



NAZY Parent Survival Guide

Written for new swim parents by “seasoned” swim parents :)

First, Welcome to the **2014-2015** winter swim season with the **Nazareth Area YMCA Blue Fins (NAZY)**. The team is part of the *Penn Del YMCA Competitive Swimming League*. We are placed in the *Central District* of PA and within the *Madison Division*.

We decided to create this little informative guide to help ease new swim parents into the world of winter swimming. This may include; the weekly grind of practices, the Saturday dual meets, packing of swim bags with essentials, to traveling to invitational meets and to possibly Districts or States. We were all new to this sport, at some point, and to the logistics of swim meets. It may seem confusing and daunting at first but we hope that this “guide” will help clear things up around the various meet volunteer jobs available to the parents, how swim meets run and what to expect and bring when attending a dual meet (*required*) and any invitational meet (*NOT required*). We’re always looking for new ideas and new people to hang out with while we stare through the glass windows overlooking the pool during practices. :) The Y lobby during swim practice is where you’ll find most of us and it’s a great place to really learn about the sport through conversation.

Swim meets can’t happen without the parents. We can’t stress that enough. We are needed to volunteer our time to work various positions, donate occasionally to the snack stand (fundraiser), while also supporting our little swimmers throughout the season.

Ultimately, we do this for our children. We really hope you all decide to volunteer your time in some way and get involved in the various aspects that help make a swim meet run smoothly. It not only can make the meets seem quicker from a parents’ perspective but it can also be rewarding.

Please join us on:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/112341872205074/>

Twitter*: <https://twitter.com/NazyBlueFins>

*The Twitter feed is usually only updated during Districts and or States.

What do I bring to a swim meet?

Swimmer Must Haves:	Nice to Have:	Parents:
Competition suit	Extra goggles, caps	Chair (or stadium cushion)
Goggles	Backup suit	Water/drinks/coffee, etc
Team cap (provided)	Healthy snacks (<i>fruit, granola, Goldfish, crackers, etc.</i>)	Pen, Sharpie, highlighter
Towels	Warm clothes	Snacks (or money to support the snack stand)
Drinks	Yoga mat (invitationals)	Money for programs (invitationals only) <i>Note: some 'Last Chance' meets allow you to pay for extra races, so you may want to bring additional money if you want your child to have extra chances to qualify for Charlie Hartley or Districts</i>
	flip-flops	Printed directions.
	Swim bag*	A readiness to get "loud and proud" for the kids.

**If you decide to buy one extra swim related item, this is the one.* Last year, there was a great deal on Black Friday on the bags on swimoutlet.com (be sure to use the team link that is provided to help the team fundraise!)

What to expect from a Dual Meet:

Dual meets are competitions between two teams; we travel to some and host others. They occur on Saturdays and tend to begin in early afternoon (typically a 1 pm start time). The swimmers will be expected to arrive early and an email (usually the night before) will provide more specific details. Our home meets at our Y are *CROWDED*, to say the least. We have the least space for seating than probably any other Y in our division. So try to arrive early to get parking at the Y or nearby. Meets tend to be warm also, so dress appropriately.

Swim meets start and end with relays. Individual events will occur in between the Medley relays (start of meet) and the Free Relays (end of meets.) Coaches will place swimmers in events that they think they are strong and where they think they can best help the team. The term 'psych' sheet will be thrown around. This is the meet event schedule and includes what events the swimmers are swimming for the particular meet. Usually two types of this sheet are available, one by event and one by swimmer. Either the coaches and/or the parent volunteers on deck will help the swimmers write their events on their person, usually on the forearm. This helps the swimmers remember their events. Parent volunteers help throughout the meet to get swimmers to their events in an orderly fashion. Once the meet is underway, the Referee and Starter will progress through the meet 'psych' sheet in order until finished. The meets tend to end around 4-5 pm. Yes, swim meet days are long and can be quite exhausting. Swimmers tend to swim 2-4 events per meet and should stay with the team during the entire event. It is not uncommon for teammates to cheer on swimmers when they are not swimming or play cards, listen to music, etc to pass time. They must stay on deck during the entire meet though (unless they leave to get a quick snack, restroom, etc.)

What to expect from an Invitational Meet:

An invitational is a meet, throughout the season, that NAZY may attend as a team, individually or as a group. These meets **are not required**, cost a fee/event and are usually a fun seasonal or themed event. The kids get to pick their own events and these meets tend to award medals and sometimes even trophies. Volunteers for these meets are provided solely by the host team. These meets are usually communicated via email a week or two prior to entry deadlines for the meet. It's fun for the kids to pick their own events since they may want to improve time on one or more events and this gives them the extra swims to try to improve. These meets may require an early wakeup time and travel (typically within an hour from home) but you can leave when your swimmer completes their final event.

