



**Brad Akins**

**YMCA Barracudas  
2013 Swim Team**

**New Swimmer  
Orientation Packet**

**WELCOME!**





## Welcome to the Barracudas!

Like you, we were once new to the sport of swimming. Learning all the nuances of this particular sport can be frustrating so, to help you and your swimmer prepare for the season, a good bit of information will be provided in this packet.

Additional information (including some of what is covered in this packet) is available on the team website:

[www.ymcabarrcudas.weebly.com](http://www.ymcabarrcudas.weebly.com)

### Content Covered:

- Season Schedules
- Messages to our New Barracudas and Parents
- Parental Involvement
- Swim Meets
- Anatomy of a Heat Sheet, Swimmer's Grid, and Swimmer I.D.
- Swimmer Dictionary
- Helpful Websites



### Summer Season Schedules:

#### May 6<sup>th</sup> - May 16<sup>th</sup>

For the duration of the school year, practices will be held in the afternoon. Swimmers 10 years of age and younger will practice from 4:30 - 5:30pm.

MONDAY	4:30 – 5:30
TUESDAY	4:30 – 5:30
WEDNESDAY	NO PRACTICE
THURSDAY	4:30 – 5:30
FRIDAY	4:30 – 5:30

#### May 6<sup>th</sup> - May 16<sup>th</sup>

For the duration of the school year, practices will be held in the afternoon. Swimmers 11 years of age and older will practice from 5:30 - 7:30pm.

MONDAY	5:30 – 7:30
TUESDAY	5:30 – 7:30
WEDNESDAY	NO PRACTICE
THURSDAY	5:30 – 7:30
FRIDAY	5:30 – 7:30

#### May 17<sup>th</sup> – End of Season

Following the last day of the school year, practices will switch to morning hours. Swimmers 10 years of age and younger will practice from 9 – 10 a.m.

MONDAY	9:00 – 10:00
TUESDAY	9:00 – 10:00
WEDNESDAY	9:00 – 10:00
THURSDAY	9:00 – 10:00
FRIDAY	9:00 – 10:00

#### May 17<sup>th</sup> – End of Season

Following the last day of the school year, practices will switch to morning hours. Swimmers 11 years of age and older will practice from 7:15 – 8:45 a.m.

MONDAY	7:15 – 8:45
TUESDAY	7:15 – 8:45
WEDNESDAY	7:15 – 8:45
THURSDAY	7:15 – 8:45
FRIDAY	7:15 – 8:45

NOTE: USA Swimming is an additional, more advanced option. For those interested in this option, please contact Coach Meredith.



## Messages to our New Barracudas and Parents

### SWIMMERS

#### **Practice**

Don't panic. Everyone was a beginner once and had to learn the new skills our coaches will be teaching you. You will absorb these and grow as swimmers, probably a lot more quickly than you even thought possible.

There will be times when you feel like saying, "I can't do it." Even if swimming makes you tired and you don't feel like you can do what we are asking of you, make sure to give 100% effort. It will take some time to get into swim shape, but once you are there, you will think back on your first few weeks and be amazed how far you've come in just a short amount of time.

There may be times when you feel like giving up. Stick with it. Just like with everything, everyone has strengths and weaknesses. You may encounter a swim drill or stroke that you just aren't comfortable with or don't understand yet. The only way to overcome this is to keep at it until you do. Keep listening to your coaches' advice, keep paying attention to what your body does in the water, and keep improving. Small victories will eventually become large victories.

#### **Rules for Practice**

1. Be on time.
2. Don't touch the water before practice.
3. Listen when a coach is talking. This means with heads above water.
4. Be respectful of your coaches, your teammates, and yourself.
5. If you need to adjust something, ask a question, or anything else... finish the lap first.
6. If you practice from 5:30-7:30pm, bring appropriate workout clothes and shoes on Tuesdays and Fridays.

### PARENTS

#### **Communication**

All entries, updates, announcements and results will be posted on the YMCA Barracudas website. Emails will be sent as a reminder to check the website as they are posted.

#### **Practice**

All parents are welcome to watch practices and meet with other swim parents. However, if your presence becomes a distraction for your swimmer, please do not take it personally if one of the coaches asks you to wait elsewhere. Some swimmers respond well to audiences, others do not; we ask that you respect this for the sake of our swimmers' progress. Alternately, if your child is continuously misbehaving during practices, do not be surprised if the coaches ask for your presence at practices. We do not expect to have to do this during the summer, but it has been necessary in a few extreme occasions in the past.

