

GEAUGA OTTERS SWIM TEAM AND CHARDON HIGH SCHOOL SWIM CLUB

HANDBOOK

YMCA of Greater Cleveland
Geauga Branch
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1.0 Team Purpose / Philosophy

The purpose of the Geauga YMCA Otters Swim Team is to serve the youth of our area through a competitive swim program dedicated to Christian ideals and excellence.

2.0 Team Structure / Training Groups

2.1 Otter Cubs

- This is the most novice swim team group.
- Swimmers are generally age under the age of 7.
- The swimmer must be able to swim one length(25 yards) of the pool without stopping.
- 1 practices per week suggested.
- These swimmers only participate at home meets.

2.2 The Sea Urchins

- This is the most novice swim team group.
- Swimmers are generally age 6-10 and must be able to swim at least 100 yards freestyle (4 lengths without stopping).
- 2 practices per week suggested.

2.3 The Crayfish

- This group of swimmers is generally age 9-14.
- They must be able to swim a set of 3 x 100 freestyle in 2:00.
- They should be able to legally swim at least 50 yards of 2 of the 3 other competitive strokes (butterfly, backstroke, and breaststroke).
- 3-4 practices per week suggested.

2.4 The Mussels

- This group of swimmers is generally age 12-18.
- They must be able to swim a set of 4 x 100 freestyle in 1:40 or better.
- They should be able to legally swim at least 100 yards of each of the other competitive strokes.
- 3-4 practices per week suggested.

2.5 High School

- Optional for those in High School.
- They must be able to swim a set of 4 x 100 freestyle in 1:40 or better.
- They should be able to legally swim at least 100 yards for each of the other competitive strokes.
- Will participate in YMCA and then high school invitational meets during the season.
- 5 practices per week required to earn team patch.

- Requirements for earning team patch will be posted for each season based on time standard. Please see website for program details.

3.0 Swim Team Practice Procedures and Policies

3.1 Use of Facilities

- Parents are asked to stay off the pool deck during practice.
- Parents may leave the facility; however, if a lightening storm is in the forecast the parent should be prepared to return quickly.
- Swimmers may use the shower and locker room facilities after practice as long as they respect other guests of the facility. Complaints of swimmer behavior may result in the parents being asked to accompany the swimmers to the locker room.

3.2 Attendance

There are no mandatory attendance requirements except for High School, of which High School is required to practice five times a week. However, it should be recognized that those who progress the most during the season are those who have practiced the most. YOU GET OUT OF IT WHAT YOU PUT INTO IT!!!

3.3 Check in at Practice Facility

All swimmers MUST present their YMCA membership cards at the YMCA Front Desk before using the YMCA facility. If you are not already a Y member, you will need to join before participating in practice sessions.

3.4 Promptness

All swimmers are expected to arrive at the pool early enough (at least ten minutes) to be suited and ready to meet the coach at the designated time. If you arrive late, you will lose valuable practice time.

3.5 Practice and Meet Equipment

Swimmers should be equipped with:

- A Speedo® competitive swimsuit
- a swim cap
- a pair of goggles

3.6 Practice Cancellations and Inclement Weather

Practices may be cancelled at the last minute due to weather. The coaches wait as long as possible before canceling a practice but will allow for driving time to the practice facility.

If practice is going to be cancelled a notice will be placed on the web. If practice is cancelled for a reason other than weather the families will be called by the YMCA.

In the event that something occurs at an individual facility that forces practice to be cancelled at the last minute, and swimmers have already been dropped off for practice, they will be instructed to call their parents to have them picked up early. In such cases, a coach will always remain at the practice site until all swimmers have been picked up.

4.0 Family Participation

4.1 Swim Meet Workers

Each family must provide volunteers to work at swim meets. Depending on the number of swimmer families, each family will be asked to provide the following:

- At least 1 worker for every home dual meet your swimmer(s) attend.
- 1 person to work at Divisionals, Leagues and Zones that your swimmer is attending.

4.2 Parent Advisory Council

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) will assist the coaches with the business side of running the team. The PAC will NOT offer coaching advice to the coaches. Once a family has been a member of the team for a year, you are welcome to become a member of the pack. As positions become available you will be informed.

