



INDEPENDENT HEALTH FAMILY BRANCH YMCA

150 Tech Dr, Amherst, NY 14221
716-276-8300 ymcabn.org

WELCOME TO THE SHARKS

Swim Team Handbook

The Sharks Swim Team is a competitive YMCA swim program. We are a part of the National YMCA Competitive Swimming program, offering instruction, training, and competition. Competitive swimming has been a part of the YMCA for over 50 years. The team operates in accordance with National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving policies and USA-Swimming Technical Rules. Accordingly, all team members must be full-privileged members of the YMCA. All rules and regulations can be found at www.ymcaswimminganddiving.org

Our staff, coaches, and parent volunteers work together to instill and reinforce the Y focus areas of youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, as well as the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility as part of a positive and fun experience for swimmers and their families.

The Swim Team provides opportunities for personal development in individual stroke technique and skills, improved times, building self-esteem, and good sportsmanship. As part of this philosophy, each swimmer is expected to participate with the team in all swim meets; there are no benchwarmers in YMCA Swimming. The swim team is a family program, and there are opportunities for swimmers and their families to support community involvement through volunteering.

OUR MISSION

YMCA Buffalo Niagara is a charitable, community-based organization committed to providing programs designed to build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE

This is a guide for swim team participants to become familiar with the Independent Health Family Branch YMCA's swim team policies and procedures, which may be updated without notice. Above all, the Y is here to serve its members and looks forward to working with them to make the community a healthier and happier place to live.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY

As a member of the team, each participant must be a member of the Y and meet specific swim requirements. There are three practice groups based on a skill assessment: Beginner (Sand), Intermediate (Bull) and Advanced (Mako). Group placement is based on

several factors, including skill level, age, endurance, and team size, and is at the discretion of the coaches. The following grouping criteria are meant to be a guideline only. Group assignments are entirely at the discretion of the coaching staff and the aquatics director.

Beginner (Sand Sharks):

For beginning competitive swimmers with little or no competitive swimming experience. Focus is on skills development and mastery.
Six years of age or the coach's discretion
Jump off the starting block, resurface, and tread water for 30 seconds
Swim a minimum of two lengths of the pool (50 yards) freestyle continuously.
Swim one length of the pool (25 yards) backstroke continuously
Demonstrate balance and comfort in the water
Must be able to practice two to three times per week for 45 minutes per practice

Intermediate (Bull Sharks):

For intermediate swimmers with some competitive swimming experience. Swimmers in this practice usually have one or more years of experience on a swim team or advanced-level swimming lessons.
Perform a start from block into a streamline position, resurface, and tread water for 30 seconds.
Swim 50 yards of freestyle, backstroke, and breaststroke continuously
Swim a minimum of 100 IM with legal strokes.
Familiar and competent at long and short axis drills
Demonstrate balanced, streamlined push-offs, prone and supine
Must be able to practice two to three times per week for one hour per practice with a range of 1,500-2,500 yards

Advanced (Mako Sharks):

For more advanced swimmers. Swimmers in this practice group may have years of competitive swimming experience and/or swim on a high school or club team during the off-season.
Perform start from block into a stream line position, resurface, and tread water for 30 seconds
Swim 200 yards of freestyle with flip turns attempted.
Swim 100 yards of backstroke and breaststroke with legal strokes
Swim 50 yards butterfly with legal strokes
Must be able to practice two to three times per week for two hours per practice and one time per week for one hour with a range 2,500-3,500 yards.



INDEPENDENT HEALTH FAMILY BRANCH YMCA

150 Tech Dr, Amherst, NY 14221
716-276-8300 ymcabn.org

SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES

Come to practice ready to swim, learn, and have fun!

Come to practice prepared and ready to start when practice begins with your suit, goggles, cap, water bottle and any other necessary items. Swimming is a highly demanding, cardio-based sport and water bottles are a necessity on deck (no glass bottles).

Swimmers must wear the team logo to meets.

Encourage your teammates in practice and during meets. Cheer them on!

Respect coaches, swimmers, officials, parents, and other teams' swimmers at all times.

Respect and follow the rules of your YMCA. Our facility is here for you. Abuse of the facility will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the team.

Swimmers should be aware that they represent the YMCA at all times, whether during training or at meets.

