



**MON VALLEY WEST
YMCA
SWIM
TEAM
HANDBOOK
Fall 2011.Winter 2012**

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Visit MVWYST Online at www.wyst.org

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MVWYST HANDBOOK

Overview of the Team

MVWYST (Mon Valley West YMCA Swim Team) is a YMCA, co-ed competitive swim team consisting of swimmers from ages 6 to 18. Over the last several years the team has grown in size and competitive ability to one of the finest teams in Western Pennsylvania. In the Fall/Winter season we are part of the WPYSL (Western Pennsylvania YMCA Swim League). There are three divisions in the league. MVWYST is in Division Two. The team pursues a full competition schedule in the Fall/Winter program.

Purpose and Principles

The purpose of our swim team program is much the same as that of other programs within the YMCA. MVWYST strives to help each swimmer become the best that they can be through the sport of competitive swimming. We challenge swimmers physically, intellectually, and morally. They will become physically conditioned, learn to appreciate teamwork, learn more about the science and mechanics of swimming, and perhaps most importantly, learn of personal responsibility and the correlation between effort and reward. The lessons that our swimmers learn from their participation on the team translate into fundamentally sound principles for the rest of their life. The bottom line in our swimming program is that we develop great kids, and along the way they may become great swimmers also. We ask each of our swimmers to try as hard as they can and to accept the results. The application of this principle in the rest of their life yields excellent results. It is no accident that our swimmers excel in almost every other aspect of their life.

Requirements

- Be a member of the Mon Valley YMCA
- Pay a Swim Team program fee to the Mon Valley West YMCA Swim Team
- Swim a continuous length of freestyle with rotary breathing and a length of backstroke
- Must not represent another swim team with the exception of High School, Middle School, or Country Club Teams.

Dates for the Program

The Fall/Winter MVWYST Program runs September through April after which are Winter Nationals. The Summer Program runs May through July. The actual length of these seasons will depend on the age of the swimmer, the level of their ability and some optional decisions. All swimmers participate through February and the majority of swimmers participate into March.

Cost

- The YMCA Program Committee establishes program fees each fall. Fees vary based on the date the swimmer joins the team and which season(s) the swimmer participates in. The winter season is generally a September through February/March Period. The summer season is usually May through July.
- Please check with MVWYST for updated pricing
- YMCA membership fees are also paid directly to the YMCA. Swimmers must be paid members of the Mon Valley YMCA in order to compete for MVWYST.
- The MVWYST Parents Association Board of Directors may levy assessments

- Indebtedness – Failure to pay dues, assessments or participate in mandatory fundraisers and/or failure to make arrangements for payment satisfactory to the MVWYST Parents Association Board of Directors and Mon Valley YMCA within thirty days after notice may result in termination of swim team membership.
- Refunds of Program Fees or YMCA membership fees must be obtained from the YMCA
- No one is ever denied service for financial reasons. If this is a factor in deciding to swim, then please contact the coaches or the YMCA Executive Director.

Practices

- Practices are held Monday through Friday. Practices at the Canonsburg location begin promptly at 5:30 p.m. and run to 7:30 p.m. Practices at the Trinity location begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. and run to 7:30 p.m. Please check the website for specific days at each location.
- It is recommended that beginning swimmers, 6-10 years of age attend practice 2 nights weekly.
- Beginning swimmers over 10 years of age should attend 3 nights weekly.
- Any questions about the appropriate practice frequency for a swimmer may be discussed with the coaches.
- Please let the coaches' coach during practice. Practice has important social contexts and it is important that the swimmers be free to interact solely with the coaches and their peer groups. We are proud of our practices and encourage parents to stay and observe.