Please feel free to introduce yourself, talk with us, and ask any and all questions you need answered before or after practices. We love meeting new parents! We do request, however, that once practice begins, you allow us to focus all our attention on swimmers in the water.

#### **Meet Fees**

Meet fees are set by the home team and are non-negotiable. Meet fees are either a one-time flat fee, or they are one or two dollars per event. Meet fees are paid at the front desk. When the time comes to pay your meet fees, you will receive an email reminder, so read those emails!



## Parent Meet Involvement

The success of any meet depends on parent participation. This year we are focused on emphasizing more **Parent Meet Involvement**.

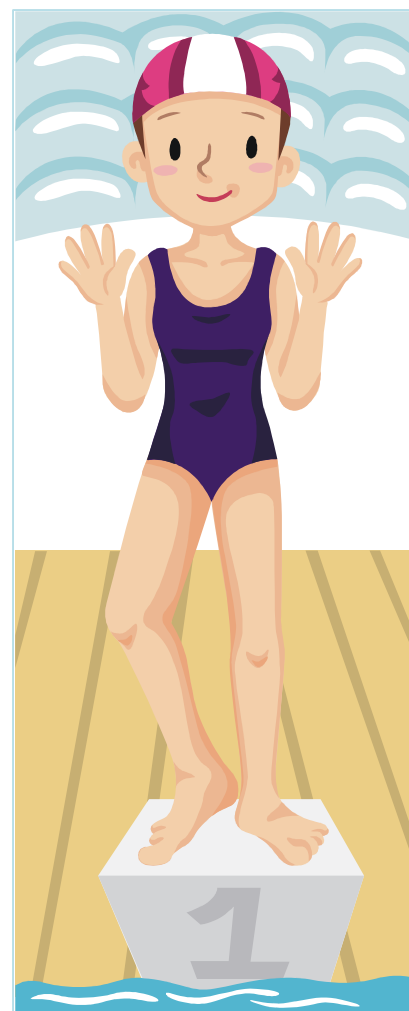
For the 2013 Season, the Barracudas have been granted the opportunity to host 2 big meets, the Pentathlon and the GRPA District meets. Those two meets combined with our usual 3 dual meets will mean all hands on deck.

This season, we would like a member of each family to participate in filling volunteer roles in both large meets and 2 dual meets. Below is a list of positions and their descriptions to see what will best fit you. Keep in mind, during the summer season, the air conditioned positions go fast so sign up today!

## Positions Available

Most positions require little to no prior experience, meaning parents can show up that day and learn what to do while on deck before the meet begins.

At the beginning of each season, we will host the Barracuda IntraSquad Practice Meet during regular practice hours. We strongly encourage new parents as well as new swimmers to attend this practice meet as it is equally beneficial for both parties. This is the best way for parents to get experience with any positions they want to learn more about or are considering as options during the summer before meets officially begin.



**Concessions:** In charge of concessions during the meet.

- ❖ Set up merchandise and money collection.

**Ribbon Table:** Distributes ribbons to swimmers following races.

- ❖ Read place sheets and distribute ribbons properly, Label ribbons and rosettes at Pentathlon.

**Set Up:** Arrives early to set up pool and deck for swimmers/guests.

- ❖ Clean deck of pool chairs, Put up flags, Hang banners and signs, Set up sound equipment.

**Take Down:** Cleans pool area after a meet.

- ❖ Replace pool chairs, Take out trash, Take down banners and signs, etc.

**Timers:** Provides accurate times for swimmers.

- ❖ Start and stop stopwatches, Record timers in clipboards for coaches, Notify Head Timer in event of a timing error.





## Swim Meets

Here are some items we recommend parents bring to meets:

- Swim cap, Swimsuit, Goggles, and Towels  
(2 of each are recommended, tears and breaks happen regularly due to chlorine and sun exposure)
- Highlighter and Permanent Marker
- Canopy Cover, Camping Chairs or Blanket
- Pack a Cooler: Fruit (oranges, bananas, and berries are best), Protein/Energy Bars, Trail Mix (without chocolate)
- Drinks: Sports Drinks, Water, and Juice
- Printed list of events your child will be swimming. This is emailed by the head coach prior to the meet.

Teams will always take time to warm up their swimmers to avoid injury, focus swimmers on the races of the day, and to work out pre-meet nerves. Warm up times will be communicated to you and your swimmer during the week prior to a meet. Be sure to have your swimmer(s) on time and ready to jump in the pool.

