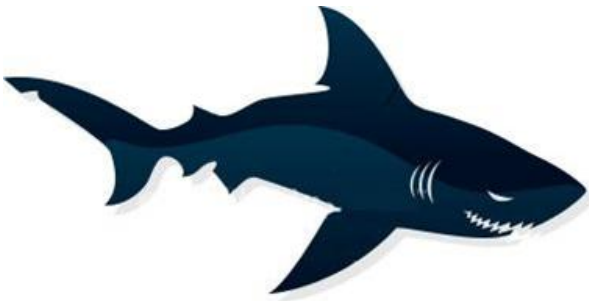


MYST Parents and Swimmers,

Welcome to the 2010-11 swim season of the Meadville YMCA Swim Team (MYST).

We are looking forward to what promises to be another great season – and we're so glad you will be part of it. Please take time to review this handbook as it will guide you through much of the season. For new parents and swimmers, many of your questions will be addressed and information about things you may not have thought about will be presented.

If, after reviewing this handbook, you still have questions, please ask an experienced parent or email Coach Laura at [laura.ymca@zoominternet.net](mailto:laura.ymca@zoominternet.net) or Connie at [connie.ymca@zoominternet.net](mailto:connie.ymca@zoominternet.net).



***Let's Go...MYST Makos***

The **mission** of the Meadville Family YMCA is to *develop individuals, through programs, in spirit, mind, and body.*

The YMCA strives to build character in all who participate in any YMCA program. The character values of *Caring, Honest, Respect, and Responsibility* are part of every program the YMCA offers.

**Caring** – All should be mindful of how their words and actions affect those around them

**Honesty** – All should represent themselves and the team in a truthful and straightforward way

**Respect** – All should treat others the way you want to be treated...if not better

**Responsibility** – All should hold themselves accountable for their own actions and to the adherence of the rules of any organization and/or facility

The **goals** of the *MYST* program are to:

- Develop a lifelong enjoyment of physical fitness through swimming
- To be an inclusive program - recognizing the value of all swimmers regardless of practice schedule and/or abilities
- And the #1 goal of the *MYST* program is for all swimmers to have a positive experience

***“Everybody swims, everybody wins”***

## **Coaching Staff**

**Head Coach** – Laura Singo, YMCA Aquatic Director

Coach Laura brings with her a great deal of experience and expertise. She graduated from Edinboro University with a BS in Health and Phys Ed. and a minor in Coaching.

Coach Laura has been with the Meadville YMCA for 2 years and was previously the Aquatic Director at Uniontown YMCA where she coached swim team for 5 years.

During her tenure at the Uniontown YMCA, the swim team more than tripled in size and swimmers went on to compete in districts and states.

## **Coaching Philosophy**

It is the goal of the MYST coaches to provide an environment which gives athletes an opportunity to develop as individuals and to prepare them for the challenges and rewards of life.

Discipline, commitment, hard work, and taking responsibility for oneself enhance an athlete in spirit, mind, and body.

Setting goals and working towards achievement of those goals are the keys to developing the values the YMCA seeks to instill. While there are no guarantees that goals will be met, it is important that swimmers take the responsibility to prepare themselves to the best of their ability in an effort to reach their goals. Preparation is a critical life skill. Whether

or not a swimmer meets their goal, we encourage them to feel good about the accomplishments they have made and the experiences they've had.

The role of the swim team, its coaches and volunteers is to teach the skills necessary to compete in a healthy and respectful way, recognizing and demonstrating that winning is not everything and the process is as important as the outcome.

### **Family Support and Involvement**

Family involvement is critical to the success of the MYST Swim Team. It is important that we all work together to provide a well-run program for the children. The team cannot run without adequate parent support. Those families not doing their share jeopardize the smooth management and operations of team events that can lead to burnout for families who consistently volunteer their time and effort.

Throughout the season there are many different opportunities for parents to volunteer that require little or no experience.

Opportunities include, but are not limited to:

practice volunteers – *under direction of Coach Laura*

- Supervise lanes and keep swimmers on task during practices

meet volunteers

- swim meet official (*certification required*)

- timers/runners
- seeding
- operating the computer system during meets
- set up and clean up for meets

**MYST Parent Boosters** committee is comprised of all swim parents.

Boosters will:

- Coordinate volunteers to assist with home swim meets
- Communicate with the YMCA in matters important to the MYST Swim Team
- Coordinate ordering of team suits, pictures, and any *pro shop* supplies
- Plan and coordinate the end of the year banquet and awards

Funds raised by the Parent Boosters will be kept separate from the general YMCA account and will be used for items determined by the Boosters.

