

# ***Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Swim Meets... But were Afraid to Ask!***

## **Why go to Swim Meets?**

1. Because Swim Meets are Fun!!! Swimmers work hard during practices...at Meets is where they get to have fun and be social. Swimmers get to hang out with their friends, make new friends, swap stories, laugh at jokes, share music, yell very loud to cheer each other on and most of all do what they like best...Swim!... and...Really see how all that practicing is making them swim better!
2. Parents get to hangout with other parents and other non-swimming family members, see the fruits of all their chauffeuring, make friends, swap stories, take pictures, take videos and yell and cheer for their wonderful children!
3. Families sometimes get to travel to some nice places like the Nassau County Goodwill Pool in Eisenhower Park, the lovely campus of Hofstra University,

## **Okay, now that you know how much fun it can be...How do you get to go?**

1. Well first you need to check the team calendar on the Team Website ([www.gaelac.com](http://www.gaelac.com)) and see where the coach plans to take the team.
2. Then you must email the coach, as soon as possible, to let him know you want to attend. Entries for the meets are done weeks, sometimes months, in advance. If you do not notify the coach in time they may not be able to include your child. Some meets fill up very quickly! This is a very important step because it costs the team to enter your child in a meet and the team will not get refunded for swimmers who don't show up.

## **Great!...Your child has been entered into a Swim Meet...**

### **How do I know where to go and how to get there?**

1. First check the calendar to see where the Meet is being held.
2. Then check for directions in the Meet Information page on the Team Website.
3. If you need to travel, check with other team parents for possible car pooling (it's always fun to travel with others)

### **Now... what will we need...**

*Swimmers should always bring their;*

1. Team Suit
2. Team Shirt
3. A Towel
4. A pair of goggles
5. Games, cards, books
6. Snacks, preferable healthy ones...usually food is available at meets, but the lines are usually long and the stuff is mostly junk food.
7. Big water bottle...if you have time to ice half of it, it will stay nice and cold through most of the meet.

### **What else do the swimmers bring?**

1. An extra suit, cap and goggles can save the day.
2. At least one good towel...preferable two (sometimes they will need to sit on one of them)

3. Extra dry clothes...in case the first set gets wet.

### **What should I wear at a Meet?**

1. Swimmers wear their uniform swim suit, their uniform swim cap and their best goggles for swimming. They also bring a t-shirt (and/or sweat shirt) and gym shorts (or sweat pants) for the occasionally cool deck. A pair of flip flops on slippery decks is nice too.
2. Parents and other non-swimming family members wear very comfortable clothes...preferably layers that you can peel off if you get warm in the bleachers.

### **What else do parents bring?**

1. Snacks...even families get hungry too!
2. Drinks...they get thirsty too.
3. Games, cards, books, & newspapers to help you pass the time in-between your child's event.
4. A pen, pencil and/or highlighter to mark the program, so you know when and what your child is swimming and when to cheer.
5. One of those portable chairs are great...seating is usually limited.
6. Extra cash...for all those things your kids want you to shop for...like swim gear, t-shirts, etc.

### **Alright...now that you have the bags (and the car) packed, what about the Swim Meet itself...**

#### **When should we arrive?**

1. Plan to get there at least 15 minutes before the warm-up begins...20 minutes earlier is preferable if you want ample time to change and claim a space to sit during the meet...either on deck (for the swimmers) or in the bleachers (everyone else). Please do not arrive late. If you are late, your child could be scratched from the meet. This is a meet policy - scratches are required to be turned in during warm-up.

#### **What is a scratch?**

1. It means your child was not present when attendance was taken will not get to swim.

#### **What does your child do upon arrival?**

1. Get suited up and take their towel and gear with them on deck.
2. Find where their team is staking out space and claim their spot
3. Let their coach know they are present and ready to swim
4. find out what events they will be swimming from their coach or the "Psyche Sheets" (more about that later) that are posted...ask... someone will know where they are.