Once at the pool, follow these steps:

- The Swimmer should report to an available coach
- Warm up will be conducted as a team
- Purchase a Heat Sheet
- Mark your swimmer with the Swimmer's Grid either on the forearm or thigh. For younger children, it is recommended to write their last name and age group on the back on one shoulder for easy Swimmer Identification in the Bull Pen. (Heat Sheets, Swimmer's Grid, and Swimmer Identification be covered in detail on the next page)



**FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY:** Officials will ask and remind spectators to NOT use a flash when taking photographs of a swimmer's start. This is because a swimmer's start is signaled by both a strobe light and a horn. The flash of a camera can give a false indicator to a swimmer to start and may even cause a disqualification.

# DQ

**DISQUALIFICATION:** The dreaded "DQ" is something that no swimmer ever wants to hear. Be prepared to wipe tears away and remind your swimmer(s) that these things happen and they'll get it next time. Certain strokes have rules that if not followed will cause a disqualification of a swimmer. Officials are stationed at specific spots on the pool deck to watch strokes and wall touches.



## Anatomy of a Heat Sheet, Swimmer's Grid, and Swimmer I.D.

Swim Meets can have several swim clubs represented, with many swimmers entered in each event. Many times there can be anywhere from 10 to 40 swimmers in an event. With only 6 to 10 lanes in a competition pool, these events need to be broken into smaller races, thus "The Heat".

Heat sheets contain a lot of important information condensed into small areas and can be difficult to read the first couple of times out. Hopefully this breakdown will help you and your swimmer decode it.

### HEAT SHEET:

The example on the right shows a portion of a Heat Sheet, 1 race or "Event". This is how it breaks down:

- 1) Event (#1) – Age Group (10 & Under) – Distance (200 Yard) – Stroke (IM-Individual Medley)
- 2) Heat 1 of 2 (there are 2 heats in this event and our swimmer is in the 1<sup>st</sup> heat)
- 3) Lane assignment is listed vertically

This BAY Swimmer would be swimming the 200 IM in:

- Event 1
- Heat 1
- Lane 5

NOTE: The Barracuda Swimmers can be easily found on Heat Sheets by spotting the Team Name of **BAY** (Brad Akins YMCA)

#1 Girls 10 & Under 200 Yard IM				
Meet Qualifying: 3:42.69				
Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 of 2 Finals				
1				
2				
3	Bogdan, Sarah G	10	SUMM	3:42.69
4	Nullis, Macy A	9	ABSC	3:40.00
5	Dhabolt, Makala M	9	BAY	3:40.01
6				
7				
8				
Heat 2 of 2 Finals				
1	Upchurch, Katie Grace G	10	ABSC	3:30.00
2	Halbach, Brynn E	9	ABSC	3:22.56
3	Allison, Kyra A	10	ASL	2:55.82
4	Moore, Christa Lynn L	10	ABSC	2:50.88
5	Weimer, Abigail R	9	ABSC	2:55.73
6	Klinck, McKenzie T	10	LA	3:02.08
7	Earwood, Katy T	10	ASL	3:25.11
8				

E	H	L	S
1	1	5	200 IM
8	3	5	25 Back
13	1	3	25 Breast
18	6	5	25 Fly

### SWIMMER'S GRID:

Swimmer's Grids are drawn on the forearm or thigh of a swimmer so they know when, where, and what they will be swimming.

E= Event  
H= Heat  
L= Lane  
S= Distance and Stroke

Using the Heat Sheet above, we have filled out the Swimmer's Grid for the BAY Swimmer (first line only).

### SWIMMER I.D.:

This helps volunteers direct swimmers to where they need to be. This is most helpful to those working the Bull Pen when getting events and heats organized for younger children.





## Swimmer Dictionary

When you are new to swimming on a competitive team, talking to swimming veterans can occasionally be like talking to someone speaking a completely new language. Here's a list of terms and abbreviations to help get you up to speed.

**BACKSTROKE / BACK/ BA. :** (n.) One of the four competitive swimming strokes, and the only one swum on one's back. This has the advantage of easy breathing, but the disadvantage of swimmers not being able to see where they are going. It is also the only stroke that starts from the water.

**BACKSTROKE FLAGS/ FLAGS:** (n.) Backstroke flags are hung across the lanes of the pool on both ends. They are positioned about 5 yards from either wall and serve as a useful tool for backstroke swimmers who need to know when they are approaching the wall.

