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2025-2026

West End Wildcats

At Union Village

Swim Team Handbook



Dear Swimmers and Parents,

Welcome to the West End YMCA Wildcats Swim Team. The coaching staff has worked hard to develop a program that will be a fun and rewarding experience for all swimmers in a safe environment. Registration for families that had children on the team for 24-25 season begins Saturday, September 20 in person or by phone. This registration will close on Saturday Sept 27th. After that date, registration for swim team will have to be approved by Coach Oliver and Shanti (the Aquatic Director). Registration for high school and middle school swimmers that want to join for a limited season will also open on September 20th. For any new families, there will be “tryout days” for new swimmers only (even if they have swum on a team before); Sept 30 (Tuesday)- Oct 3 (Friday) from 6:30-7:30pm. Please register for the tryouts, it is suggested that your child attend at least 2 times during that week. Final registration will close once the team numbers have been reached. Swim team practices will officially start Monday October 6; you must be registered for the team to attend practices.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information about our team, the facility and the coaching staff who work to help your children meet challenging team and individual goals. As a swim team member, your swimmer can strive to improve their swimming technique in all four competitive strokes, make new friends, and learn the unity of team experience with the reward of great physical activity.

Communication between coaches, swimmers and parents is extremely important. If there are ever any questions or concerns, please ask and we will do our best to address any issues that arise. This packet is to help you better understand the team’s goals, commitments, and objectives.

This year’s swimming program is structured by age groups with Coach Oliver’s discretion.

A Parent Informational/Meet the Coach meeting will be held Wednesday October 1 from 7-8pm in the multi-purpose room at the West End Y.

Shanti Blatnik- Aquatic Director:

sblatnik@lakecountyyymca.org / ph: 440-710-6747

Sue Dietrich- Associate Branch Executive

sdietrich@lakecountyyymca.org / ph: 440-710-6752

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

YMCA Core Values: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Caring

Swim Team Coach:

Head Coach- Oliver Curwen ocurwen@lakecountyyymca.org

Oliver has coached for the Lake County Y since 2006: 2025-26 will be his 14th season as the Head Coach at the West End YMCA. Oliver has coached the Eastlake and Mentor summer teams, and has experience coaching many different age groups, including high school and college swimmers, throughout his career. Oliver swam for his high school, a community center, and universities in Canada and Germany. Oliver looks forward to passing on his knowledge and love for swimming to his swimmers and families."

Assistant Coaches-

Sarah Hudek, Cade Pastor, Rob Brocious, Marc Pengal, Robert Pruitt, Gabriella George

Wildcats Advisory Committee

The advisory committee works in conjunction with the Head Coach and the Aquatic Director to create the best possible experience for the swimmers and acts as the organizational and operational team behind the meets and team events. The committee also acts as a liaison between the parents and the coaching staff as well as the YMCA staff. Any questions or concerns NOT regarding a coaching issue may be brought to the attention of a committee member and the committee will then work to find you an answer. Please see Shanti Blatnik/ Sue Dietrich/ Oliver Curwen if you would like to get involved with the Advisory Committee.

Swim Team Eligibility:

- Children, age 6 (by December 1, 2025) to 18 years old are eligible to participate and should have completed Stage 4 of the YMCA swim lessons or similar program equivalent.
- A Youth or Family Lake County YMCA membership is required.
Membership: The swim team is a West End YMCA program - each swim team member must also be a member of the Lake County YMCA. The membership fee varies depending upon whether you have a Youth or Family Membership. Arrangements for becoming a YMCA Program Member can be made at the Welcome Center. Your membership allows you full use of all Lake County YMCA branches.

From the YMCA of the USA's Rules That Govern YMCA Competitive Sports Handbook:

- "[A]n athlete shall represent only one competitive team in a given sport for a period of 90 days prior to participating in a YMCA championship competition. The one exception is for an athlete who represents his/her High School in scholastic competition during the High School competitive season. In the case of exceptional circumstances, an athlete may seek a waiver of this rule." Please see Coach Oliver or Aquatic Director Shanti Blatnik for questions.
- Also, if a swimmer has transferred from another YMCA, they must have the signature of the Executive of the branch they are leaving, as well as the signature of the Executive of the branch to which they are transferring.
- Parents who need to speak with a coach must call/text or email the coach.
- Swimmers are expected to participate in each dual meet.
- If a swimmer is ill on the day of a meet, please contact the head coach by 9am to allow enough time to change the line-up. If the swimmer does not appear by the end of warm-ups, the coaches will make appropriate changes. (Especially regarding relays)
- Swimmers are required to participate in three dual meets to attend the Divisional Championship Meet.
- All swimmers are to swim in the Divisional Championship Meet. Swimmers must have competed in at least 3 meets of which at least two must be a dual meet.
- If swimmers Qualify: League Championship TBD

Registration and Other Costs

Registration for current families (families that were on the team last year for the 24-25 season) will begin on Saturday September 20. Registration will be in person or by phone.

