

INVITATIONAL MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE

An Invitational Meet can be an intimidating experience for new swimmers and their families. A typical meet will have 400 to 450 swimmers and will include as many as 3,000 individual swims over the course of the weekend. This guide is meant to help you survive your first experience at such a meet. **REMEMBER:** When in doubt, send your swimmer to a Munster coach or ask another swim family what to do. There is no such thing as a silly question. All swim families know how confusing and intimidating a first meet experience can be, and will be happy to help you out.

SUGGESTED THINGS TO BRING TO A MEET

- Copy of the Host Team's Meet Packet ("Meet Packet"). This packet contains information as to what session (morning or afternoon) your swimmer's age group is competing, warm-up times, order of events and other practical information which will serve as a reference tool during the meet. Copies of most meet packets can be downloaded from the Meet Schedule section of the Munster team web site.
- Swimsuit and goggles. An extra pair of goggles for insurance is a good idea. Equipment also will be on sale at the meet.
- Towel(s) - to dry off after races.
- Something to sit on between races. Blankets/sleeping bags work well.
- Sweat suit/tee shirt to wear between races to keep warm.
- Games: travel games, books, or anything to pass the time between races.
- Food: small cooler with drinks (Gatorade/All Sport/PowerAde, fruit Juice, bottled water), and snacks (sandwiches, granola bars, cereal, etc.). There will also be concessions at the meet.
- Duffel bag to hold it all.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Pool areas are usually very warm and humid. You should either dress lightly or make sure you layer your clothing so you can adapt to the inside temperature once you arrive.

ARRIVAL

Try to arrive 15 minutes before warm-ups are scheduled to begin. The warm-up times for your swimmer's age group will be set out in the Meet Packet. Warm-up times also announced on the Munster voice mail (923-8699) system a day or two before the meet.

CHECK-IN

Check-in. Most meets will have a "**Positive Check-In**" table set up near the pool entrance where you will be required to check off your child's name on an attendance sheet. This procedure lets the meet organizers know who will be swimming that day, and enables them to

make lane and heat assignments prior to the start of the session. If you do not sign your child in, he/she will not be allowed to compete. The positive check-in requirement is set out in the Meet Packet, but and if you are unsure as to the procedure, ask the coaches.

WARM-UPS

After checking in, have your child get dressed and report to the coaches on the pool deck for warm-up instructions. Before letting your child go, make sure they know where the spectator area is located and where they can meet you after warm-ups. NOTE: You will not be allowed to meet your swimmer on the pool deck. USA Swimming regulations forbid parents on the deck.

DURING WARM-UPS

During warm-ups, there are a few things you might want to do.
-Locate the "Clerk of Course" (if applicable). A few meets still run a "Clerk of Course" (usually for younger swimmers), and the Meet Packet will tell you if there is a Clerk of Course being run for your swimmer's age group. If there is a Clerk of Course, you should make sure you know where it is located. The Clerk of Course is an area near the pool deck to which swimmers must report in advance of their events in order to be organized and then escorted to the pool deck for competition. If there is no Clerk of Course, each swimmer's heat and lane assignments are posted on the walls at the end of warm-ups, and swimmers are expected to report on deck at the appropriate times. The coaches will help younger and inexperienced swimmers with the procedure.

-Locate the "camping area". Many meets have an area where swimmers can spread out blankets and socialize/rest between races.

-Purchase a "Psyche Sheet" Program. This is a master list of all the swimmers organized by event number, and will let you know when your child will be competing. They are typically sold near the concessions area and usually cost \$5 to \$6.

AFTER WARM-UPS

When your child completes warm-ups, have her/him meet you in the stands or the hallway outside the pool area. Write on the back of your child's hand the event numbers of the races in which they will be competing that day. This will act as a reminder of the events as they come up.

PROGRESSION OF THE MEET

Once the meet starts, the races will proceed in numerical order. Each race will receive a first call, a second call, and a final call prior to the event. For example, while event number 26 is about to begin, a typical announcement might be "first call for event number 29, second call for event number 28, final call for event number 27". If there is a Clerk

of Course for your swimmer, they should proceed to the Clerk of Course area **immediately** upon hearing the first call for one of their races. If there isn't a Clerk of Course, they should be on deck (or head back to the deck) upon hearing first call, should be ready to proceed to the starting end of the pool by the time the second call is announced, and should be at the start end when the last call is announced. Always remember, when in doubt send your swimmer to one of the Munster coaches on deck!

BETWEEN RACES

After a race is completed and your heart rate has slowed sufficiently, you may want to meet up with your child to make sure they have dried off and put on a shirt. NOTE: The first thing your child should do upon completing a race is report to their coach for any comments, etc., and only then meet up with you. At a typical meet you will have at least 30 - 40 minutes between swims (or longer if it is a crowded meet or your swimmer is skipping an event). This is also a good time to make sure he or she drinks and/or eats something prior to the next race. Just remember to keep track of the events and be ready to send your swimmer either to the Clerk of Course or back on deck when the first call for their next event is announced.

RELAYS

In addition to individual events, your child may swim as part of a relay. The coaches appoint swimmers to relay teams at the beginning of the session based on the number of swimmers present (one relay for every four swimmers who are present). The relay races are usually held at the end of each swim session, so make sure your swimmer checks with one of the coaches to see if he/she is swimming on a relay. NOTE: If your swimmer must leave the meet early and is unavailable to swim a relay, let the coaches know *at the beginning of the session* so another swimmer can be found for that relay.

If your swimmer is not on a relay, you may leave after your child's last individual event!