

Swim Team Handbook

2009-2010



barracuda ~ bǎr' ə kōō' də ; *pl.* barracuda or **barracudas**;
Sphyraena Perciformes; *n.* one who is not afraid to use fierce predatory instincts to swiftly, aggressively and powerfully achieve an ambitious goal.

TEAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Barracuda Swim Team's 2009 – 2010 season!

The Barracuda Swim Team is the Bangor Y's year-round competitive swimming program. It aims to build a sense of community and team orientation in each of its members – male and female swimmers between the ages of 6 and 18. Each swimmer is provided with an opportunity to develop strong values, self-discipline, time management skills, and self-esteem in tandem with proper stroke mechanics. The team looks for swimmers who are sincerely interested in challenging themselves in the areas of mental and physical training.

The Barracuda Swim Team roster expects to include 75+ swimmers for the 2009 – 2010 season. Registration is open to all returning swimmers in good standing. Barracuda Swim Team members must maintain current Bangor Y memberships.

It is the goal of Head Coach, Eric Palmer, and the Barracuda Swim Team staff to develop the Bangor Y Barracuda Swim Team as one of the strongest YMCA/USA Swimming Age Group teams in Maine. We are looking forward to an outstanding 2009 – 2010 season.

2009 – 2010 BARRACUDA SWIM TEAM STAFF

<i>Eric Palmer</i>	Head Coach
<i>Matt Cook</i>	Assistant Coach
<i>Theresa Turner</i>	Assistant Coach
<i>Holly Hatch</i>	Administrative Director



THE SWIM SEASON

The Barracudas compete year round. Within the year, competition is organized into two (2) different seasons: Winter Season, which runs from September through March and is swum primarily in 25-yard (short course) pools; and Summer Season, which runs from April through July and gives more opportunities for long course (50-meter) competition. Barracudas hold a separate registration for each season; all are encouraged to participate throughout the year as their swimming matures.

BARRACUDA PRACTICE GROUPS

The team is divided into different practice groups determined by ability. Each swimmer's needs are met on his or her own level. Each step into a more advanced training group comes with an increased practice requirement and team commitment.

Zoomers: This pre-team program is especially designed for children who have advanced fundamental swimming skills, but are not yet ready for competition. Practices will emphasize stroke technique and introduce racing starts and turns. Children must be able to swim 25 yards of both backstroke and freestyle to enter this program. Zoomers swimmers meet twice a week for 45 minutes. *New to this year's program is the ability to compete in Barracuda Swim Team home meets.* This exciting addition to the program allows children to get a real taste for what competitive swimming is all about as well as introducing them to more of the team aspects not previously offered to Zoomers participants. It is strongly encouraged that swimmers have passed YMCA Fish level swimming lessons.

Age Group Program

Age Group swimmers will concentrate on stroke development while preparing and training for competition. Commitment, self-discipline, goal setting, interval, and mental training are important aspects of this level's training regimen. Workouts will be designed according to ability. Our Age Group Program consists of four (4) groups:

White: The overall objective of this level is to give the swimmers more individual attention and a positive experience in competitive swimming. This is the Barracuda Swim Team's entry level group. White swimmers are expected to practice 2 to 3 times a week. In this group children learn starts, turns, stroke technique, and team spirit, which are all basics of competitive swimming.

Green: Swimmers in this group are expected to practice 3 to 4 times a week. They are expected to build off the skills they were taught in the White group. Practices begin to have more of a conditioning emphasis while working on the stroke technique.

Gold: Gold swimmers practice 4 to 5 times a week. Here children start to pull together the stroke mechanic and conditioning aspects of the sport to create a workout environment that is fun but also allows for the young swimmers to still grow and develop.

Senior: This group is designed to prepare swimmers for the challenges of our Pre-National/National program, the highest level of training. The focus of this group is to prepare swimmers for difference in practices and meets as they advance through their preteen and early teenage years. There is a strong emphasis put on developing the dedication, determination, and team leadership qualities needed to be a Pre-National/National swimmer. Participants in this group are expected to practice 4 to 5+ times a week.

Pre-National and National Program

It is an honor and a privilege to be selected for the highest level of the Barracuda Swim Team. In addition to training individual swimmers, the Barracuda National Program is about training a team of swimmers to work together, enabling the team to be competitive at this level of swimming.