What are 'Championships'?

'Championships' is the final regular divisional meet of the season held in Feb. All Madison Division teams will swim at this meet and it is usually held at the Boyertown YMCA. This is a typical meet in the way it runs except for the fact that the teams will be grouped in the gym and each event will be 'seeded' in the seeding room prior to moving out to the pool deck. This is the biggest difference for the swimmers on how they are lined up. Parents can either sit in the gym or in the pool area. Most of us prefer sitting in the gym and then move to the pool when our children swim. Trophies and medals are given out and the results are posted on the wall as the meet progresses and it is always interesting to see where your swimmer ranks within a larger group.

What is 'Charlie Hartley' (Silver Championships)?

This meet takes place after our Madison Divisional Championship meet in Feb and it is not required that you attend. The meet is open to swimmers who qualify within a specific time range within an event. A qualifying time needs to be met *and* the time cannot exceed a specific time. This meet is meant for those that did not quite make the cut for Districts. During the season, you may see CHSC next to your swimmer's results and that will indicate to you that they have qualified for Charlie Hartley. Your swimmer will also receive a bead for their necklace as a congratulatory message that they have qualified to swim that event at Charlie Hartley. If your child has qualified for Districts, they may still have events that they did not qualify to swim at Districts. They may want to attend Charlie Hartley to receive another chance to qualify for Districts.

What are Districts and States Championships?

The District meet is only open to swimmers who achieve a qualifying time during our dual meets or at an invitational. Districts usually takes place in York, PA in March at the York YMCA Graham Aquatic Center and tends to require an overnight stay. Swimmers will compete against qualifying swimmers from the PA Central district. The top (6) qualifiers in each event at Districts will move on to States, which is (2) weeks after Districts and held at Penn State University (and also tends to require an overnight stay.)

Volunteering:

Volunteering for jobs and donating to the concession stand for the meets will be done through the Volunteer Spot website: <http://www.volunteerspot.com/> An email will be sent prior to a meet for signing up for jobs and donations. Volunteerspot is simple to use and requires no advanced registration. Again, the swim meet can't take place without all our help in volunteering. A few of the jobs are also sibling friendly, such as; meet set-up/clean-up, food stand, locker rm, 50/50 raffle. So don't be afraid to volunteer if you have siblings in tow. But please, use *your* best judgement based on your child's needs and don't hesitate to ask any questions if you're unsure.

Parent Volunteer Jobs: *Sign-up is through Volunteer Spot*

Runner: (*Wet Possibility - YES*)

The runner's job is to collect the timesheets and place sheets from the timers and place judges and run (walk) them to the scorer's table. This job is really easy, but you will be working during the entire meet. The officials tend to like the sheets consistently coming to them throughout the event to keep up with inputting the date (when a timesheet is complete: run it. If all timer's have moved to the opposite end of the pool, you can wait until they come back (there is no need to follow them to the other side) You will be on deck during the entire meet (great opportunity to see your child swim and you can time your running around your kid's events) Just remember to dress lightly (the deck gets crowded, hot and possibly wet) and you may like running shoes (or at least comfortable shoes).

Liner-Upper (Marshall): (*Wet Possibility - YES*)

Each liner-upper signs up for a group and the job is to pull the appropriate swimmers up to the blocks prior to their events, ensure that the swimmers know the event that they re swimming, and send them to the proper lane at the proper time. You should bring a sharpie marker. *Ideally*, you will get two sheets: One lists each swimmer alphabetically and the event each will swim (this is the ideal one for marking their arms with sharpies to indicate which events they are swimming.) The second lists the meet in order of events and lists each swimmers who will swim them (this is ideal for following along with the meet as it unfolds and watching when you should lead each group of swimmers.) You will need to show up on deck before swimmers begin warm-ups. At that time, mark your swimmers arms with the events that they are swimming (Event #, Event, Lane/Heat - Medley relays swim in alphabetical order: back, breast, fly, free). During warm-ups, mark your sheet with the events that your group will swim (Be careful, because some of your swimmers may also swim in with the next age group up (for instance, if you have Girls 8 and Under, you will want to scan the Girls 9-10 events to make sure none of your girls are swimming in them and, if they are, you must also line them up for those events.) Pull your needed swimmers and bring them to the staging area, remind them what they will be swimming, and make sure that they know which lane to go to. You will be on deck during the entire meet (great opportunity to see your child swim and you can time your duties around your kid's events - maybe pull a group a little early or plan to go immediately after your child swims) Remember to dress lightly (the deck gets crowded and hot) and you may like running shoes (or at least comfortable shoes).