Swim Meets

- **DUAL MEETS** are our most important type of meet. **Attendance is required at the dual meets unless special circumstances are reviewed and approved by the coach.** In this format, our team swims against another team. The points for each event are added together within each age group and the age group will win, lose or tie. Individual events are scored with 5 points for first place, 3 points for second place and 1 point for third place. A team may not score all three places in an individual event. Relays are scored 7 points for the first place and no other places score points. There are a total of 5 separate age groups for both the boys and the girls so there are 10 total contests within a dual meet. (A typical score for a dual meet might be 6 to 4, with the highest score winning.) Each swimmer is allowed to swim a maximum of 4 official events, one of which must be a relay. As a swimmer, you will be swimming against people in the same age group; boys swim against boys and girls against girls. **Everyone gets to compete.** We will try as hard as we can to win the meet within the rules. Swimmers will be placed in the events and age groups where swimmers can most help the team. Event assignments are strictly coaching decisions. Half of our dual meets will be at home (Canonsburg Middle School Pool or Canon Mac High School) and half will be away. We provide a bus for transportation for the swimmers to the away meets. Swimmers are not required to ride the bus. As a swimmer, you will be responsible for knowing when your events are, what stroke, and in which lane you are going to swim. Bring a pen with you to the meet so you can write your events on your hand.
- **INVITATIONAL SWIM MEETS** are meets to which our swimmers are invited to compete along with those of many other teams. Invitational Meets fall into three categories: First – There will be targeted meets where all swimmers will be encouraged to attend, plus a coach will be in attendance, however, this type of meet is strictly optional. Second – There will be completely optional invitational meets. These meets will be attended by anyone who wishes to participate,

However, there may or may not be a coach in attendance. The majority of meets will fall in this category. Third – There will be meets in which we will not participate. These meets will not be posted and will not have any MVWYST swimmers in them. If you sign up for an invitational meet you will be expected to follow the procedures outlined for participation in invitational meets. Check with a coach if you are not sure if this type of meet is appropriate for you. Swimmers are responsible for their own transportation to invitational meets. It is a good idea to ask about a particular meet before you participate. There is a nominal fee for participating in each event so check the office bulletin board for this information.

- **Novice Championships** is the league championship for those swimmers ages 8 and under. This meet is usually held after the conclusion of our dual meet season and is an excellent way to introduce young swimmers to the format of championship competition. It is strictly an optional meet and all swimmers ages 8 and under are qualified to swim. Information on this meet will appear on the bulletin board sometime after the 1st of the year.
- **B Championship Meet** is held each year at the conclusion of the dual meet season prior to the District meet. Any swimmer who has not met a West District YMCA Individual Event Time Standard is eligible for this meet. If the swimmer has qualified for a district relay, but not an individual event, the swimmer may participate in this meet.
- **DISTRICT Championship Meet** is held each year at the conclusion of the dual meet season. To participate in this meet, you must have achieved a qualifying time prior to entry deadline. These times are available to us early in the season and will be posted as soon as they are published. You may swim in a total of three events, one of which must be a relay. Should a conflict arise between what a swimmer might wish to swim and what the coaches think is best, the coaches will have the final decision. The coaches will determine the make up of the relays. We will try to accommodate each swimmer, while trying to be as competitive as possible. Districts take place over a period of two days. Two age groups swim Saturday. And, two age groups swim on Sunday. Please pay attention to the office bulletin board for up-to-the-minute information about Districts.
- **All swimmers are required to attend one “Championship” meet....either Novice Championships, B Championships or District Championships.**
- **STATE Championship meet** is for those who qualified for Districts and placed in the top nine in an individual event or a relay. This meet combines the best YMCA swimmers in Pennsylvania. It is held the weekend following the District meet and for many years has been held at the Natatorium on the campus of Penn State in State College. We have had several swimmers from our team become either individual State Champions or members of an age group that won the State Championship. It is an absolute honor to participate in this meet and we look for personal best performances from all of our participants. The details for the meet will be extremely intimidating for first time participants and a great deal of information will be posted concerning both the District and the State meets. If you have any questions please see one of the coaches.
- **WINTER NATIONALS** is a meet that represents the epitome of competition in the YMCA program. There are stringent qualifying times and swimmers from all over the country will

attend the meet. To be eligible you must meet the time standards and be at least twelve years of age on the first day of the meet. All swimmers and parents are encouraged to pick up a copy of the Handbook for Nationals, which is available in the coaches' office.

Parent and Swimmer Responsibilities

Competitive swimming is a serious undertaking that entails a tremendous amount of work on the part of swimmers and parents. It is important to recognize that both the swimmers and the parents have some responsibilities that are important to the attainment of a successful swimming career. In an ideal situation we would like the parents to:

- Reinforce the principles learned in practices
- Echo the tenets of sportsmanship and teamwork with which the swimmers are presented
- Offer support for the team and coaching staff
- See that your swimmer attends practice regularly
- Get to as many meets as you can
- Make sure your swimmer attends all possible dual meets
- Talk to your swimmer regularly about how practice is
- Do not let your swimmer see if you are disappointed in a particular swim or meet
- **There is a need for officials, timers, fundraisers, board members, concession workers and lots of other skills. Please volunteer.**

Some of the developmental milestones you should look for as a parent

- Your child will swim to please you. As they develop they will depend on their coaching staff to be their primary source of encouragement
- Your child will be swimming to please the coach. At the end phase of their athletic development they will seek out their peers for the primary support and validation
- Your child will be swimming for their friends. It is important that at all three phases of this development, parents have an active role in their child's career.

