

# MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE

## SWIMMERS' NECESSITIES

**Team swimsuit and a spare suit** – They do fall apart

**Swim cap and a spare cap** – They tear sometimes

**Goggles (2 pair minimum – straps break)** – NEVER wear untested, new goggles at a meet

**Deck sandals** – Ever hear of plantar warts? How about athlete's foot? Can you say sharp, metal floor registers? Make sure you wear sandals on every pool deck – inside or outside. A swimmers primary means of propulsion is their feet!

**Towels** – Two minimum. A swimming shammy is a nice and quick way to dry off

**Something warm (warm up suit, sweats, swim parka, polar fleece)** – swimmers should keep muscles warm between events

**Water bottle or sports drink (no soda!)** – Swimmers dehydrate easily. You don't realize you are sweating!

**Healthy snacks** – Fruits, veggies, pretzels, and crackers are examples of good snack foods to pack for the meet.

**Things to pass the time** – Good book, CD or MP3 player, cards, homework. Since you will be at the meet for approximately 4 hours, you may want catch up on some important things, or just stay on deck and cheer for your teammates.

## ON THE DECK

**Before the Meet** – Have a healthy breakfast (something with good carbohydrates). Nutrition is very important for a swimmer. Wear your team swimsuit.

**Arrival** – Plan on arriving **15 minutes before warm ups start**. Check in with the coaches so they know you are there. Find your teammates and stake your claim on a piece of real estate to leave your bag. Be ready to swim at warm up time. Make sure you bring your goggles and a towel on deck. **Parents are not permitted on deck.**

**After Warm Up** – Visit your parents and look over the heat sheet. Mark your event, heat, and lane info for each race on your right hand. Be back in your teams staging area and lined up a few heats before your next swim.

**Time to Swim** – It is your responsibility to be ready to swim when your event is called. When it is time for your heat, the Referee/Starter blows his/her whistle in a series of short bursts. The Starter will then announce the race. The Referee/Starter will then blow his/her whistle one-time indicating it is time to step up on the blocks. The Starter will say, "Take your mark". When everyone is set, he will start the race with a loud horn/beep.

**Fly-Over Start** – When you finish your race, you will stay in the water hugging the wall under the starting block, until the next race has started. You may then climb out of the pool.

**After Your Event** – Find your coaches after each event so they can congratulate you or explain how to improve. The main thing is to realize that you are there to beat your own times, and in doing so, you may have also beaten other swimmers. **However, RACE swimmers do not get angry, pout, scowl, or brag. We are good sportsmen! Congratulate the other swimmers. You tried your best, and so did they. Everyone is proud of you.**

**Waiting for your next event** – Visit your parents, they are waiting to praise your effort. Have a drink (water or sports drink) and a light snack. Cheer for your teammates!

## **PARENTS' NECESSITIES**

**Highlighter** - Highlight your swimmer's events on the heat sheet.

**Pen** - When your swimmer's times are posted and are official, write down the new times your swimmer achieved at the meet.

**Sharpie Marker** - Be sure to put your swimmers Event, Heat, and Lane information on one of their hands.

**Meds** – If your child is asthmatic, don't forget their inhaler, this is the most important thing they own. Different environments have different triggers that can set off an attack. Make sure you can easily access their inhalers. You might also want to bring tissues, eye drops, and other meds that you or child might need.

**Stadium Cushion or Blanket** - bleachers are much softer with a stadium cushion or blanket on them.

**Lawn Chair** - If you would like to relax in the rest area and read a good book while you are waiting for your swimmer's event, you may not want to sit on the floor, so bring a lawn chair.

Things to pass the Time - Good book, office work. Since your swimmer will be at the meet for approximately 4 hours, you may want to catch up on some important things.

## **IN THE STANDS**

**Clothing** - All meets are usually hot and humid so wear lightweight clothing. You will be there for approximately 4 hours.

**Arrival** - Plan on arriving 15 minutes before warm ups starts. Parents are not permitted on the deck!

**Prime Real Estate** - Parents must sit in the bleachers. Stake your claim on a piece of real estate. Some meets get very crowded. Sit with other RACE parents and get to know each other. We're a happy and friendly bunch and will include you and your "Aunt Martha" in our conversations! Please be courteous of others – try to avoid taking more space than you need and storing your swimmers bags in the bleachers. There are swimmers' rest areas at every pool where they can store their belongings.