4.3 Code of Conduct

As representatives of the Geauga Otters Swim Team and the YMCA, swimmers are expected to speak and behave in a manner that is respectful, responsible, honest, and caring. If each swimmer is mindful of these traits, appropriate conduct should never be an issue. These guidelines are to be followed by Geauga Otters swimmers at all practices, meets, and other team functions.

4.3.1 Practice Behavior and Discipline

During practice, swimmers are expected to follow the guidelines and rules of behavior for the specific facility they are practicing in. In addition, there are three simple rules that must be followed during practice:

- No talking when the coach is talking
- Eyes and ears must be above water and focused on the coach
- Swimmers must ask permission before going to the bathroom

If these rules are not followed during practice, the following disciplinary actions will be taken by the coach:

- 1st violation – the swimmer will receive a warning from the coach
- 2nd violation – the swimmer will be removed from practice and sit on the deck for the remainder of practice

These rules are designed to help teach the swimmers the core values of respect and responsibility and to ensure that the staff is providing the best teaching environment possible.

4.3.2 Unacceptable Behaviors

In addition, swimmers are expected to adhere to the following behavioral guidelines when at practices, meets, and team activities.

- Unsportsmanlike conduct – taunting, teasing, or speaking negatively about teammates, competitors, officials, or coaches.
- Use of inappropriate, strong, or vulgar language or gestures.
- Lying, deceit, dishonesty.
- Littering, abuse, or misuse of equipment, furniture, or other items of property.

The Head Coach and Aquatics Director shall together determine the appropriate action to be taken for each infraction on a case-by-case basis.

4.3.3 Intolerable Behaviors

The following actions will not be tolerated:

- Verbal or physical abuse toward others
- Theft of any kind
- Vandalism or any destruction of property, public or private
- Use of tobacco products or other illegal substances
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other illegal substances

4.3.4 High School Swim Club Requirements

In addition to the above mentioned behaviors, the High School swimmers must comply with all the eligibility, attendance and training rule guidelines set in the Chardon Athletic Department Handbook. Please see your High School Athletic Department for a copy of the hand book. The coaches will be working with a Club advisor or Guidance counselor to insure that grade requirements are met.

If a member of the team is found to have participated in ANY of the above mentioned violations at ANY time, the head coach and aquatic director shall together determine whether to suspend the swimmer or discontinue their team membership with NO financial refunds.

5.0 Competition Swimming

5.1 *Swimming Seasons*

5.1.1 Winter – Short Course

The season runs from mid-September to the last championship your child is eligible to swim. All swimmers may swim in the YMCA Divisional Championships. Your swimmer's season will end at this championship unless he/she qualifies for the YMCA League Championships, Great Lakes YMCA Zones, or YMCA Nationals.

5.1.2 Summer – Long Course

A summer season will be offered if the required number of swimmers are interested. The summer season runs from June through the end of July or beginning of August. Summer swimming ends with a Championship meet, and, for those who qualify, Summer YMCA Nationals.

5.2 Participation

Meets are highly recommended since they are the measure of the swimmer's progress in training. Regular scheduled competition is essential for maximum progression in performance.

Not all meets are designed for all the swimmers on the team. Some meets require swimmers to have qualifying (cut-off) times or be members of the USA swimming association.

5.3 Requirements to Participate in Championship Meets

5.3.1 NEO Divisional Championships

- A. All swimmers are expected to compete at this meet.
- B. Per YMCA League regulations swimmers **must swim three dual meets** prior to divisionals in order to be qualified to participate at Divisionals.

5.3.2 League Championships

- A. Swimmers qualify for League championships by competing in Divisionals. The swimmers will be notified after the Divisional results are posted if they qualified for Leagues.

5.3.3 Great Lakes YMCA Zone Championships

- A. Swimmers must swim in at least three YMCA meets (dual and/or YMCA invitationals).
- B. Swimmers must attain cut-off (qualifying) time(s).

5.3.4 YMCA National Championships

- A. Swimmers must swim in at least three YMCA meets (dual and/or YMCA invitationals).
- B. Swimmers must attain cut-off (qualifying) time(s).