#### **What is a Psyche Sheet?**

1. A Psyche Sheet is a program of all the swimmers who have been entered into the meet. It will list the swimmers in each event in order of their "seed time". Their "seed time" is their previous best time, on record, in that event. If they are swimming it for the first time they will be entered with a "NT" (no time). The heats are broken up based on how many lanes there are in the pool and the slowest or NT swimmers swim first and continue with the fastest swimmers swimming last. Usually girls event are the odd-numbered ones and boys are the even.

### **Where do I get one of these Psyche Sheets?**

1. They are usually available for sale in the lobby or concessions stands when you arrive.

### **Why is there an admissions and program fee for spectator families?**

1. Remember meets are very expensive to host and the sales are just a way for the hosting team to raise the funds.

### **Why is warm-up important?**

1. Every pool is a little different. Some are more shallow, some more deep than the child's home pool. Some are longer, some are shorter than what they are used to. The diving block may be different too. The flags which help the child know a turn is coming in backstroke may seem different. The children need to warm up their muscles and...This is a time for the child to practice the stroke, dive, & turns they will be doing in the pool they will be doing it in.

### **After warm-up...then what?**

1. If the swimmer is not in the first event, this is a good time to wave at their parents, go to the bathroom, take a drink and settle down with their friends. **DO NOT WANDER OFF WITHOUT TELLING YOUR COACH!** If the swimmer needs to visit their parents in the bleachers, they may do so in-between events. It is the swimmers responsibility to be on the deck and ready to swim when their event occurs.
2. USA Swimming rules **BAN ALL PARENTS FROM THE DECKS** during meets (unless you are working as a timer, etc.). If you have a question regarding an event, a disqualification, or the conduct of a meet, please speak with your coach at the appropriate time. They will handle the matter through appropriate channels.

### **What if my child misses their heat in their event?**

1. They can be penalized if they do not swim their event...they may be disqualified from their next event or the rest of the meet and the team could be fined. It all depends on the exact circumstances at the time they miss their swim.
2. It is very important they know where and when they are supposed to swim and keep track of the time. If the child is very young and unsure, a coach or older swimmer will usually be there to help them. Always encourage your children to talk to their coach about uncertainties.

### **What does my child get out of all this?**

1. A sense of accomplishment when all their practicing is paying off....a reason to set new goals for a personal best...more incentive to practice hard...and eventually an occasional bit of recognition with a ribbon, medal or trophy.

## Okay what else should you know...

### How long are meets?

1. Meets are broken up into sessions. Sometimes there is only one per day; sometimes there can be up to three.
2. According to USA rules a regular average session may not last more than 4 hours (including warm-up time). Of course there is usually a short grace period.
3. In the case of championship meets they can sometimes run longer.
4. If you have only one child then they will usually only have to swim in one session per day. If you have more than one and they are in different age groups you might have more than one session per day. You have to check the meet information to find out which groups are swimming which sessions.
5. If you have an 11 yr old or older, during the championship games, they will be swimming preliminary sessions and then if they make it...a finals session at the end of the day.
6. 10 yr olds and under only have final sessions, so you will only have one session for them.

### What do they mean by Short Course and Long Course?

1. Short Course Season runs from September to April (end of March). Short course pools are 25 yd pools and the events and times are done in yardage.
2. Long Course Season runs from April to mid-August. Long course pools are 50 meter pools and the events and times are done in meters.

### What if my child has a disappointing swim?

1. Sometimes swimmers have poor races or get disqualified. If your child approaches you after one of these instances, be positive with them. It is important for them to gain this experience and move past it. Offer them love and acceptance (a hug never hurts) and encourage them to speak to the coach if they have not already. Concentrate on what they think they could do to improve next time not what you think they could do.
2. Most importantly, keep in perspective that unless this is the last race they ever do (and it almost never is) there are hundreds more to go...so it is just one race! Move on!

***Above all remember Swim Meets are really fun for the team members, it is a time to show are skills and to learn what we need to work on, and those team members who consistently avoid meets, miss out on a very important part of the GAEL AQUATIC CLUB EXPERIENCE!***