The Parent Booster committee is not a policy making committee. They are not legally responsible and cannot make any decisions to bind or obligate the YMCA. Policy decisions affecting all YMCA programs will be developed through the YMCA Program Committee and will then be recommended to the YMCA Board of Directors for approval.

*Please note, the coaching staff works for the Meadville Family YMCA, not the parent boosters or individual swimmers and families.*

While the coaching staff is open to comments and discussions, ***parents are asked to refrain from approaching coaches on deck during practices and swim meets.*** The coaches primary focus will be to ensure all swimmers have a safe and effective practice/meet. Coach Laura *may* be available to meet with a parent following practice. Otherwise, parents can request a conference at a time convenient for everyone. Please contact Coach Laura at the YMCA or by email at [laura.ymca@zoominternet.net](mailto:laura.ymca@zoominternet.net) or Connie Gainor, Assoc. Executive Director at [connie.ymca@zoominternet.net](mailto:connie.ymca@zoominternet.net).

## **Swim Season**

The **regular MYST swim season** will run from September 20, 2010 through February 19, 2011. The regular season includes predetermined practice times, 6 dual meets (3 home and 3 away), various invitational meets, and league championships.

The **post MYST season** runs through March 20, 2011 and includes YMCA Districts and YMCA States for those swimmers with qualifying times.

The YMCA is responsible for (*paid with team fees and YMCA membership*):

- Pool rental from September 20 through League Championships
- Coach wages throughout the season (states)
- Coach travel fees through League Championship meet
- Insurances

- Administrative fees
- Equipment purchase up to \$1,000

Parents are responsible for:

- Suits, goggles, other personal equipment for each swimmer
- Invitational expenses including event fees
- Any pool rental fees beyond League Championships
- Coach travel fees beyond League Championships

Parent Booster Committee is responsible for *(paid for with profits from New Years Classic Invitational, Pro Shop, and any other fundraising deemed necessary)*:

- End of season banquet
- Awards and gifts
- Costs associated with New Years Classic Invitational
- Any expenses from above that the Parent Boosters agree to *(i.e. pool rental and/or coach travel fees beyond League Championships)*

## Regular MYST Season Fees

### **1 hour practice** 6 – 7 PM or 7 – 8 PM

	Season fee	5 payment installments
3 nights/week	\$160	\$32
4 nights/week	\$210	\$42

### **2 hour practice** 6 – 8 PM

	Season fee	5 payment installments
3 days/week	\$320	\$64
4 days/week	\$425	\$85

### **High School Swimmers** Season Assessment - \$80

Team fees can be paid in advance or broken into 5 equal installments. Fees can be set up on automatic bank draft.

All payments must be made by the following dates:

Payment 1	September 15 <sup>th</sup>
Payment 2	October 15 <sup>th</sup>
Payment 3	November 15 <sup>th</sup>
Payment 4	December 15 <sup>th</sup>
Payment 5	January 15 <sup>th</sup>

**Please note:** *Registration of your child for the MYST team requires a contract for the season.* Complete season team fees are due regardless of a swimmer's attendance or participation.

A parent may **upgrade** their swimmer's practice schedule during the season. Team fees will be adjusted accordingly.

Based on **Rules that Govern YMCA Competitive Sports** a YMCA membership is required for all swimmers during the season. The cost of membership is in addition to the season fees. YMCA membership must be paid in advance or be set up on an automatic bank draft.

*Families experiencing financial difficulties may complete a scholarship assistance request form.*

## **High School Swimmers**

Swimmers who compete on the high school team are encouraged to begin their swim season with the MYST team prior to the start of high school practice.

High school swimmers are a vital part of the MYST team and are encouraged to participate in YMCA dual meets and invitationals. By doing so, swimmers may qualify to compete in league championships, district, and state meets.

## **Practice – Format, Expectations, Schedule**

Practice times will be available Monday through Thursday from 6 PM – 7 PM and 7 PM – 8 PM. Practices will be held at the Meadville Area Recreation Complex.

Practices for the MYST Swim Team do not just involve swimming laps. Practices will include pool work, dry land training, and meet preparation.

*Pool work* will focus on improving stroke technique, starts and turns, and building endurance.

*Dry land training* will focus on building team unity, learning proper technique, and physical conditioning.

*Meet preparation* will include goal setting and meet etiquette.

Swimmers practicing during the first hour will be responsible for setup. Swimmers practicing during the second hour will be responsible for teardown and cleanup. All swimmers will be expected to pitch in and help.

For each practice session, swimmers should bring:

- a towel to sit on
- water bottle
- goggles – 2 pair
- swim cap
- deck sandals are recommended for the deck and the locker rooms.