5.3.5 High School Sectionals

5.3.6 PAC High School Conference Championships

- A. A swimming and diving athlete who has not participated for the school in a swimming and diving contest during the current season must cease non-interscholastic competition four weeks (28 days) prior to the Monday of the week of the State Swimming and Diving Tournament to be eligible for OHSAA tournament competition in swimming and diving.

- B. A member of an interscholastic swimming and diving squad (any student who has participated in a regular season/tournament contest) sponsored by the Board of Education **shall not participate in a non-interscholastic contest** as an individual or a member of a team in the sport of swimming and diving **during the school's season**.
- C. An individual may elect to "QUIT" the high school team at any time and return to the YMCA team. However, once you leave the High School Team you cannot go back.
- D. If an individual quits the team the remaining members of the team may continue to swim for Chardon High School.

5.4 Swim Meet Sign-ups

5.4.1 Sign-up Deadlines

All dual meets, invitational meets, and championships have signup deadlines, so it is imperative to watch the online calendar in order to get signed up for the competitions you desire.

5.4.2 Dual Meets and Approved Invitational Meets

It is expected that all swimmers attend the scheduled dual meets. An email will be sent to all the families and you will be asked to respond if you will be attending the upcoming dual meet. If you sign up to come please do not cancel. Any cancellation can affect what other swimmer on the team are able to swim.

Invitational meets are optional (you can pick and choose according to coach suggestion and your calendar). Arrangements for payment of entry fees and which events the swimmer will be competing in will be posted on the web calendar with meet details.

Once the swimmer is entered in a meet, the entry fees are **non-refundable**, even if they do not swim.

5.4.3 Attending Optional Invitational Meets

Swimmers are permitted to attend an invitational without a coach; however, the team coaches prefer and recommend that swimmers attend an invitational with their team rather than on their own. If a swimmer chooses to attend a meet they are responsible for submitting entries and fees independent of the coach or team treasurer. **Any times or results that are achieved at the meets that are entered without a coach will not count towards team records or be entered in the team database. Exceptions will only be made if the time qualifies the swimmer for a Zone or National Championship meet.**

5.5 Swim Meet Coaching

All coaches will attend home Dual Meets.

Two Coaches will attend Away Dual Meets.

The number of coaches attending approved invitational meets will depend on the number of swimmers attending the meet. However, at least one coach will attend all approved invitational meets.

5.6 Swim Meet Line-ups

Dual meet events are posted at the dual meet. The final decision of what a child swims in a meet is left up to the coach for overall team effort and best development of the swimmer. Each swimmer can swim two individual events and up to two relays at a dual meet. If there are not enough swimmers to form a relay for that gender age group then the swimmers will be allowed to swim three individual events.

Invitational, Divisional and League meet line-ups will be posted on the website 2-5 days before meet entries are due. Swimmers should double check this list to make sure their entries are correct. Swimmers can select which events they want to swim at invitational meet.

5.7 Accommodations for Travel Meets

For most out of town invitational meets hotel information will be made available on the team's web site. It is up to each family to make their own travel and hotel arrangements. *Coaches cannot chaperone swimmers.* An adult family member must accompany each swimmer, unless prior arrangement is made with another family.

5.8 Team Area

Dual Meets – Swimmers are encouraged to sit with the team at all times during a meet. Sit with the team and cheer on your team members. Each individual swimmer and their family is responsible to get the swimmer to the coach at least four events prior to their event to get their event card. **Swimmers must keep the area clean and must abide by facility rules.**

5.9 Swim Meet Apparel

All female swimmers must wear (unless discussed with coach Matt Parrish) the Otter's cap or a speedo orange cap to swim meets and all swimmers must wear the team swim suit and team t-shirt to swim meets. Team suits, swim caps, GO t-shirts, and GO warm-ups can be purchased through the team. Ordering times will be announced prior to the start of the season.

The Geauga Otters are a Speedo® sponsored team. Swimmers are required to wear Speedo® suits at all meets while representing Geauga Y.

High School Swimmers will be required to wear their school colors at all events where they are representing their school. High School swimmer can only display ONE speedo logo. If the suit has a logo for speedo then the cap cannot have a speedo logo.

