

The Importance of Being Competitive...

Every athlete approaches a sport from a very unique perspective. Most people find that the physical and psychological challenges that come from consistent exercise are the sole rewards. However, developing a dedication towards athletics, in any variable degree, is much more than recreational exercise. As clichéd as it may be, fitness is very much a defining characteristic of lifestyle.

However, there is a tremendous difference between the personal efforts of an individual and those of an organized team member. We Flying Dolphins compete. The time that is spent practicing and refining our physical abilities is geared towards an end result. We race. We improve. We set more goals. What distinguishes a competitor from a mere participant is that, in competition, achievement is measured and evaluated at the contest. For competitive swimmers, the results of a swim meet are the gauge by which progression is tested. The ultimate goal, then, is simply to swim faster.

This is not to say that competition is our only concern. As a team, we collectively set our sights in one direction—racing—and this allows us to include all other aspects associated with swim training. In fact, we spend most of our focus and energy on 'sweating the small stuff,' so to speak—day after day going over the details of technique and fitness. What we find there are the smaller rewards, successes at the end of every practice. But throughout the entire season, the perspective must always remain that, as team members, we train to compete.

With that in mind, parental involvement really comes into play when it is time for your child to race in a swim meet. Meet registration is the first place to start. One visit to the [Direct Athletics](#) website, will allow you to register your child for any or all of the upcoming meets this season. There are deadlines for meet registration. If you do not register by the cutoff date, your child will not be able to swim in a particular meet.

After registering, be sure that you make it to the meet on time. Your child knows what to do once they are there. We work hard to prepare the athletes for their races and certainly expect them to do their best. We absolutely do not concern ourselves with the place finishes in the meet. We are looking for improvement in technique, time and spirit.

There is always a great deal of excitement at a swim meet. Your child will have a chance to shine in the pool, and show off everything that he or she has mastered in practice. It is a chance to perform. Don't assume that too much stress is put upon them. We focus on the energy and the anticipation and maintain a positive attitude. The swim meets, as you will see, will quickly become the highlight of your child's career in competitive swimming. It rewards them for the hours of hard work they put into their sport.

See you at the pool!