

Your First Swim Meet

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

Before the Meet Starts

Arrive at the pool before the scheduled warm-up time. The coach will communicate that time to the swimmers at the last practice held before the meet.

Upon arrival, look for some familiar faces as the team usually sits together. Find a place to put your swimmer's blanket, swim bags and sleeping bags. The team usually sits together, so look for some familiar faces.

Your swimmer will need to "*check in.*" Only those swimmers that check in will be allowed to swim. Once "*checked in,*" write each event-number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps them remember what events they are swimming and what event numbers to listen for.

Your swimmer now reports to the coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.

After warm-up, your swimmer should return to the team area and wait until their event is "*Posted*" on the heat and lane assignment. Ask where "*Heat and Lane Assignments*" will be posted. This is a good time to make sure they go to the bathroom, get a drink, or just are settled in.

The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

Buy a program. A "*heat sheet,*" or program is usually available for sale in the concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "*seed time.*" When the entry is sent in, each swimmer and their previous best time in that event are listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, they may be entered as a "*no-time*" or "*NT.*"

Once the Meet Starts

It is important for the swimmer to know what event numbers they are swimming. (They should have the numbers on their hand). They may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

As the time for a particular event nears, the "*Heat and Lane Assignments*" will be "*Posted.*" It is important that swimmers learn their heat and lane assignments as soon as they are posted. The swimmer must report this information to their coach prior to their race. The coach will usually take this opportunity to provide keen insight into stroke techniques, race strategies or simply provide encouragement. The swimmer should then prepare for their event.

The swimmer is responsible for being at the correct end of the pool when their heat is called to start. The meet will not stop for a missing swimmer. A swimmer that fails to report for a race needs to report to their coach.

After Each Swim

The swimmer should ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) their time or check the electronic scoreboard.

They should go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:

- Positive comments or praise
- Suggestions for improvement
- Positive comments

Things a parent can do after each swim:

- Tell them how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell them how proud you are and what a great job they did.
- Take them back to the team area to relax, check out the bathrooms, and get a drink or something light to eat.
- The swimmer now waits until their next event is posted and starts the procedure again.

When a swimmer has completed all of their events, they and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay.

What to Take to the Meet

- Competition suit and PVAC cap -- and goggles.
- Towels -- pack at least two.
- Something to sit on -- sleeping bag, old blanket, chair, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on.
- Weather-appropriate clothes -- this will depend on the temperature: sweat suits, T-shirts, shorts, flip-flops, warm boots, swim parka, warm hat, etc.
- Games -- travel games, coloring books, cards, books, anything to pass the time.
- Food -- It is a good idea to bring your own healthy food, snacks and drinks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but sometimes the lines are long or the swimmers don't like anything at the snack bar.
- Sunscreen

After one or two meets, this will all become very customary. Please do not hesitate to ask any other PVAC parent for help or information!