**Guidelines for a successful practice**

- Swimmers should arrive 10 – 15 minutes before start of practice time.
- No swimmer may enter the water without a lifeguard on duty *and* the coach on deck.
- Be ready to swim when you come on deck – have your suit, cap, goggles, and water bottle in place and ready to go.

- Take restroom breaks prior to or after practice. Take emergency breaks between sets.
- Support and encourage your teammates
- Treat every start, turn, and finish as an opportunity to improve your skill.
- Be proud of where you are – or work to change it. Your ability level is your own – others should not be expected to meet your standards or hold back for you.
- When the coach asks for the team’s attention – give it.
- If you don’t understand something – ask!
- Let the coach know if there is a problem with another swimmer.
- Save dunking, splashing, and other roughhousing for open swim on your own time.

### **Locker Room Etiquette**

The YMCA swim team utilizes the Meadville Area Recreation Complex for practice sessions. The locker rooms may be used by members of the general public during practice times. It is important to remember the MYST swimmers are representing the YMCA and their parents. Please be respectful while using the MARC facility.

***Horseplay including running and screaming, turning out lights, climbing on lockers, and general mischief will not be accepted.***

## **Meet Information**

*Dual Meets* are scheduled with a single other YMCA team within our league. Home meets will be held at the MARC, with warm-ups beginning promptly at 9:00 am. Away meets are prescheduled and parents are responsible for transportation to these meets. Maps and directions will be available for those parents who need them.

Swimmers must complete a meet sign up form by the end of practice Wednesday prior to a dual meet. (*Parents of midjets, cadets, and preps must also sign the form*) The meet sign up indicates that a swimmer will be competing in the dual meet and lists the events the swimmer *would like* to compete in. Each swimmer can compete for points in *up to 3* events - one of which is a relay. Additional events could be swum as exhibition. Coach Laura will make the final determination of events each swimmer competes in.

*Open Invitational Meets* are hosted by each individual team in our league. Swimmers from all teams may compete and may enter as many events as they wish. Invitational meets are normally staged as fundraisers for the host team, so a fee is charged for every event entered. Entries and payment are normally due 3 weeks prior to the date of the invitational.

*Championship Meets* are the final meets of the YMCA short-course competitive season.

- League championships – *or Sections* – is similar to invitational meets, but swimmers can only compete in three events, one of which must be a relay. Swimmers can indicate a preference – but Coach

Laura will make the final determination of events for each swimmer.

- District meet participation requires meeting a predetermined qualifying time during a previous sanctioned meet. Qualifying times are determined prior to the start of the season.
- States are the next step beyond Districts and are limited to the swimmers who have made a qualifying time or who are in the top 12 swimmers in their event.
- YMCA Short-Course Nationals is the conclusion of the short-course season. In order to compete, swimmers must have met a qualifying time.

### **General Guidelines for a Successful Meet**

- Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes prior to scheduled warm-up
- Upon arrival, find a place to put your swim bag, towel, and blanket
- Once you are checked in, write your event number on your hand in ink. *(This will help you remember what events you are swimming and what events to listen for in seeding)*
- Get your cap and goggles and report to the pool for warm-up instructions. It is important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. A swimmer's body is like a car on a cold day – it needs to get the engine warmed up before it can go *all out!*

- After warm-up, go to the team area and wait for the first event to be called – *use this time to make a restroom or snack break*
- Parents are not permitted on deck during meets unless they are serving in an official capacity.
- Heat Sheets – a listing of all swimmers in each event in order of seed time – are usually available for sale in the lobby. If a swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered with a “no time” or NT.
- After each swim:
  - GO TO YOUR COACH – your coach will discuss your swim with you.

*What to take to the meet*

- 2 pairs of goggles
- Team suit – have an extra incase one rips
- Team cap
- Pool deck shoes that are not slippery on wet decks
- Towels – 2 or 3
- Something to sit on such as an old blanket or sleeping bag
- Sweat suit
- T-shirts
- Games – travel games, books, cards, anything to help pass the time
- Nutritious snacks – cereal, hard boiled eggs, bagels, veggies, crackers
- Drinks – water works best, but 100% fruit juice, Gatorade, other sport drinks work well also

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any MYST parent for information. These meets are a lot of fun – you'll get to meet and visit with people from other teams, play games, and see how much improvement all your hard work has achieved!

### **Ten Commandments for Swim Parents**

- Do not impose your ambitions on your child. Swimming is your child's activity and each swimmer will progress at different rates. Don't judge your child's progress based on what others do.
- Be supportive – no matter what. There is only one question to ask your child – “Did you have fun today?”
- Do not coach your child. You have taken your child to a professional coach – do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part.
- Only have positive things to say at a swim meet. Show up to cheer and applaud for not only your child, but for the efforts of all children.
- Do not criticize the officials. Only the coach may approach an official during a meet.
- Honor your child's coach. The bond between the coach and swimmer is special and contributes to his/her success and fun. Do not criticize the coach in front of your child.

