

SWIM MEET BASICS

Swim meets are a great family experience. They're a place where the whole family can spend time together.

Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach or group representative.

Swimmers

- ❖ Make sure that you pack your swim bag the night before with all of the things you will need for the meet.
 - Team Suit (or suit you will be swimming in)
 - Team Cap
 - Towel, plus and extra towel
 - 2 pairs of goggles
 - Shoes you can wear at the meet to keep feet warm and off the deck
 - Warm clothes you can wear between your events
 - Water bottle that you can fill to keep hydrated
 - Games, book, or Ipod to keep busy between your events
 - Don't forget your STREAMLINE!
- ❖ When you are at the meet we want everyone there to know who you swim for so please wear your team apparel!
- ❖ **Make sure that you sit with the team.** This is important because you will be close to the coaches and will get important information. Also meets are a time when our team grows together and we get to know each other better than before, we don't want anyone missing out on team moments.

Parents

- ❖ Remember that your role at meets is to make sure your swimmers are given everything they need to be physically ready and have enough energy to swim. You are the support system for your swimmers at the meet you are not the coach.
- ❖ Here are a few things you can do the day before and the day of the meet to make sure you and your swimmer(s) are ready for the meet.
 - Make sure your swimmer(s) get to bed on time, at least 8hrs of sleep.
 - Check their bag, after they have packed it themselves, to make sure that everything that they need is included. **Let your swimmer(s) do the packing, don't do it for them.** This is a good lesson they can learn on preparedness.

- Pack chairs that you and your swimmer(s) can sit in during the meet. Often at pools there is not any were to sit unless you bring your own chairs.
- Bring enough food and drinks for your swimmer(s) and try to keep them away from the snack bar if possible. Pack food high in carbs such as granola, fruit and sports drinks, most important is water! Also if the meet will be long bring something more substantial such as sandwiches and other things of that nature.
- **Timing**- one of your responsibilities as a parent is to help with timing when needed. Swim meets are completely staffed by parent volunteers so if parents don't help then things don't get done.
- Bring something to keep you busy! There will be long breaks between your swimmer(s) races so have something to keep you busy or it will be a long evening.
- Last but not least, be a cheerleader for your swimmer(s) they want to show you what they have learned and they want to make you proud so remember to always show you how proud you are of them!

BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

- ❖ Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information posted online for that particular meet.
- ❖ Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
- ❖ Find the check-in place. Usually, parents are not allowed on deck so this the responsibility of your swimmer. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach! Check for special posted instructions in the check-in area.
 - Usually one will need to circle or highlight the swimmer's name; double check for the events he or she is swimming, that day. If this is not done, the swimmer will not be allowed to swim that event. Check-in is required so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet. After check-in, the meet administrators "seed" the swimmers into heats. Heat and lane assignments will be posted, so be sure your swimmer knows where to look!
 - Sometimes the meet is "pre-seeded" and no check-in is required. You and your swimmer can find heat and lane assignments by purchasing a heat sheet.
- ❖ Once "checked in", write or have the swimmers write each event-number on his or her hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.
- ❖ Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up

with the team. A swimmer's body is just like a car on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.

- ❖ After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her team is sitting and wait there until his first event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
- ❖ The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
- ❖ According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a coach. He or she in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
- ❖ Psyche Sheet or Heat Sheets. A psyche sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time (up to the date that the entry was submitted) in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. A Heat sheet may be available close to the start of the meet that lists the actual heat and lane a swimmer will be competing in.

MEET STARTS

- ❖ It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
- ❖ Most meets are computerized. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane:
 - A swimmer usually reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she actually swims. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions.
 - In some novice meets, a swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "clerk of course" or "bullpen". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle.
 - ◆ Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, report to Clerk of Course." The "Clerk of Course" or "bullpen" area is usually where all swimmers checked in before the warm-up.
 - ◆ The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event.

- ❖ The swimmer swims his or her race.
- ❖ After each swim:
 - He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
 - Depending on the coaches' instructions, the swimmer may be asked to do some recovery swimming if a "warm down" pool or lanes are available.
 - The swimmer should then go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer. Some coaches may wish to talk with the swimmer before her recovery swim.
- ❖ Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - Positive comments or praise
 - Suggestions for improvement
 - Positive comments
- ❖ Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - Tell him how great he did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with him. You need to tell him how proud you are and what a great job he did.
 - Take him back to the team area and relax.
 - This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
- ❖ The swimmer now waits until his next event is called and starts the procedure again. When a swimmer has completed all of her events she and her parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and she is not there.
- ❖ Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility. Awards are often gathered for a team and given to the coach at the end of the meet. The coach will give the awards to the swimmers at a later time.