**Heat Sheets** - Purchase a heat sheet and highlight your swimmer's events. Make sure your swimmer's events are written on their hand so there is no confusion.

**During the Event** - Cheer! Cheer! Cheer!

**After the Event** - Praise, congratulate or console your swimmer but never coach or criticize. After all, they have practiced for many hours and are trying their best.

**Results** - When your swimmer's times are official, they will be posted on the results board, usually a wall outside the pool. Write down the new official times your swimmer achieved at the meet.

## **MEET PERSONEL**

**Officials (AMS)** – All officials are representatives of Allegheny Mountain Swimming – not the club hosting the meet. They run the meet in accordance with rules established by USA Swimming.

**Referee** – The Referee is in charge of the swim meet. He or she is the person on the deck with the whistle who keeps the meet running. The referee settles any disputes or problems that occur during the meet. Parents should address any questions or concerns directly with the coach – not the referee.

**Starter** – The Starter announces each race. After the Referee turns the heat over to the starter (with a hand signal), he or she tells the swimmers to “take their mark” and then starts the race (with loud horn or beep). If the starter sees a swimmer leave the blocks early or move during the start, the starter will disqualify the swimmer. The Referee must confirm false starts.

**Stroke & Turn Judge** – The stroke & turn judges watch the swimmers to make sure they are swimming the strokes according to USA Swimming Rules. If a stroke & turn judge sees an infraction, they will raise their hand indicating a possible disqualification. After the race, the judge will seek the swimmer (or coach if the swimmer is not available) and explain the reason for the disqualification.

**Meet Director** – The meet director is a representative of the host club who is responsible for the meet logistics (i.e. facility, concession stand, etc.). They are not officials and do not have authority to make decisions that relate to the competition. (That is the job of the Referee).

## **SWIMMING TERMS**

**Block** - The platform on which the swimmer stands and pushes off to start each race.

**Cap** - A latex, silicone, or lycra swim cap used during a race or practice to protect a swimmer's hair from the effects of chlorine in the water as well as help cut down water resistance from the swimmer's hair.

**DQ** – Acronym for Disqualification. A disqualification indicates the swimmer involved has committed some infraction of the rules of the start, turn, or stroke of the event being swum. No time is recorded.

**Deck Seeded** - Some meets limit the amount of entries in an event. This is particularly true in long distance events and relays. Swimmers must check in by a stated time and those swimmers who have checked in are placed into assigned lanes before the race. Deck Entered is more applicable to relays because AMS does not allow deck entries except for relays.

**Event** - An event is a race that includes the stroke and the distance (e g., Boys 11-12 100 yard butterfly).

**False start** - Occurs when a swimmer leaves the starting block, or is moving on the block, before the starter officially starts the race. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in an automatic disqualification from the race.

**Final** - The championship final of an event in which the fastest six or eight swimmers from the morning preliminaries compete.

**Heat sheet** - This is a published schedule of the day's events and is available to all spectators. They are displayed on a wall at every meet. You may purchase your own heat sheet if you desire. A heat sheet tells what event, heat, and lane each swimmer will compete.

**Heats** - At most meets there is generally more than enough swimmers to fill each lane. When this happens, the swimmers are placed in different heats.

**Individual Medley (IM)** - An event in which the swimmer uses all four competitive strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

**Lanes** - The lanes are the divided sections of the pool designated 1 through 6 or 8 in which the swimmer swims his practice or races in the meet.

**Lane ropes** - The dividers used to delineate the individual lanes. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable that rotate on the cable when hit by a wave. The rotating disks dissipate surface tension waves in a competitive pool.

**Official** - A judge on the deck of the pool. Various judges watch the swimmer's strokes, turns, and finishes or are timers.

**Preliminary** - Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in the events.

**Seed** - When a swimmer enters an event, his times are entered into a computer which sorts the times fastest to slowest and puts the swimmers into the appropriate heats, allowing the swimmers to compete with other swimmers with similar times.

**Strokes** - The four competitive strokes are butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

**Take Your Mark** - A command that the starter gives the swimmer at the start of each race signaling the swimmer to take his starting position.

**Touch pad** - The area at the end of each lane in the pool where a swimmer's time is registered and sent electronically to the timing system then the scoreboard.

**Warm down** - Used by the swimmer to rid the body of excess lactic acid generated during a race or practice.

**Warm up** - A pre-meet swim used by the swimmer before the race to get his muscles loose and ready to race.