- Help your child set goals beyond swimming. Giving an honest effort, regardless of what the outcome is, is more important than winning.
- Please respect the philosophy and goal of the YMCA Swim Team. If you feel that our team is not meeting your child's needs, you are encouraged to seek out another team.
  - o Understand the YMCA MYST Swim Team purpose is not to produce elite swimmers, but to provide the best possible experience for all swimmers.
- Volunteer. The YMCA MYST Swim Team would not be possible without a great deal of parental support. Please lend your help during practices, meets, and fundraising efforts.
- Please consider becoming an active participant in the YMCA. We have much to offer and are a vital part of the community.

## **Healthy Coach-Parent Relationship**

Parents have an important role in providing a supportive atmosphere for swimmers and the coaching staff. Parental involvement and encouragement are essential ingredients in a successful swimming program. Have a positive attitude and remember that swimming is only a small part of your child's life – not the central part.

The coach has the responsibility and authority for conducting swim practice, maintaining discipline, and

motivating swimmers. Parents should not interfere with these matters! If there is a concern, please bring that concern directly to the coach by phone or email. Do not discuss this concern in front of your child. Refrain from drawing other parents and swimmers into your concern.

### **Guidelines for Parent-Coach Contacts**

- Avoid contacting the coach with minor problems; these generally resolve themselves.
- Do not approach the coach during a practice or swim meet.
- Problem resolution is part of growing up. Encourage your child to try to resolve the problem first if possible.
- Be polite – maintain voice control and refrain from using derogatory or foul language.
- Send a note if your child arrives late for practice or must leave early.
- Be careful not to push your child too far, too fast. It is better to have them develop at a slower, less pressured pace than to have him/her BURN OUT or start to dislike swimming.

Discipline and workout performance is a swimmer-coach matter and should be handled in that way. The coach will bring any problems to the parent's attention if necessary. Parents should try to show a healthy interest in their child's participation in swimming and avoid commenting on stroke and training performance.

## **Swimmer's Code of Conduct**

- Respect the coaching staff – give your attention when the coach is speaking. Address any concerns with the privately (*on deck*) before or after practice.
- Display good sportsmanship at all times. Support the efforts of your teammates and all other swimmers. *Cheer – don't Jeer!*
- Attend your scheduled practices – and give your best effort. Listen to your coach and accept his/her guidance.
- Be on time – swimmers must be on deck prepared to begin swimming at the start of any practice or meet.
- Participate in scheduled meets and give your best effort.
- Display the values of *Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility* in your team activities and beyond.

## **Newsletters**

Updates and newsletters will be sent out on a weekly basis via email (*hard copy will be available for parents who don't have access*). Keep Coach Laura updated on any special activities or accomplishments regarding your child. She will recognize him/her in the newsletter

***Please be sure Coach Laura has current email addresses for all parents.***

## **MYST Season Schedule**

September 20<sup>th</sup>

Practice begins

November 6<sup>th</sup>

Dual Meet: County @ Meadville

November 13<sup>th</sup>

Invitational: Warren

November 20<sup>th</sup>

Dual Meet: Meadville @ Corry

November 27<sup>th</sup>

Invitational: Oil City

December 4<sup>th</sup>

Dual Meet: East Side @ Meadville

December 11<sup>th</sup>

Dual Meet: Meadville @ Oil City

January 8<sup>th</sup>

Invitational: **Meadville's New Year's Classic**  
*(If Parents choose to put on meet)*

January 15<sup>th</sup>

Dual Meet: Warren @ Meadville

January 22<sup>nd</sup>

Jamestown Invitational

January 29<sup>th</sup>

Dual Meet: Meadville @ Bradford

February 5<sup>th</sup>

Franklin Invitational

February 19<sup>th</sup>

League Championships

March 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>

YMCA Districts – qualifying swimmers only

March 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>

YMCA States – qualifying swimmers only

### **YMCA Addresses**

**Jamestown YMCA** (716) 664-2802

(meets held at the High School )

350 E 2ndSt., Jamestown, NY 14701

**Corry YMCA** (814) 664-7757

906 N Center St., Corry, PA 16407

**Bradford YMCA** (814) 368-6101

59 Boylston St., Bradford, PA 16701

**Franklin YMCA** (814) 432-2138

Ill W Park St., Franklin, PA 16323

**East Side YMCA** (814) 899-9622

(meets at Harborcreek High School)

6375 Buffalo Rd., Harborcreek, PA 16421