6.0 Swim Team Functions

A few team activities will be scheduled periodically throughout the season. Please pay close attention to the updates for related information. We have some non-swimming activities such as parties, and age group appropriate activities.

7.0 Just For Parents

A parent should:

- A. Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer! Parent volunteers perform a variety of tasks. All jobs are important for the swim team to operate smoothly and effectively. For this reason, it is essential that every parent participate in some way by volunteering his or her time and talent during the course of the season.
- B. Conduct himself/herself in a manner to earn the respect and confidence of the athletes, coaches, officials, and YMCA professional staff.
- C. Model good sportsmanship in the following ways:
 - Encourage all swimmers
 - Control your emotions in frustrating situations
 - Abide by referees' or officials' decisions.
 - Congratulate the opponents when they win.
- D. Leave the coaching to the coaches! Do not pressure or volunteer swimming advice to your swimmers. Parental coaching can cause much confusion and harm to the swimmer. He needs only one source of coaching input - from the coach.
- E. Keep informed! CHECK THE WEB SITE (www.goswimming.org). All relevant documents will be posted on the web page and emailed to the contact email.

If you have concerns or suggestions about any part of our program, talk to the Parent Advisory Committee member responsible for that area.

8.0 Swim Team Communication System

A traditionally inherent challenge in swim organizations the size of ours is communication of information and concerns among parents, swimmers and coaches. We need regular communication to and from all parties of our organization and have set up avenues to accomplish this.

- A. **Parent Advisory Committee (PAC):** As necessary, the PAC team members, Coach, and Aquatic Director have a business meeting to plan and manage all swim team activities and needs.
- B. **Geauga Otters Web Site:** www.goswimming.org Meet results and team news will be posted on our web page. This is our most effective form of communication. Please check the web site WEEKLY!!
- C. **The Coaches:** Direct communication with the coaches is encouraged, but we ask that you please not engage the coaches in conversation during practice sessions or meets. Coaches will have a day in the office once a week. **PARENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO ON DECK DURING PRACTICE SESSION!!** If you have a question for the coaches you may contact them during their office hours.

9.0 Finances

9.1 Swim Team Membership Fee

Before a swimmer can be considered eligible for signing up for the new swimming year, all financial obligations from the previous year must be paid in full.

Each swimmer is required to pay an annual swim team fee. The amount depends on which training group the swimmer practices with. **The fee covers entire season through the last championship meet the swimmer qualifies for.** New swimmers may swim for one week for fee.

High School/Mussel Group : \$350
Crayfish Group: \$300
Sea Urchins Group: \$250
High Schoolers who leave for HS season: \$250
Cubs Group : \$100

Payment in full or enrollment in a YMCA payment plan is required before the first team practice. The team membership fee can be paid at the YMCA front desk. If you elect to do a payment plan a credit card will be required. There is a six payment plan, or a pay in full option.

There are no refunds if you decide to leave the program during the season.

9.2 Fundraising Fee

THIS IS AN OPTIONAL FEE. You can choose not to pay it and instead participate in fundraising efforts to raise approximately the same amount.

If you are going to pay the fundraising fee it must be paid at the beginning of the season to the Geauga YMCA. By paying the fundraiser fee you will not have to participate in group fundraisers. Fees are \$150 for single child and \$225 for a family. **HOWEVER, this**

DOES NOT exempt your family from required participation in any hosted Invationals, Home Meets or Championship Meets. Fee can be paid at the time of registration.

9.3 United States Swimming



USA swimming is an optional program offered by the Geauga Otters swim team. USA Swimming offers additional competitive opportunities for the more experienced swimmer. In order to participate the swimmer must have one year of competitive swimming experience or permission from the team coaches. USA participants must register at the beginning of the fall season.

More information about USA swimming can be found at usaswimming.org.

In order to participate in USA swimming the swimmer and the team must be USA certified. The swimmer must complete a registration form and pay a membership fee at least three weeks in advance of the USA Swimming meet in order to get a membership card. A USA Swimming card is good for one year. The USA membership includes a copy of the USA swimming magazine on a quarterly basis.

Please see the coaches or PAC president if you are interested in participating in USA Swimming.

