

While my child is swimming a race should I wait on the pool deck where he will finish?

That is not a great place for a parent to be, unless you are a timer or other meet official. The end of short course season is a good time to alter that habit, if you and your child have gotten used to it.

Championship meets are typically crowded. They can also be stressful for swimmers, families, and the volunteers who are trying to run the meet fairly for everyone's children. If you have not begun to let your child go to the blocks alone and then report to her coach before reporting to you, you may need to learn to do that now, as the starting end of the pool is often restricted to competitors and meet volunteers only.

1. This rule promotes safety. The more people crowding the blocks, the easier it is for someone to get hurt or land in the pool.
2. This rule is necessary for the meet to function smoothly. Timers cannot get to the edge of the pool, and officials cannot watch swimmers, if parents are blocking them. A swimmer has a harder time knowing what heat of what event is being swum, and can actually be prevented from getting to his race on time, if he is stuck in a crowd at the start end of the pool. And if you are allowed there, why shouldn't every other parent be there too?
3. This rule emphasizes that meets are by and for the swimmers, our children. We can't swim for them. Most are capable by about age 10 of getting to and from the water by themselves. Their accomplishments are their own, and they are amazing!

By all means, cheer for your child. She needs to know that you notice and support her efforts. But PAC swimmers should talk to their coaches both before and right after they swim. Please drop your swimmer off near the coaches' area before his race, and arrange to meet him there again after he has swum and spoken to his coach. Please respect the requests of meet officials to stay out of restricted areas on the deck. Any parent who would like to be closer to the action at a meet would be very welcome to time, or to volunteer as an official!