

ABOUT THE RAYS SWIM TEAM PROGRAM

The Ridley Area YMCA [RAYS] competitive swimming team has become one of the premier programs in the entire area. Since its inception in 1994, the team has grown steadily and has made its mark at many levels of swimming.

The team competes in both YMCA and USA Swimming meets during the season. USA participation is encouraged but is optional depending upon the level of the swimmer. The team is a registered USA club and participates in USA meets whenever possible.

The program begins practice in early September and runs through the end of February. Dual meets and a Division championship are swum during this time. Swimmers may extend their season into March or early April by qualifying for the District, State, or National YMCA championships. During the spring, additional programs are available for swimmers who want to focus on training for the next level of swimming.

Over the summer the YMCA provides the following training options: summer training program at Briarcliffe Swim Club for 6 weeks of long course training [50 meter pool], once a week stroke clinics held at Ridley High School Pool, and a short course training program [25 yard pool] also held at Ridley High School Pool.

Penn-Del Swim League: The RAYS program operates 4 teams in the Penn-Del Swim League with two girls teams one competing in the Girls AA Division and one competing in the Girls B South Division. The boys compete in the Boys AA Division and the Boys C Division. Each team will have 3-5 dual meets and everyone makes championships. Dual Meets start in mid November and run thru end of January. Divisional Champs will take place for each team between the end of January thru the middle of February.

YMCA Winterfest: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at the University of Maryland with competition from teams from Virginia to New England. This is a scored team meet and you must achieve qualifying times to enter. We have consistently scored in the Top 15 in this meet and it is a great opportunity for swimmers to swim in a large venue with over 1000 swimmers at the meet. This meet is usually the second weekend in January.

YMCA Charlie Hartley Memorial Championship: Is a YMCA meet hosted by RAYS at Gloucester County Institute of Technology in Sewell, NJ. This is an opportunity for the silver level swimmers to compete in a large championship style meet. This meet is qualify by time and has over 20 teams and 900 athletes attending. This meet is usually the last Saturday in February.

YMCA PA East District Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at LaSalle University from teams across the eastern part of the state. The RAYS continue to place in the Top 10 in team competition with many District Champions [both individual and relay]. This meet takes place in the middle of March.

YMCA PA East/West State Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at Penn State University from teams across the entire state. The RAYS continue to place in the Top 10 in team competition with many State Champions [both individual and relay]. This meet takes place in at the end of March.

YMCA National Short Course Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at the Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale Florida featuring over 200 teams and 1500 athletes [ages 12-19] from across the country. The RAYS continue to have swimmers achieve the qualifying times needed to make this meet. This meet takes place in the beginning of April.

YMCA East Field Long Course Championship Meet: Is a YMCA meet held at Upper Main Line YMCA. This is our biggest summer meet and gives all swimmers a chance to swim in a 50 meter pool.

YMCA Summer National Long Course Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at the University of Maryland featuring over 150 teams and 1100 athletes (ages 12-19) from across the country. The RAYS continue to have swimmers achieve the qualifying times needed to make this meet. This meet takes place at the end of July.

The RAYS also host 2 additional invitational meets during the season:

- ❖ Winterfest Q Meet at the end of December
- ❖ Spring Sprint Meet in the beginning of May

Both meets give RAYS swimmers a chance to swim new and different events from the norm.

Over the years RAYS swimmers continue to break many team records and have had swimmers achieve times that make them eligible for the YMCA National Top 10, Regional USA Swimming Top 10 [Middle Atlantic], and the MA Zone Team.

The coaching staff will strive to provide the variety of experiences a developing swimmer needs to prepare him/her for competition. Education, motivation, determination, and team pride are some of the cornerstones on which the RAYS have built their early success. The RAYS expects its swimmers to make a commitment to helping the team by developing a good work ethic and making a positive contribution in a manner consistent with the philosophies of the YMCA. If you should have questions about our program, please contact Erik Nelson at 610.544.1080 x205, enelson@cyedc.org or visit us on the web at www.cyedc.org/rays.

Fees & Membership

Practice group and current season rates determine fees. Spring and summer programs are additional. All swimmers are required to be full privilege members of the Ridley Area YMCA. An additional activity fee (\$65.00) is required and the purchase of a team suit is encouraged.

Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance is available for qualifying families. Interested individuals may pick up an application at the front desk. This assistance is made possible by the generous support of individuals who contribute to the YMCA's Annual Support Campaign and the United Way.

