ABOUT THE RAYS SWIM TEAM PROGRAM

The Ridley Area YMCA [RAYS] competitive swimming team has become one of the premier programs in the entire area. Since its inception in 1994, the team has grown steadily and has made its mark at many levels of swimming.

The team competes in both YMCA and USA Swimming meets during the season. USA participation is encouraged but is optional depending upon the level of the swimmer. The team is a registered USA club and participates in USA meets whenever possible. Also in 2013 we achieved USA Swimming Club Recognition Level 2 status.

The program begins practice in early September and runs through the end of February. Dual meets and a Division championship are swum during this time. Swimmers may extend their season into March or early April by qualifying for the District, State or National YMCA championships. During the spring, additional programs are available for swimmers who want to focus on training for the next level of swimming.

Over the summer, the Y provides the following training options: summer training program at Briarcliffe Swim Club for six weeks of long course training [50 meter pool] and a 6 week stroke clinic held at Ridley Area YMCA.

Penn-Del Swim League: The RAYS program operates two teams in the Penn-Del Swim League competing in the Adams Division. Each team will have 4-5 dual meets and everyone makes championships as long as you swim in 2 dual meets. Dual Meets start in mid-November and run thru end of January. Divisional Champs will take place between the end of January thru the middle of February.

YMCA Winterfest: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at the University of Maryland with competition from teams from Virginia to New England. This is a scored team meet and you must achieve qualifying times to enter. We have consistently scored in the Top 10 in this meet and it is a great opportunity for swimmers to swim in a large venue with over 1,500 swimmers at the meet. This meet is usually the second weekend in January.

YMCA Charlie Hartley Memorial Championship: Is a YMCA/USA meet hosted by RAYS at Gloucester County Institute of Technology in Sewell, New Jersey. This is an opportunity for the silver level swimmers to compete in a large championship style meet. This meet is qualified by time and has over 25 teams and 1,000 athletes attending. This meet is usually the last Saturday in February.

YMCA PA East District Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at Gloucester County Institute of Technology in Sewell, New Jersey from teams across the eastern part of the state. The RAYS continue to place in the Top 5 in team competition with many District Champions [both individual and relay]. This meet takes place in the middle of March.
YMCA PA State Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at Penn State University with teams across the entire state. The RAYS continue to place in the Top 10 in team competition with many State Champions [both individual and relay]. This meet takes place at the end of March.

YMCA National Short Course Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at the Greensboro Aquatic Center in Greensboro, North Carolina featuring over 200 teams and 1,500 athletes [ages 12-21] from across the country. The RAYS continue to have swimmers achieve the qualifying times needed to make this meet. This meet takes place in the beginning of April.

YMCA Summer National Long Course Championship Meet: Is a YMCA/USA meet held at Greensboro Aquatic Center in Greensboro, North Carolina featuring over 150 teams and 1,100 athletes (ages 12-21) from across the country. The RAYS continue to have swimmers achieve the qualifying times needed to make this meet. This meet takes place at the end of July.

The RAYS also host four additional invitational meets during the season:
- Autumn Splash – usually the 3rd Saturday in October @ RHS
- Winter Classic – usually the 3rd Weekend in December @ Swarthmore College
- Frost Fest – usually the 3rd Friday of February @ RHS
- RAYS LC Meet – usually the 3rd Weekend in May @ GCIT in Sewell, New Jersey

All meets give RAYS swimmers a chance to swim new and different events.

Over the years, RAYS swimmers continue to break many team records and have had swimmers achieve times that make them eligible for the YMCA National Top 10, Regional USA Swimming Top 10 [Middle Atlantic], the MA Zone Team, USA Swimming Junior National qualifiers, and in 2014 our first USA Swimming National qualifier.

The coaching staff will strive to provide the variety of experiences a developing swimmer needs to prepare him/her for competition. Education, motivation, determination, and team pride are some of the cornerstones on which the RAYS have built their early success. We expect our swimmers to make a commitment to helping the team by developing a good work ethic and making a positive contribution in a manner consistent with the philosophies of the YMCA. If you should have questions about our program, please contact Erik Nelson at 610.544.1080 ext. 2205, enelson@cyedc.org or visit us on the web at www.cyedc.org/rays.

Fees & Membership
Practice group and current season rates determine fees. Spring and summer programs are additional. All swimmers are required to be full privilege members of the Community YMCA of Eastern Delaware County. An additional registration fee ($100.00) is required and the purchase of a team suit is encouraged.

Financial Assistance
Financial Assistance is available for qualifying families. Interested individuals may pick up an application at the front desk. This assistance is made possible by the generous support of individuals who contribute to the YMCA’s Annual Support Campaign and the United Way.