Similar to that of the parent's responsibility, we would like the swimmers to:

- Develop an outstanding work ethic
- Support each other in their quest for achievement
- Come to practice on time
- Carry over the concepts of hard work and sportsmanship into their school and home environment
- Warm up and cool down correctly
- We are ONE team, MVWYST. Work together and show support to each other
- Treat each other with respect
- Try your best

Coaches and YMCA Administration

Steve Leonardi holds the position of Head Coach. If at any time you have any questions concerning the coaching, you are encouraged to contact the coach who will be glad to assist you. Responsible communication is a cornerstone of the YMCA program. You may contact the coach before or after practice in the swim team office.

Board of Directors and Parents Association

The Parents Association is an essential element of the team. This group administers the paperwork, the finances and the logistics of running a swim team. Every parent who has a participating swimmer is a member of this organization. Every member of the Parents Association can and is encouraged to attend meetings and vote when issues are raised. The Board of Directors meets each month and they consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as At Large Representatives. Our Parents Association acts as a support group for the coaching staff. It is not a policy-making organization.

All questions about team policy, YMCA policy or facilities, or coaching should be addressed with Coach Steve. Unresolved issues should be addressed to the YMCA Program Director or the YMCA Executive Director. If you have questions about other support functions please address someone on the Parents Association Board of Directors.

Disciplinary Policy

There must be no physical contact between swimmers. We do not allow any behavior that will endanger the safety or health of another swimmer. When a swimmer is disciplined and how the discipline is administered are decisions that may involve coaches, swimmers, parents and the YMCA staff. It can be as minor as a few push-ups to being removed from the team. In all instances there is a specific chain of command that should be followed.

- The problem should be brought to the attention of the coach closest to the situation
- The problem should next be presented to the head coach
- The next step is to approach the YMCA Program Director
- The last person to be contacted should be the YMCA Executive Director

President's Invitational

We sponsor a yearly invitational swim meet, which is held early in February. There are many jobs and responsibilities for this event and we need the help of every parent. While we expect and encourage the parents to be active members of the team all season, this is the one occasion we really need everybody.

Officials

In swimming, the officials consist of meet referees, timers, starters, stroke and turn judges, take off and finish judges and scorers. For our home meets we are expected to provide all of the necessary people to officiate a swim meet. Most of these positions require a level one or level two certification. To become certified, it is necessary to take a class and pass a written test. We sponsor a class and ask all parents, if possible to take it so we will have an ample number of officials.

Top Times Report

The team keeps a record of ALL swims for our swimmers. This includes dual meets, invitational, USS meets, and any swim where you represent MVWYST. Periodically, we will generate and post a "Top Times Report". This consists of the best times achieved in each event for each swimmer. This report is the primary instrument that the coaches use in setting up the meets. It is critical that it be as accurate as possible. Please check this report carefully, and if you see that one of your best times is missing, please bring it to our attention. This report is used to set up relays before each meet, so it has very practical importance for you and the team.

Contact Information

➤ Head Coach

Steve Leonardi

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Cell – 724-263-6279

Email – steveleonardi@earthlink.net

- Mon Valley YMCA 724-483-8077
- Executive Director Jeff Vitale
- Assistant Director Susan Cappocciana
- 2011.2012 Parent's Association Board of Directors
 - President Greg Sulc 724-413-9439 mvymca.ad@comcast.net
 - Vice President Jim Stanko 724-746-2156 or 724-250-7087 jim.stanko@verizon.net
 - Treasurer Pam Vidmar 412-715-1576 vid1vid@comcast.net
 - Secretary Carolyn Miller 724-554-6257 mvwyst@gmail.com
 - Members At Large Steve Morris
 - Stephanie Jardine
 - Laura McNeil
 - Susan & Mike Timko
 - Community Member Molly & Tom Crooks

These board positions rotate on a staggered basis....the composition will change during the 2012.2013 Season. You will receive notification to vote for the new members.

➤ MVWYST ONLINE

www.wyst.org

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