

Swim Meets 101

Why should my swimmer participate in swim meets?

Swim meets are a great opportunity for swimmers to race one another and see if they are improving. Young swimmers love to race against each other and see if they got a best time. It is a good way for them to stay motivated and keep learning new things. The goal should always be to have fun and to continue improving.

How can I find out about upcoming swim meets?

On the Wasilla Waves teamunify web page we have listed all upcoming swim meets. As we get closer to swim meets (5-3 weeks prior to the swim meet) information will be updated to show what events are available, expected cost, how many events swimmers can sign up for, entry deadlines, where the meet is located, time of day of the swim meet, and other important information. I will send out emails with reminders of upcoming swim meets and their deadlines as well as announce them in practice.

How do I sign up and what are the cost?

We will post all events on team unify at least two weeks in advance. If you keep an eye on the event schedule as meets become available to sign up for there will be an accept or decline button. When you hit that button it will take you to sign up for events for your swimmer. There may be a limit to the number of events and required qualifying times so please be aware of this. Events vary in cost and will always be posted on the event sign up. You will be billed through team unify. Anything before the 20th of the month will be billed on the following month. Anything after the 20th of the month will be billed in two months.

What can I expect the day of?

Swim meets can be a long day. On the day of the swim meet swimmers should plan on being at the pool at least 15 minutes before their warm up time. When they get to the pool, they should change into their swimsuit and bring all of their stuff out onto the pool deck and find on of their coaches. They should let their coaches know that they are there and find out where they swim team is keeping all of their gear. Coaches will instruct swimmers on what lanes they are warming up in and what they are going to do for warm ups. After warm ups swimmers will find out their heats and lanes for the events they have signed up for and get ready to compete.

What do warm ups look like?

Warm ups usually last 30 minutes to an hour. They can be very crowded and busy at times and will vary how long and how much a swimmer warm ups will be based on age, ability, and events

swimming. Most warm ups will usually include some easy swimming, drill work, work on kick, and turns, and starts. Swimmers should check in with coaches and be listening for instruction.

What are heat sheets?

Heat sheets tell swimmers the event number, the heat, and lane that they will be swimming in at a swim meet. They will be posted up around the pool, coaches will have a copy of them, and often times they will sell copies for the parents to purchase. These are important because it helps swimmers know when they are swimming.

How do I know when I am swimming?

Swimmers should look at the heat sheet before the swim meet starts to find out the event number, heat, and lane that they are in. Most swimmers write it down on their arm so that they remember during the day. It is then their job to be watching the event numbers to see when their event is coming up and be paying attention to the heats so that they are prepared to go when it is time. They should be behind their lane at least 2 heats before they swim so that they are prepared.

Why do some swim meets have qualification times?

Some championship meets have required qualifying times in order to participate. This means the swimmers need to have achieved a certain time at previous swim meets in order to attend. The times required will be attached in the invite and are posted on the bulletin board at the pool and can be found at the ak swimming website. Different championship meets have different qualifying times.

What should they bring?

Swim meets can be long (3+ hours) so it is important that swimmers come with all important items. They will need a swimsuit, cap (waves one), and goggles. They should bring clothes that they can put on in between events to stay warm and at least two to three towels. Swimmers will need water and snacks to stay fueled during the day and in between events. They will burn more calories than they are aware of!

How do I know what events to sign them up?

Talk with your swimmer to see what events they are comfortable swimming. It is always good for them to try new events, swim in events they have not swum before, or do events that it has been awhile since they have swum in to see if they have improved. Newer swimmers should start with 50's and 100's of free, backstroke, and breaststroke. When they have more practice and are more comfortable they can start branching out to new events. Swimmers will select their events and coaches will have final approval.

Why are they all using sharpies?

Swimmers use sharpies to write their event, heat, and lane number's down on their arm so that they remember when they are swimming. It is always a good idea to have one or two around.

How many people does it take to make a swim meet happen?

It takes a ton of volunteers to make a swim meet happen. Most often the only people paid at the pool are the coaches. Concessions, officials, timers, hospitality, decorations, and other items all happen because of volunteers. It takes 60 - 80 people on a swim meet day to actually make it happen and that does not include the countless hours people spend preparing before a swim meet. It is important that all clubs and parents do their part in volunteering and making it happen.

How can I help at swim meets?

The first way that you can help at a swim meet is as a timer. We always need timers to make it happen. Please listen for timer all calls during swim meets because they will often announce how many they still need. Another way that you can help, is by selling at concession stands, becoming an official, hospitality, and other areas. Please be on the lookout for emails when we are asking for people and volunteer.

How long are swim meets?

Swim meets can last 4 to 8 hours depending on how many teams are participating, the number of swimmers, and the event.