Pre-National and

National:

These are the elite training levels for the Barracuda Swim Team. Swimmers in these groups understand the importance of physical training as well as mental training. Many of these swimmers are preparing to train at the college level. Time management in relation to academics and training is of the utmost importance. These swimmers strive to qualify for local, state, regional, and national championship level meets. Swimmers are required to attend no fewer than 5 workouts and must participate in all scheduled meets. Dry land training, time management, mental training, goal setting, and film analysis are all part of this practice schedule.

National Program Expectations

These expectations for this team are in place to ensure the best and most positive experience for the swimmers, parents, and coaches. It is important that everyone understands, agrees upon, and commits to the basic requirements for participation in this program. Both swimmers and their parents need to understand the commitment involved and the expectations of the coaching staff for a swimmer at this level. Outlined below are the requirements of a National level swimmer:

- All swimmers are expected to attend all practices each week unless they are participating in a school sport (*see below*). When unable to attend, the swimmer will contact Coach Eric prior to the absence.
- Swimmers will attend all meets for which they are eligible.
- Academics are a swimmer's first priority. Swimming is second only to academics at this level of competition.
- For a Barracuda swimmer participating in his/her respective High School swimming season (or other High School sports in the beginning of our fall or spring season), the Barracuda training requirement for him/her during that season is to attend EITHER two (2) workouts per week and four (4) YMCA meets during the High School Season *OR* attend one (1) workout per week and ALL regular season YMCA League meets unless other arrangements with Coach Eric have been made one (1) week prior to the conflict. If more than two (2) regular season meets are missed then the High School requirements automatically revert to the two (2) workouts per week option.
- The team aspects of swimming are crucial at this level and it is fundamental that swimmers, parents, and coaches display respect, consideration, and mutual support at all times.
- All National level swimmers are required to participate in all fundraising activities for the Barracuda Swim Team and any additional fundraising activities that are specific to the National Program.

National Team swimmers planning to participate in qualifying meets may be expected to meet additional requirements as specified in the *National Team Winter Season Expectations*.

TEAM COMPETITION

The Barracudas compete in two (2) different swim leagues whose meets are organized quite differently from each other: YMCA Swimming and USA Swimming. In both, league swimmers compete in age classes: 8 & under, 9 – 10, 11 – 12, 13 – 14, and 15 & over. For YMCA Swimming, a swimmer's age is determined by his/her age on December 1st. For USA Swimming, a swimmer's age is determined by his/her age on the first day of the meet.

Meet Sign-In

Swimmers are required to simply check "Yes" or "No" for each meet throughout the season. A Meet Sign-In sheet (also often referred to as "*The Yes/No List*") is posted at least several weeks prior on the team bulletin board for each meet. If an electronic sign-in option becomes available for certain meets, information, including sign-in links, will be communicated to the team by e-mail and through the team newsletter. Swimmers who do not sign in appropriately, by leaving blanks next to their names, may be excluded from the team entries. Late entries and/or deck entries are not always permissible for meets so it is imperative that all swimmers sign in as expected. The coaching staff will select the events for the swimmers based on what is best for both the individual swimmer and the team and often what they are working on in practice.

YMCA Swimming

As a YMCA Northern Region team, Barracudas compete against other YMCA teams in the Pine Tree League. The Winter Season consists of 4 dual meets (Barracudas vs. one other team) and 5 – 6 invitational meets (Barracudas vs. 2 or more teams) in which every swimmer in the age group is expected to participate as a team member. All regular dual meets will be scored and all swimmers will be expected to participate. The YMCA State championship meet (States) is held in late February or early March at which time the coaching staff enters each swimmer in events that will best benefit the team. To qualify for YMCA States a swimmer must have competed in at least three (3) YMCA sanctioned meets. If not already achieved at previous meets, swimmers may achieve qualifying times to proceed on to the New England YMCA championship meet typically held in mid-March. Senior and National level swimmers strive to qualify for YMCA Nationals. In order to qualify for YMCA Nationals a swimmer must have competed in at least three (3) YMCA dual meets and one (1) YMCA championship meet each season.