A USA Swimming membership is optional. You only need it if you plan to compete in USA Swimming meets. It is not required to compete in YMCA meets.

If you will be participating in Spring Swimming season the USA registration is required for participating in swim meets.

9.4 Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance is available from the YMCA through the Strong Kids program. Please see the coaches or PAC president for questions.

10.0 Maps and Directions

Maps and directions to each meet will be posted on the web page.

11.0 Glossary

A glossary of those strange and wacky words we use in the sport of swimming. Parents! You may or may not find these words in the English Dictionary, and if you do, their definitions will

probably be radically different than the ones listed in this Glossary. Relax and take your time reading. Soon, you'll be understanding and maybe even speaking some "SWIMSLANG."

Anchor - The final swimmer in a relay.

Backstroke - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swum as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters backstroke).

Blocks - The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool, and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.

Breaststroke - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swum as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters back)

Butterfly (Fly) - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swum as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters back)

Cards - A card that is either handed to the swimmer by the Clerk of Course or given to the timer behind the lane. Cards usually list the swimmer's name, USS number, seed time, event number, event description, and the lane and heat number the swimmer will swim in. Backup times are written on these cards. Each event has a separate card.

Championship Meet – The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter this meet.

Colorado Timing System- The state of the art electronic timing system used at swim meets. This system allows for an accurate account on swimmers times and places.

Distance - How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), 1650 yards (66 lengths). Distances for long course are: 50 meters (1 length), 100 meters (2 lengths), 200 meters (4 lengths), 400 meters (8 lengths), 800 meters (16 lengths), 1500 meters (30 lengths).

Disqualification (DQ) – Every child is DQ'd at some point in their career. Keep in mind that there are specific rules governing each stroke that certified USA Swimming judges use in determining whether the stroke was "legal."

Dual Meet – Type of meet where two swim teams compete against each other.

Dropped Time – When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".

Entry Fees - The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the LSC and type of meet.

Entry Limit - Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they can not exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Electronic Timing - Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hookup cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers' times.

Event Cards – Cards that contain the swimmer's event number and event name. These cards are used to seed the heats in each event. Cards are kept in the bullpen until the time for the current race. Swimmers are then responsible for taking the cards of the times in their respective lanes.

False Start - When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.

Fastest to Slowest - A seeding method used on the longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events will alternate one girls' heat and one boys' heat until all swimmers have competed.

Flags - Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.

Freestyle - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swum as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, 200 yards/meters, 400 meters / 500 yards, 800 meters / 1000 yards, 1500 meters / 1650 yards. (LSC's with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd free)

Heat - A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers' time swum, after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Award - A ribbon or coupon given to the winner of a single heat at an age group swim meet.

Heat Sheet - The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the coaches submit swimmers' times many weeks before the meet. Heat sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seedings prior to the race, and swimmers can tell how the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.

Individual Medley (IM) – a swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. Equal distances must be swum of each stroke.

Invitational – Type of meet that requires a swim team to request an invitation to attend the meet.

Lap - One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.

Lap Counter - The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

Leg - The part of a relay event swum by a single team member; a single stroke in the individual medley (IM).

Length - The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See lap.

Long Course – a 50 meter pool.

Mark - The command to take your starting position.

Psyche Sheet - Another name for a "Heat Sheet" or meet program.

Qualifying Times - Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer. See "A" "AA" (etc.) times.

Relays - A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team, each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200 yd/meter and 400 yd/meter distances. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 200 yd/meter, 400 yd/meter, and 800 yd/meter distances.

Scratch - To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

Seed - Assign the swimmer's heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.

Short Course - A 25 yard or 25 meter pool.

Split - A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, that is timed. For example, a swimmer's first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances.

Starter - The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

Stand-up - The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.

Step-Down - The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.

Stroke Judge - The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.

Submitted Time - Times used to enter swimmers in meets. These times must have been achieved by the swimmer at previous meets.

Taper - The resting phase of a senior swimmer at the end of the season, before the championship meet.

Timed Finals - Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times.

Time Standard - A time set by a meet or LSC or USS (etc.) that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.

Timer - The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.

Time Trial - An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.

Touch Pad - The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.

Warm-down - The loosening a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.

Warm-up - The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.