**BLOCKS:** (n.) 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. They are not diving boards!

**BREASTSTROKE/ BREAST/ BR. :** (n.) One of the four competitive swimming strokes. Swimmers are on their breast and do not rotate during this stroke. Although it is extremely popular among swimmers because of the ability to keep the head out of the water for a good portion of the race, breaststroke is one of the most difficult swimming strokes to perfect at a competitive level as it requires a mastery of timing and synchronicity.

**BULLPEN:** (n.) The holding area where swimmers wait to receive their lane and heat assignments for a swimming event. The bullpen is usually set up away from the pool and has rows of chairs or bleachers for the swimmers to sit. Once swimmers are called to the bullpen and organized into their proper heats, they are filed through directly behind the blocks into their lanes where they will step up and start their race. Depending on which teams are running the meets or the size of the meet, there may or may not be a bullpen present.

**BUTTERFLY/ FLY:** (n.) One of the four competitive swimming strokes. Swimmers are on their breast and have both arms moving simultaneously. It is one of the hardest strokes for new swimmers who have not built up the proper shoulder muscles needed to power through the water. Until technique is polished, fly is difficult for beginning swimmers, even those with more developed shoulder muscles.

**DIVE:** (n.) Entering the water head first in a streamlined position. Diving is not allowed unless monitored by a swim coach. Swimmers start a race by diving into the water (except in backstroke) from the block or from the side of the pool if they are less advanced.

**DIVE OVER:** (n.) A type of start in which swimmers who have just completed a race remain in the water until the swimmers on the blocks for the next heat dive over them to start the next race.

**FALSE START:** (n.) An illegal start at the beginning of a race that occurs when a swimmer is moving, in any way, prior to the sound of the official start of the race (signified by the beep from the electronic timing system). False starts result in DQs for the swimmer, or swimmers if it occurs during a relay, but officials may try to be flexible by saying "step down" or "relax" to delay the start if they believe a swimmer is on the verge of doing a false start.

**FINISH:** (n.) In a race, the last few yards to the wall and the swimmer's actual touch at the wall are all included as part of the finish. In breast and fly, swimmers must finish with both hand simultaneously touching to avoid disqualification. In backstroke, swimmers must finish on their backs (no rolling over) to avoid disqualification.

**FREESTYLE/ FREE/ FR:** (n.) One of the four main competitive swimming strokes. Freestyle is swam on the breast, most often as a front crawl, and is usually regarded as the fastest of the four competitive strokes.

**INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY/ IM:** (n.) An individual medley of strokes where an individual swimmer will swim one or more laps each of butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle, in that order.

**STREAMLINE:** (n.) The most hydrodynamic body position for a swimmer. The swimmer's body is as straight and tight as it can possibly be. The arms are positioned above the head with elbows locked, hand over hand. The head is tucked down between the arms and the legs are held together tightly with knees locked and toes pointed. This technique is used to reduce drag, gaining maximum distance beneath the water during a start and/or pushoff from the wall.



## Helpful Websites

### YMCA Barracudas Team Website

All team information for the season is posted here! You can find your swimmer's times and results, the Coaches Page, How to Read a Heat Sheet, FAQs, etc. posted on our team website.

[www.ymcabarracudas.weebly.com](http://www.ymcabarracudas.weebly.com)

### Barracudas Facebook Group

Visit to connect with other Barracudas or their families, find documents for team records and swim meets, and get quick updates on important team information.

<http://www.facebook.com/BAYbarracudas>

### Georgia Swimming Website

All the information you could ever want regarding swimming in the state of Georgia, including time standards and high school swimming.

<http://www.gaswim.org>

### USA Swimming Website

Did you know that as a member of USA Swimming, you are on the same team as 300,000 other swimmers across the country? USA Swimming is a service organization that promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through clubs, events, and education

<http://www.usaswimming.org>

### NGSL Website

Our team is part of the North Georgia Swim League; this is their website. On it, you can find all sorts of goodies like these: Meet Directions, Meet Results, Official Timing Standards (All-Star Times, etc.), Tips for Swimmers/Parents, and a list of all teams included in the NGSL.

<http://www.ngslonline.com>

### Swim Outlet

The Web's most popular Swim Shop! According to them, of course. But seriously, they usually have some pretty sweet deals on goggles, suits, caps, towels, and more...

<http://www.swimoutlet.com>

**Welcome  
Aboard  
and Have a  
GREAT  
Season!!!**