USA Swimming

All Age Group and National swimmers may participate in USA swimming (USA-S). Barracuda swimmers are not required to obtain USA-S registration. Taking part in USA-S swimming involves a separate cost for registration, membership, and meet participation. USA-S meets, in contrast to YMCA meets, are not dual meets in which the coach enters each swimmer in events in which he can best benefit the team. In USA-S meets, many of which require qualifying times for participation, each swimmer will be entered by the coaching staff into events for which he/she is eligible. Swimmers from many teams are entered in each event. The events are divided into heats so each swimmer is competing with others of equal ability. The meets are classified as All ages, A, or AA meets. Each classification has progressively stiffer qualifying times that a swimmer must meet in order to enter. A swimmer who has not yet achieved an A time in a certain event may not swim that event at an A meet. Conversely, a swimmer who has achieved an A time in an event may no longer swim that event at B or C meets. Thus at USA-S meets, swimmers are assured appropriate competition and are also encouraged to focus on the goal of improving their times rather than winning the race. Those

swimmers who are able to achieve the cut-off times compete at the MSI (Maine Swimming, Inc.) USA-S Championship meets held in mid-March and late July – early August. Besides achieving the qualifying time cuts, a swimmer must have participated in USA-S meets during the season to be eligible.

High School Swimming

Barracuda swimmers who also participate in their high school swim program have two (2) options available to them for the winter season: Option #1 is to swim with the team only in the fall with no winter commitment; Option #2 is to swim with the team from September through November, continuing with the team through December and January as often as possible, participate in as many dual meets as possible, and swim with the team from February through March. Swimmers choosing Option #2 can pay 60% of the Swim Team program fee in September with the other 40% being due no later than December 1st. **To ensure that high school swimmers have every opportunity to meet the minimum training requirements set forth in the National Team commitment guidelines, morning practices are offered twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:45am – 7:00am) beginning October 13th.** High school swimmers are eligible to participate in and are encouraged to attend as many YMCA and USA meets as possible throughout the course of the winter season. Where high school meets tend to limit swimmers to two (2) specific events, YMCA dual meets and USA meets allow swimmers to compete in a variety of events not always available in the high school program that can help to broaden college swim resumes. In order to accommodate the high school swimmers, we try to schedule two (2) YMCA dual meets before the high school season and a championship meet after the high school season so swimmers can meet the requirements for competing in YMCA State and National Championships.

Team Records

The Bangor Y Barracuda Swim Team tracks both short course (yards) and long course (meters) records for the team. The Short Course (yards) record boards are located on the wall in the Aloupis Pool. Both SC and LC records are also posted on the Team Bulletin Board in the pool lobby. To be posted as a team record you must have represented Barracuda Swimming, as a member of the Bangor Y Barracuda Swim Team, in the meet in which the record was achieved.

Transportation to Meets

The team does not use buses to travel to YMCA dual or USA-S meets except in special circumstances, if deemed appropriate; i.e., lengthy travel distances, championship meets, etc. It is the swimmer and the parents' responsibility to get to all swim meets. Car pools are often formed and others are always willing to help when a ride is needed. Advance notice will be given if the decision is made to travel by bus to a specific meet.

BARRACUDA BOOSTER ASSOCIATION

The Barracuda Booster Association (BBA) is a vital support organization for the Barracuda Swim Team. It provides administrative, financial, and other general support for the Bangor Y's competitive swim program. All parents are members of the BBA and each family contributes BBA dues at registration. The BBA is governed by the Head Coach and Aquatics Director and designated staff. The BBA does not make policy decisions. Parent volunteers may be requested to attend meetings during the course of the season to provide input and needed volunteer and financial resources instrumental in ensuring the smooth, consistent operation of the team.

Parents Commitment

Parental involvement is essential. Based on the size of our competitive team, all parents are expected to volunteer at meets. Working at a swim meet hosted by our team is a good way to meet other parents and increase your understanding and enjoyment of the competitive swim program. Most parents actually find it more enjoyable to participate than to sit in the bleachers. The Barracudas are also invited to numerous away meets and championships during the season. According to the size of our entry, we are assigned a proportionate amount of jobs. There is a fine to our team for lack of volunteer support. A Meet Leader may be assigned by the Head Coach and/or the Aquatics Director and will be responsible to contact and organize volunteers for home and away meets.

The **BBA** runs a wide variety of activities in which volunteer support is vital. There are numerous one-time events that need to be coordinated. There is a job for everyone! Volunteer opportunities will be posted and discussed at our annual Fall Parents' Meeting. Everyone is expected to help.

Meet Leaders

A Meet Leader is a parent who coordinates volunteers for a swim meet. The Head Coach and/or Aquatics Director, or designated Meet Coordinator if deemed necessary, will advise the number and type of work assignments needed at each particular meet and will contact the Meet Leader. When arriving at the meet, parents should check in with the Meet Leader who will in turn organize the volunteers and divide up the assignments. In this way, no parent ends up working for four hours straight. Any block of time is welcome.