Timer(s): (*Wet Possibility - YES*)

A timer spends their time at the blocks of each lane timing each heat of every event using a digital stopwatch. In this role, you WILL get slightly wet from splashes on starts. It is a great way to be "in the action." You will need to attend a timer's meeting approximately thirty minutes prior to the start of the meet in which the ref will assign you a lane and go over using the stopwatch. You will time for the entire meet. You do not need to bring any supplies and will be supplied with a stopwatch. It is a great idea to dress lightly (the deck gets crowded, hot and wet) and you may want to wear shoes that are water friendly. Your feet will get pretty wet at home meets when timing.

(cont.)

Scorekeeper: (Wet Possibility - NO)

The scorekeeper helps/assists the team scorer in receiving and accurately entering event results into the team's Meet Manager software. An Administration Official (cert. required) will also be present to help and monitor the 'dry' portion of the meet. The scorer's table is typically located behind the meet referee and tends to be pretty dry.

50/50 Raffle: (Wet Possibility - NO)

This job requires one to walk around the meet selling raffle tickets to those in attendance during the first half of the meet. During the break session, a winner will be chosen of the 50/50 raffle.

Food Stand: (Wet Possibility - NO)

This is just what it sounds like, working a concessions area. During *home meets only*, we all try to donate predetermined items that we think will sell well at our concessions stand. Each family is asked to donate items to the stand at some point throughout the season. An email for concession items, similar to the volunteer email, that are needed will be sent prior to home swim meets. Examples of items include; water, ice, fruit, sports drinks, taco meat, chips, cookies, etc.

Meet Set up / Clean up: (Wet Possibility - NO)

This job entails one to arrive ~ 1 hr prior to the start of the meet and help with set-up of seating, tables, etc. for the swim meet. Clean up involves returning the Y back to the state it was in prior to our swim meet. Retuning tables and chairs to proper place and cleaning up any garbage or left items.

Locker Room Monitor(s) : (Wet Possibility - NO)

These individuals, (1) male and (1) female, are responsible for monitoring the swimmers while they use the Y locker rooms. Basically, make sure no shenanigans take place in our locker rooms before, during and after the meet.

Water Runner : (Wet Possibility - NO)

This job requires you hand out water bottles, periodically, to those volunteering on deck during the meet. The water will be provided by the team.

Announcer : (Wet Possibility - NO)

The announcer emcee's the meet. Each event is announced, plays some music during breaks, etc. Playing the 'chicken dance' while the timers switch sides is a requirement. :)

JOBS REQUIRING CERTIFICATION

Referee: YMCA Swim Official Level II

Starter: YMCA Swim Official Level II

Chief Judge: YMCA Swim Official Level II

Stroke & Turn Judge: YMCA Swim Official Level I

Place Judge: YMCA Swim Official Level I (*Recommended*)

In the event we are short a Certified official, this position can be filled by a non-certified volunteer.

Administrative Official: YMCA AO Certification

How do you become certified you ask?

Simple, you can register on the Penn Del website and you will receive emails which alert you as to where/when certification classes are available, along with other league info. They tend to be available in September/October. You can also speak to the other parents that have sought and received certification for more information. A list of certified parents can be provide or may be available on the team bulletin board.

Fundraisers

SwimOutlet.com (on-going) please use the team link, on NAZY website or see below, whenever ordering. This site really does offer great deals at times and even the regular prices are competitive.

Food Stand (on-going) visiting the snack stand and donating to the snack stand helps the team raise money during each home meet.

Catalog/coupon sales (intermittent) at times you will receive catalogs or the opportunity to buy coupons. Please ask family, friends, trusted neighbors, etc. to help support the swim team.

Swim-A-Thon (scheduled event) There is talk of a Swim-A-Thon this year! Please share any great ideas you may have to make this event the best it can be with the fundraising committee.

The fundraising committee needs people to: suggest and research possible ways to raise funds, schedule the fundraising events, facilitate the sales and manage the records.

Social Events

We are likely to have a team spirit/unifying event prior to our first dual meet, around the holidays, prior to Championships (pasta dinner night), and an end of year banquet.

The social events committee needs people to: schedule and plan fun activities, parents who are willing to volunteer at the events along with offer donations of supplies and/or treats.

Swimming Related Links:

Penn Del YMCA Swim League: <http://www.penndelswim.org/>

Nazareth YMCA Blue Fins: <http://nazyusa.wordpress.com/>

Swim Outlet: <http://www.swimoutlet.com/NazYMCA> ← great online source

A&H Sporting Goods: <https://www.ahsporting.com/> ← great local source