wet.
- **Constructive entertainment** – Playing cards, books, games, Legos, markers, crayons, paper, etc. **Electronics (cell phones, handheld games, tablets) are not recommended**—they can get lost, stolen, or distract your swimmer. Bring at your own risk.

- **Beverages & snacks** – Small coolers with water, sports drinks, or juice in **non-glass containers** are fine. Coaches recommend waiting to eat until your swimmer is done competing. Good options include Jello, apples, juice, or unsweetened dry cereal. Avoid heavy meals before events.
- **Hair items for girls** – Swim caps are much easier to put on with hair tied up!
- **Toiletries** – For showering after the meet.
- **Clothes to wear home**

Parent Involvement

- Families are required to volunteer at **all home meets**. Roles include timers, stroke & turn judges, starters, administration, concessions, and more.
 - **Minimum Requirement:** Volunteer at **2 home meets** per season, plus additional help if Worthington is hosting Sections.
- Home meets are a **major fundraiser**—your support helps grow the program.
 - We ask that parents assist with concession item donations for home swim meets. Items range from cash donations to purchase any items needed day of. Beverages like pop, water, Gatorade. Food items like hot dogs, fresh fruit, baked goods, healthy snacks, walking taco toppings.
- Parents are responsible for supervising their children if not present; coaches focus on running the meet.
- Setup before and cleanup after home meets are a team responsibility.

Swim meets help swimmers grow in pride, confidence, and teamwork while learning responsibility, respect, and dedication—the core values of the YMCA Stingrays.

Stingray Swim Team Parent Committee

The Stingray Swim Team is supported by the Parent Committee. Everyone is included in this group if you have a Stingray swimmer. The Parent Group's goal is to support the efforts of our swimmers by helping with meets, fundraising, and providing whatever we can to help make a stronger Swim Team.

The Parent group annually seeks volunteers to help oversee the Parent Group.

2025-26 Swim Team Parent Group:

- **Sally Almodovar**
- **Dana Larson**
- **Adam Dahlquist**
- **Laurie Dahlquist**
- **Katie Kremer**
- **Becky Strand**

Parent Committees

The Parent Committee has several sub-committees, and all parents are encouraged to participate. These committees help support the team, make meets run smoothly, and enhance the swim season experience for everyone.

- **Concessions** – Organize home meet concessions and arrange for food donations.
- **Fundraising/Program Advertising** – Develop fundraising opportunities and coordinate the sale of program advertising.
- **Volunteer Coordinator** – Organize volunteers for home meets.

- **Team Gear/Apparel** – Select and organize team swag (shirts, stickers, yard signs, apparel, swim caps, etc.).
- **Officials** – Get certified and officiate at swim meets.
- **On-Deck Support** – Assist as clerk of course, runners, or other roles at home meets.
- **Party Planning** – Organize team events, including the Christmas/Thanksmas party and year-end recognition.
- **Pool Decorating** – Design and display banners in the pool area to encourage swimmers.
- **Ribbon Labeling** – Label ribbons after home meets and organize them into individual swimmer folders.
- **Set Up / Tear Down** – Set up the pool area before meets and tear down afterward.
- **Team Pictures** – Organize team and individual photos.
- **Technology** – Work at the score table during home meets.
- **Thank You's** – Write and deliver thank you notes as requested by board members, coaches, or committee chairs.
- **Timers** – Time and record individual swimmer times during meets.

Online Resources –

<https://ymcaworthington.org/programs/aquatics/stingrays-swim-team>

A copy of this Handbook, along with additional resources such as Frequently Asked Questions, the team Google Calendar, Meet Schedule, and other important updates, can be found on the Stingrays landing page on the Worthington YMCA website.



Coach Erin has been working hard to keep this page updated so that families always have one central place to find the most current information about the team. We encourage you to check this page regularly throughout the season.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out—we're here to help!

Swim Team & Coaching Questions

[Erin Jans](#)

Aquatics Director / Head Coach

Email: erin.jans@ymcaworthington.org

Phone: 507-376-6197 ext. 226

You may also reach out to Erin directly through the team Slack channel.

Membership & Registration Questions

[Member Engagement Director](#)

Email: membership@ymcaworthington.org

Phone: 507-376-6197 ext. 224