Fundraising

The **BBA** provides financial resources that allow our team to function smoothly and competitively. We subsidize expenses for training equipment such as fins and boards, stopwatches, computer equipment and maintenance, annual swim team banquet, prizes, awards and coaching staff travel expenses for meets. In the past, the **BBA** has provided funds for the electronic timing system, the purchase of computers, and deck and pool equipment.

Besides annual dues, there are several fundraising events during the season. The Barracuda Swim Challenge is the primary fundraiser every year. All Barracuda families are required to participate in the team's annual fundraiser at the following minimum levels: \$75 for the first swimmer, \$50 for the second swimmer, and with a maximum of \$150 required for families with three or more swimmers. These charges are the minimum level of required participation and apply even if your swimmer does not participate actively in the fundraising event. If you have any other ideas for fundraising activities, companies or individuals who may be potential contributors, contact the Aquatics Director.

Communication

Communication is a key element in running a successful competitive swim program. The Barracudas communicate to the parents through the Barracuda Swim Team Bulletin Board (located in the pool lobby), the team website (www.barracudaswimmingbyb.org), e-mail (barracudas@bangorY.org, epalmer@bangory.org, or hhatch@bangory.org), and the '**Cuda Chronicle**. The Barracuda Swim Team Staff would like to ensure that membership on the team is a positive and enriching experience for both parents and children alike. Parental concerns about his/her child's swimming should be addressed directly to the coaching staff. The coaches are always open to discuss issues with parents during non-practice times and may be reached at the Bangor Y's 2nd Street location at (207)941-2808

ext 335. Please remember that with 75+ swimmers to coach, Coach Eric is not always able to return a parent's call promptly.

Parent Commitment *Quick List*

- ☑ Help and support your swimmers to meet their team and age group commitments, for themselves and their teammates, by being on time and present for required practices and meets.
- ☑ Remember that swimmers have been placed in the most appropriate practice group by the coaching staff and should only attend practices for their assigned groups. Reassignment to different practice groups during the course of the season is a decision made solely at the discretion of the coaching staff.
- ☑ Stay up to date on all financial commitments (see Explanation of Fees - Program Information).
- ☑ Be present and volunteer for timing and other team parent assignments at all home and away meets.
- ☑ Volunteer and help with the various **BBA** efforts to support swimmers (meet help {officials, timers, concessions, etc.}, event organization, communications, photography, publicity, etc.)
- ☑ Remember that parents support, coaches coach.
- ☑ Be aware that, in the interest of the team's progress, and to limit distractions and maintain the attention of all swimmers, **parents are only allowed on the pool deck during the last 20 minutes of every Tuesday and Thursday evening practices; all Monday, Wednesday, and Friday practices are CLOSED to parental viewing.**
- ☑ Parents must adhere to the Bangor Y code of conduct.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

There are three (3) items of Financial Responsibility that **MUST BE PAID** in full at the time of registration. They are as follows:

1. Bangor Y Membership (up to date);
2. Barracuda Swim Team applicable Winter or Summer Program Fee;
3. **Barracuda Booster Association (BBA)** Winter or Summer Dues;
4. USA Swimming (USA-S) registration (optional).

In addition, there are three (3) other items of financial responsibility for each swimmer, incurred during the course of the season. They are:

1. Each swimmer is required to purchase a team suit and team cap and must wear both at every meet. (For approved championship meets only; i.e., Maine YMCA State Championship meet, USA-S Winter and Summer Championship meets, and YMCA Winter and Summer National Championship meet, swimmers have the option to wear special racing suits, i.e., Aquablade, Fastskin, FSII, FS-Pro etc., which would also need to be purchased by parents at their discretion).