Be responsible for your belongings. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or damaged items. Consider bringing a lock.

Please check your file folder regularly after swim meets for ribbons and other correspondence (this is done by way of parent volunteers, more later on how you can help!)

Work to have a healthy spirit, mind, and body at all times.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Get your swimmers to the pool on time. Your swimmer should be at the pool 15 minutes before practice and on deck and ready to get in the water at the beginning of practice.

Make sure your swimmer has all the necessary practice needs including:

- Swim Suit
- Goggles
- Swim Cap
- Towel
- Water Bottle (NO GLASS)

Make sure your swimmer follows locker room policies.

If you attend practices, please be a silent partner. Any interaction on deck during practices should be between the swimmer and coaches only. At both branches, there are many sitting areas available to members. If you choose to remain on deck, please be a silent observer and stay on the benches/bleachers on the pool deck. Encourage your swimmer to attend as many practices as available. The pace of your child's improvement is based on his/her commitment to swimming. Check your E-mail on a regular basis. This will be the primary method of communication for the team.

Prior to the season starting, please provide Robert Wolf, our Administrative Official, with your primary email. We also use TeamReach, an app for your phone, compatible with both Apple and Android phones. Login credentials will be sent via email for TeamReach once the season begins.

Please notify your coach by Monday before a meet if your child will not be able to participate in that meet. A coach will check in with every parent on deck to verify attendance. If you will not be at practice for an extended time, please let Justin Popp, Head Coach, know. Attend Parent Meetings. Regular parent meetings provide parents an opportunity to volunteer, give feedback, and exchange ideas with the coaches and parent leaders. Meeting notices will be on Team Reach and sent via e-mail.

Volunteer: Parents/Families are requested to volunteer during meets and to provide volunteer support for other teams and events. We are always in need of parent volunteers to help manage the team. Find an opportunity that fits your skills and time. Here is just a partial list of volunteer opportunities:

- Meet Volunteer
- Swim Official
- Meet Refreshments
- Meet Awards
- Parent Leader
- Swim Apparel
- Team Liaison
- Volunteer Coach
- Communications/Social Media
- Goodwill Meet
- State Meet
- Year-End Banquet

SWIM MEETS

The YBN Sharks are one of several YMCA Swim Teams in WNY. We participate in closed competition meets (YMCA teams only) throughout the season with other teams in WNY. Swimmers must swim in a minimum of three meets to continue to participate in the swim team season. A prep program will be available during the season for anyone who does not meet the minimum meet requirement to maintain participation on the competitive team.



**INDEPENDENT HEALTH
FAMILY BRANCH YMCA**
150 Tech Dr, Amherst, NY 14221
716-276-8300 ymcabn.org

Types of Meets:

Dual/Tri Meets – Dual/Tri meets are meets held between two or three teams within our league. These meets will occur on weekends and have no additional fees.

Invitational – Invitational meets are open to several teams and typically have different formats and events. They may be multi-day. Additional fees apply

League Championship (Districts) – A closed competition meet held at the end of the season between all WNY teams.

Swimmers must swim in at least three meets to qualify State Championship – A state-wide meet every March involving 1,400 – 1,500 swimmers who have met qualification times. The location of the meet changes each year. Additional fees apply.

Sanctioned – Higher-level meets, including state championship and some invitational meets. Times achieved at Sanctioned meets can be used to qualify for YMCA National and USA-S meets. Additional fees apply.

EQUIPMENT FOR MEETS

Two or more towels, one for sitting on
Water Bottle (NO GLASS)

Team swim suit, goggles and caps (at least two pairs in case one breaks), hair ties

Healthy snacks (must be consumed in the hallway; food is not permitted on pool decks)

Additional items may be needed for swim meets.

Swimmers and families are expected to leave the pool deck, seating area, and locker rooms in good condition. Please assist in cleaning up.