New families (with children who have never swum on this team or who did not swim on this team last year) will need to register for the try-out week and if they have been given the ok by the coach to register, may then register starting October 3rd.

Parents can only register their swimmers during West End YMCA office hours. Payments (including fees throughout the season, such as for invitational meets) can be made in person, or online. All fees are made through the Y. Swimmers must be a current West End YMCA Member to register for swim team.

Program fees for the 2025-26 swim season:

The swim team program fee is separate from the West End YMCA membership, and is an operating fund to cover staff, pool time and administrative costs. The program fee MUST be paid before the first practice. If needed, you can set-up a payment schedule through the business office. The payment schedule is the fee divided by 5 (downpayment and then 4 monthly scheduled payments) to be paid on the 15th of each of the following months: Oct, Nov, Dec & Jan. Families must fill out an Automatic Payment Plan in the Business Office at the West End YMCA. (Financial assistance is available)

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| • First child | \$330 (\$15 discount if paid in full) |
| • Each additional child | \$280 |
| • High School / Middle School Students
(swimming for their own school team) | \$210 |

Team Fee: All families are required to pay a team fee that is directly applied to the parent's team account of \$20 per family. This money is used to go towards: award ribbons, timing and training equipment, end of season banquet tickets for each swimmer, banquet awards, Team Unify software, league fees.

Non-Volunteer Fee: WE Wildcats requires each family to volunteer for at least 3 positions throughout the season. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities during the season. Many opportunities for volunteering during swim meets will be listed on Team Unify where you can sign up. There are also opportunities to volunteer outside of meets- such as heading the Parent Volunteer Committee or helping with the Pentathlon baskets. There is a \$75 non-volunteer fee for parents who do not meet their team volunteering requirement. This year this fee will be added to every family's account scheduled to be paid at the end of the season. Once your family fulfills your volunteering requirement, this fee will be removed.

Swimsuits and Swim Cap

The team will post more information on the website. Our team color is red. To show unity as a team we suggest you purchase a red suit.

New swimmers will receive a latex cap. (Caps worn at meets must be team caps.)

\$5 to replace latex cap

\$13 for silicone cap

West End Wildcats Swim Team Practice Schedule 2025-2026

Monday through Friday will be closed practices. Parents, please wait in the lobby, no watching from pool deck or ramp. Saturdays, upstairs bleachers will be open to watch practices. Unless otherwise noted, the practices will be held in the competition pool. Swimmers MUST attend their age group practices; attendance will be taken and swimmers will not be allowed to participate in practices that are not for their age group.

MONDAY

6:30-7:30pm	Ages 11-12
7:30-8:45pm	Ages 13 and up

TUESDAY

6:30-7:15pm	8 and under in Rec. Pool – 7:15-7:30 in Comp Pool
6:30-7:30	Ages 9-10
7:30-8:45pm	Ages 11-12

WEDNESDAY

6:30-7:30pm	Ages 9-10
7:30-8:45pm	Ages 13 and up

THURSDAY

6:30-7:15pm	8 and under in Rec. Pool – 7:15-7:30 in Comp Pool
6:30-7:30pm	Ages 9-10
7:30-8:45pm	Ages 11 and up

FRIDAY

6:30-7:30pm	Ages 10 and under
7:30-8:30pm	Ages 11 and up

SATURDAY

11-12pm	all ages
12-1pm	all ages

****NOTE:** These combinations as well as age groupings are subject to change at the discretion of Coach Oliver. There may be some changes to practices after the first month based on number of kids in each age group this year.

Information on Meets

The West End YMCA Wildcats compete against other YMCA Swim Teams in the Northeast Ohio Swim League. Dual swim meets are our regular season meets and are included in your swim team fees. Swimmers are encouraged to swim in as many meets as possible and expected to swim a minimum of three dual meets, as well as the Divisional Championship. For more information about the NEO Swim League, dual meets and invitational meets go to neoswim.org.

Swimmers can also swim at invitational meets hosted by other swim teams. We will be hosting two invitationals; all swimmers are expected to swim or help as these are fundraisers for our team account. This account pays for swim team banquet, swim team caps and t-shirts.

All swimmers can make times at the Divisional Meet to participate in the League Championship. All swimmers also have the opportunity through the whole season to make times for the Zone Championship.

Individual events include backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle, and individual medley. Relays are medley (all four strokes), and freestyle.

Pending age group attendance at dual meets, swimmers are guaranteed at least one relay swim per dual meet. Throughout the season swimmers will have a chance to swim in different legs of relays, with the goal to get the best possible results at a championship meet. Relay members will be selected ultimately by the coaches, with the final decision by the head coach.