2. Each Barracuda family is required to participate in the team's annual fundraiser at the following minimum levels: \$75 for the first swimmer, \$50 for the second swimmer, and with a maximum of \$150 required for families with three or more swimmers. Every other year the team runs a Swim Challenge, for which swimmers may solicit pledges from outside sources. The specific fundraiser varies on the "off" year, although the **Barracuda Booster Association (BBA)** tries to choose fundraising programs that allow parents or swimmers to engage outside sources if they so choose. The fundraiser participation is a requirement of team membership. The Head Coach or Aquatics Director must approve any requests for variation on your payment before registration. Any swimmer in arrears will **not** be permitted to practice until the account is settled.
3. Certain meets, such as select YMCA Swim League Invitational meets, YMCA Championship Meets (State, New England, and National level), and all USA-S meets, require swimmer entry fees in addition to team fees. The swim team program fees and BBA fees cover team fees and, in limited number of circumstances, may also cover individual swimmer entry fees. You are responsible for any meet entry fees that are not offset by program or BBA fees. Meet entry statements will be sent out either before or after applicable meets during the course of the season. The Head Coach or Aquatics Director must approve any requests for variation on your payment. Prompt payment of these fees is important; any swimmer in arrears may be excluded from meet entries until balances are rectified. Certain meets require entries and fees be sent in well in advance of the meet. The team is not able to obtain refunds for swimmers who scratch from these meets after the team entry and fees have been submitted. Swimmers who sign in "yes" but scratch from the meet or fail to attend are still required to reimburse the team for the applicable meet entry fees.

EXPLANATION OF FEES

The Barracuda competitive swim program is affiliated with both the National YMCA and USA Swimming (USA-S). Our Local Swimming Committee (LSC) is Maine Swimming, Inc. (MSI). The fees indicated for our program are reflective of the team's participation in both programs and are required of all participants.

Bangor Y Membership: The Bangor Y membership fees are used for covering the actual Bangor Y facility/pool expenses. All program participants are required to have a current Bangor Y membership and must remain a member in good standing during the course of the season in order to be eligible to participate in YMCA dual meets, YMCA State Championships, New England YMCA Championships, and YMCA Nationals.

Program Fee: The swim team program fees cover staff salaries and administrative costs. The Bangor Y requires full payment of program fees upon registration but does offer the option of a monthly electronic bank draft spread over the course of the season for interested swim families. Winter season ~ 1/6 of the program fee must be paid at the time of registration and the other 5 payments must be completed by no later than February 15th of the current winter season. Summer season ~ 1/3 of the program fee must be paid at the time of registration and the other 2 payments must be completed by no later than June 30th of the current summer season. Swimmers must register separately for the Winter Season (September – March) and the Summer Season (April – July).

Barracuda Booster Association (BBA) Fee: There are swim team expenses and personnel support that the Bangor Y does not cover. The **Barracuda Booster Association (BBA)** provides the necessary financial and volunteer support for the team and coaches. Examples of expenses the Bangor Y does not cover are computer equipment and supplies, team shirts, awards, annual banquet costs, equipment repairs, coaches' clinics and certifications, timing system, and coaches' travel expenses. Your **BBA** fees are determined at registration and **must be paid in full at the time of registration**. This fee **cannot be bank drafted** with the program fee.

Meet Entry Fee: Certain meets, such as select YMCA Swim League Invitational meets, YMCA Championship Meets (State, New England, and National level), and all USA-S meets, require swimmer entry fees in addition to team fees. The swim team program fees and BBA fees cover team fees and, in certain circumstances, a portion of the swimmer entry fees. Depending upon each season's meet schedule there may be a number of meets requiring entry fees. Meet Entry Fee statements will be sent out either before or after applicable meets during the course of the season. **All applicable Meet Entry fees must be paid in full upon receipt of your Meet Entry Fee statement.** These fees **cannot be bank drafted** with the program fee.

USA Swimming Membership/Registration (optional): USA Swimming (USA-S) is the national governing body for swimming in the United States. The Barracuda Swim Team is a member of USA Swimming through the Local Swimming Committee (LSC) known as Maine Swimming, Inc. (MSI). The Barracuda Swim Team participates in USA-S sanctioned meets throughout the course of the year. These meets are in addition to the YMCA dual meets and championship meets. Every Barracuda swimmer is required to register with USA Swimming in order to participate in these meets, as well as be insured while participating in practices and meets. The annual membership fee for each athlete is \$55 and is effective for a full calendar year (January 1st, 2010 through December 31st, 2010). Annual athlete memberships purchased beginning September 1st, 2009 are valid through December 31st, 2010. A seasonal USA membership is also available, instead of the annual membership, for a \$33 fee per season; Season 1 runs from October 16th, 2009 through March 14th, 2010 and Season 2 runs from April 4th, 2010 through August 31st, 2010. For team officials and interested parents, the annual membership for a non-athlete is \$50 and is effective for a full calendar year (January through December). Different from previous years, parents who wish to volunteer as Meet Marshals at various USA-S meets, including both Winter Champs and Summer Champs, do not need to have valid 2009 USA-S Non-Athlete registrations.