PRACTICES

Practice Level: Day & Time

Sand Sharks: Monday/Wednesday:
5:15-6:00pm
Thursday: 7:00-7:45pm
Friday: 6:00-6:45pm

Bull Sharks: Monday/Wednesday:
6:00-7:00pm
Tuesday: 6:30-7:30pm
(Dryland Tuesdays 6:30-7:00pm)
Friday: 6:45-7:45pm

Mako Sharks: Monday/Wednesday 7:00-8:30pm
Tuesday/Thursday: 6:30-8:00pm
(Dryland Thursdays 6:30-7:00pm)

IMPORTANT DATES

9/8	First Day of Practice
12/17	Holiday Party
1/5	Practice Resumes
3/27	Banquet @ IH

No practice on the following dates:

10/31	Halloween
11/24-11/28	Thanksgiving Break
12/22-1/4	Winter Break

All YMCA Buffalo Niagara facilities are closed on the following holidays:

New Year's Eve (branches close at 6:00 pm)

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Eve (branches close at 3:00 pm)

Christmas Day

PARKING

All YMCA facilities offer free parking for members and guests. For the safety of members and staff, members are asked to exercise caution and reduce speed as they drive through the parking lot. Members are also asked to avoid blocking the entrance ways and respect the handicapped spaces in front of the facility. Members should not leave valuables in their cars. The YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

SECURITY

The front door is used for both entering and exiting the building. In an effort to limit security problems, all other exits are alarmed. It is strongly recommended that members use a lock when storing personal belongings in the lockers.

COMMON COURTESY

It is important for members to remember that they share the facilities with young children, teens and people of all backgrounds. The YMCA is a positive environment where staff and members alike demonstrate the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Appropriate attire must be worn at all times – swimsuits in the pool area, and shoes, shirts, and shorts/pants in all other areas of the facility. Appropriate language must be used and all individuals should exhibit appropriate behavior at all times.

All YMCA facilities and equipment must be used only for their appropriate purpose at all times. Members are asked to refrain from loitering in program areas or the Wellness Center. Locker room age and/or membership requirements should be respected and adhered to at all times. Facility



INDEPENDENT HEALTH FAMILY BRANCH YMCA

150 Tech Dr, Amherst, NY 14221
716-276-8300 ymcabn.org

usage age guidelines must be respected and adhered to at all time.

LOCKER ROOM POLICY

Children are to use Boy's/Girl's locker rooms and may be accompanied by an adult of the same gender. Families are encouraged to use the Community Locker Room. Under all circumstances, parents must be aware of the privacy of others. If you have any questions regarding this policy or need suggestions on how to ease this transition, please speak to the Manager on duty.

YBN SWIM TEAM SWIMMER BULLYING POLICY

The Y is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for children so that they can learn and grow in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. That is, any use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person (including, but not limited to, physical, emotional, verbal, sexual) is not tolerated. Serious incidents of targeted aggression are documented by YMCA staff and ongoing monitoring of the situation will occur. When attempts to change unacceptable behavior are unsuccessful, the consequences of repeated bullying may include suspension and/ or termination from the program.

YBN SWIM TEAM PARENT BULLYING POLICY

As adults, we are role models for our youth. Our team is here to support a positive environment for all. Should a parent, swimmer, or coach have reports of serious incidents of targeted aggression they will be documented by YMCA staff and ongoing monitoring of the situation will occur. When attempts to change unacceptable behavior are unsuccessful, the consequences of repeated bullying may include suspension and/ or termination from the program and/or membership.

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

The YMCA expects persons using the YMCA to act maturely, to behave responsibly, and to respect the right and dignity of others. The code of conduct outlines prohibited action, but the actions listed below are not an inclusive list of behaviors considered inappropriate in the facilities or programs.

Being under the influence of controlled substances or illegal drugs on YMCA property or program sites at any time; and using, dispensing, distributing, possessing or

manufacturing alcohol, controlled substances or illegal drugs on YMCA property or program sites at any time. Smoking on YMCA property – All YMCA properties are a smoke-free environment.

Carrying or concealing a weapon or any device or object that may be used as a weapon. Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language, or any type of menacing behavior. Physical contact with another person in an angry, aggressive or threatening way, verbally abusive behavior, including angry or vulgar language, swearing name-calling or shouting. Sexually explicit conversation or behavior; any sexual contact with another person. Inappropriate, immodest, or sexually revealing attire. Theft or behavior that results in the destruction or loss of property. Loitering within or on the grounds of the YMCA.