Relays for championship meets will be selected for the fastest possible performance, with final choices at the discretion of the Head Coach. *Factors used to select relay members will include recorded race times, attendance at practice, as well as overall attitude and adherence to the Y's four core values: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.* Relays for meets beyond championships, this includes Zone Championships, will be selected solely at the discretion of the head coach.

Dual Swim Meet Schedule

The balcony seating will be opened to view the meet. Only people volunteering during the meet will be allowed on the pool deck. Swimmers will be housed in the field house.

2025-2026 Schedule

Saturday October 25 – Location/team/time - TBD

Saturday November 8– Location/team/time - TBD

Saturday November 22– Location/team/time - TBD

Saturday December 13– Location/team/time - TBD

Saturday January 10– Location/team/time - TBD

Saturday January 24– Location/team/time - TBD

Home Invitational Meet Information

Saturday Dec 20 or Sunday December 21 (TBD)- Christmas Cadet hosted by West End

Sunday February 15, 2026 Pentathlon hosted by West End

Other invitationals will be added to the NEO Y Website:

<https://www.teamunify.com/SubTabGeneric.jsp?team=neoyleaue&stabid=216151>

League Championship Meet

February 27-28 @ Cleveland State

Great Lakes Zone Championship Meet

March 13-15 @TBD

Officials Training

Officials are needed in order to run a meet. Our team is in desperate need for officials for this season. This is a great way to volunteer for the team. Officials also have great views to watch all the home meets. All trainings to become an official will be paid for by the league. Officials' trainings will be posted on Team Unify.

West End YMCA Swim Team Procedures

Listed are several procedures that swimmers and parents are asked to follow. These procedures are to ensure each swimmer's safety and to help get the most out of every practice, and to ensure a smooth-running program. Thank you in advance for your support.

- I. Swim Practice Expectations: swimmers are expected to participate in at least 2 practices a week. The older age groups (9 and up) practice times allow for 5 practices a week (including Saturdays).
- II. **If a swimmer is unable to make a meet, a written note or email must be given to a coach by Wednesday evening prior to the meet.**
- III. Coaches will make decisions regarding swimmer's competitive events.
- IV. All swimmers must take showers on deck before entering the pool and no horseplay in pool or pool area, including locker rooms. To have an effective practice, it is recommended swimmers with long hair wear a swim cap or have their hair tied back.
- V. All swimmers must scan their membership card at the Welcome Center before they enter the locker rooms and pool.
- VI. All articles of clothing are to be placed in the lockers. It is strongly recommended to use a lock on your locker. The West End YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Street clothes/shoes are not permitted on the pool deck. Please change in the locker rooms before practice.
- VII. Being rude to any of the YMCA Staff either here or at away meets will not be tolerated. Each team is expected to behave properly during practice and scheduled meets. For all misconduct and behavior problems you will receive one (1) warning. If a second warning is necessary, you will be removed from the activity and your parents will be notified. If a third warning is necessary, you will be removed from the roster for a period to be determined appropriate by the West End YMCA Professional Staff.
- VIII. Equipment is to be put away immediately after practice by all swimmers. Do not leave pool area until dismissed by coaches.
- IX. Footwear during the meets must be worn outside the pool area.
- X. Parents are NOT permitted on the pool deck during practices. If there are any concerns for the coach, please contact the coach after the practice has ended.
- XI. Parents are not permitted on the deck during Championship, Divisional, League, Zone or invitational meets unless they are volunteering as officials, timers, etc.
- XII. Parents are to supervise swimmers during swim meets. During meets, swimmers should be in the pool area or in a designated area only, not wandering the facility.
- XIII. All swimmers and parents are expected to treat each facility with respect; this includes picking up trash, not leaving a mess, being polite to all employees and opposing team members and parents.
- XIV. All swimmers must participate in any fundraising events.
- XV. **All parents are to volunteer for at least three home/invitational meets or they will pay an extra fee if the volunteer hours are not met.**

Parental Involvement:

A strong working Parent Group is the backbone of any competitive team. All parents whose child is a participant of the Lake County YMCA Wildcats is automatically considered a member of that team's Parent Group.

As a Wildcat Parent, I will help by...

- Supporting the Aquatic Director and Coaches in making the competitive program meaningful for all team members. Parent's good sportsmanship and supportive behavior of the Lake County YMCA Wildcats encourages swimmers to demonstrate the values of the YMCA.
- Attending Parent Group meetings. Parent input is an integral part of the success of all team events.
- Communicating with the coaches and Parent Group. Communication is extremely important with any group.
- When registering your swimmer, please answer the questionnaire about volunteer job opportunities for meets and team activities.

To ensure our Parent Group is successful in supporting our team we encourage full family participation. Your participation as a family will help show your swimmer that you are part of their success as well as the success of the team.

Thank you for your time and Have a GREAT season!!!