In addition, the Y reserves the right to deny access or membership to any person who has been accused or convicted of any crime involving sexual abuse, is or has been a registered sex offender, has ever been convicted of any offense relating to the use, sale or possession or transportation of narcotics or habit forming and/or dangerous drugs, or is presently or habitually under the influence of dangerous drugs or chemicals, narcotics or intoxicating beverages

Members and guests are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal comfort and safety by asking any person whose behavior threatens their comfort to refrain from such behavior. Anyone who feels uncomfortable in confronting a person directly should report the behavior to a staff person or the building supervisor.

The branch membership director has the authority to suspend or terminate a YMCA membership/privilege if, in his/her judgment, deems the conduct a violation of the YMCA member code of conduct.

TEAM APPAREL

To make all swimmers feel as though they are part of a team, we will have a team suit available for purchase. A Sharks swim cap will be provided to all swimmers at the first meet that they attend. The link for the online store will be provided at the beginning of the season and will be sent via email to the email address on file. If you need assistance or are unsure of what suit size to purchase, please ask one of our coaches. It is encouraged to purchase 2 suits: one for practice and one for competition. The practice suit can be purchased anywhere and can be



INDEPENDENT HEALTH FAMILY BRANCH YMCA

150 Tech Dr, Amherst, NY 14221
716-276-8300 ymcabn.org

any color/design, but we ask that the competition suit is purchased through the site. We have some suits at IH to try on before you purchase.

YMCA ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

Your contribution to the YMCA Annual Campaign helps make the YMCA more affordable and accessible for everyone. Your gift will directly benefit kids, families, adults, and seniors in Western New York by providing support to those who are otherwise unable afford the full cost of YMCA programs and membership services. Please visit our member services desk or visit YMCABN.org to donate.

There are various gift plans that you can employ to meet personal and family tax, estate, and charitable planning objectives. Be sure to contact your own legal and/or financial advisor and then contact the YMCA financial development office to confidentially discuss the gift opportunity that best expresses your generosity. For more information or to let us know if you have already made a provision for the Y in your estate plans, please contact the YMCA Financial Development Department at 276-5978.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Within its available resources, YMCA Buffalo Niagara will provide services to anyone who desires to participate in our programs and membership, regardless of his/her ability to pay. Partial financial assistance will be awarded to those who can demonstrate their inability to pay the full fee. Funds are secured by volunteers during the YMCA's Annual Campaign. Contact the member services desk to apply.

REGISTRATION

Members may register by phone or online at YMCABN.org. Accessing your online account allows you to register for programs, pay balances, make donations, view payment history, and more. Stop by our Welcome Desk today, and our staff will help make it even easier for you to log on to our online registration site. The program is non-refundable after 9/19/2025.

INVITATIONAL/CHAMPIONSHIP MEET FEES

There are additional fees to participate in invitationals/championship meets that are not included in the swim team program fee. Specific entry fee information will be available prior to the meet.

VISUAL RECORDING DEVICE POLICY

The use of video recorders, cameras, or any other visual recording devices, including cellular phones with photo capabilities, is prohibited in the locker and restroom areas of the YMCA. Violators will be subject to appropriate sanctions, including revocation of membership. Adding any pictures/videos to TeamReach is allowed and encouraged and will be approved by Administrative Official, Robert, before it is visible/posted to TeamReach to ensure the picture/video follows team policy. Pictures and videos should only be of the swimmers at team events, not outside activities/events.

AQUATICS SAFETY POLICY

Safe pools need rules, and at the Y, your child's safety is our number one priority. Members under the age of 12 must have an adult in the building during practice time. Based on their height and their swimming ability will determine if the supervising adult needs to be in the water or if they can supervise from the pool deck.

Lap Pool

1. All non-swimmers under 60 inches must be accompanied in the water by an actively engaged adult within arm's reach at all times. Prior to entering water above armpit level, anyone under the age of 18 must complete a deep water swim test.

Zero Depth Entry Pool

1. All non-swimmers under 48 inches must be accompanied in the water by an actively engaged adult within arms reach at all times. Prior to entering water above armpit level, anyone under the age of 18 must complete a deep water swim test.

Signs reflecting these rules will be on display on the pool deck. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, please feel free to contact Ehrin Hughes, Aquatics Director at 716-276-8312 or ehughes@ymcabn.org.