



Kelowna Aquajets Swimming Club

Swim Meets for Beginners

You are ready to enter your swimmer/s into their first swim meet? Hooray!! This is fantastic news and we are excited to take this next step with you.

Swim meets are exciting and fun and incredibly social. They can be daunting for both parents and children for a variety of reasons too. Here are some tips on what to expect and how to prepare yourself and your swimmer/s for an enjoyable experience.

WHAT TO BRING TO A SWIM MEET

1. 2 x Kelowna Aquajets swim caps
In case one splits. These can be purchased through Tina Pomponio our Team Manager - teammanager@kelownaaquajets.com
2. 2 x goggles
Goggles can break so rather be prepared and have a spare that your child is comfortable with
3. Swim suit to race in and a spare.
Swimsuit issues do happen for a multitude of reasons so better to be prepared. Competition race suits are not necessary.
4. 2 swim towels for poolside.
Towels tend to get soaked pretty quickly. The microfiber towels are a great option to consider as they are pretty compact and they dry really fast in between use.
5. Kelowna Aquajets Team Shirt
These can also be purchased through Tina Pomponio our Team Manager.
6. Clothing for on deck
This is clothing for your child to wear over their swimsuit which are worn in between their events. This helps to keep those muscles warm and ready for the next race. The most common options are track pants and a hoody, onesie, a long length swim parka in the cooler months, and shorts or lightweight tracksuit pants with the club t-shirt in the summer months.
7. Shoes
Slides or appropriate poolside footwear that can get wet.
8. Entertainment
Meets can feel long and having some travelling games, books, cards, colouring in books etc. help to keep the swimmers entertained in between races.
9. Clothing for after the swim meet
Pack some warm clothes and a towel and toiletries for your child to travel home in after the swim meet. As we head into winter it is also a good idea to make sure a tuque is packed for arriving and leaving the pool.

WHAT FOOD TO BRING TO A SWIM MEET

1. Water bottle
Drink water or juice of your choice. Please make sure there is enough fluids for your child for the duration of the swim meet. In the hotter months, try freezing some water in the bottle for your child to enjoy poolside.
2. Snacks that are easy to eat poolside.
Pack food that will be easy for your child to eat and without making a mess on the pool deck. Smaller nutritious snacks tend to be preferred by swimmers. Not all pool facilities have food policies in place however, please be cognisant of the typical foods to avoid due to allergies e.g. Nuts, egg, sesame seeds etc.

Here are some suggestions for snacks in your lunch bag:

- Crackers, rice cakes, pretzels
- Fruit – blueberries, strawberries, mandarin, apple slices, dehydrated fruit like mango, cranberries, raisins etc.
- Veggie sticks like carrots, cucumber, celery
- Granola bars
- Cheese
- Jerky, meat slices
- Sandwiches that are cut into smaller, manageable sizes.

Get creative with your snack ideas, keep an eye out for Tina's Club Newsletter which also includes recipes for us all to try. Please send along any of your recipe ideas to Tina that you would like to share with us all.

WHAT TO BRING TO A SWIM MEET FOR THE SUPPORTERS

1. Lawn chairs and/or cushions for the bleachers
Not all swimming pools provide seating so a lawn chair is always good to bring along for those situations. Bleachers can be uncomfortable so a travel cushion is helpful.
2. Entertainment for the siblings
Same as the swimmers, swim meets can be long and hot. Bring along some entertainment for the siblings eg. colouring books, reading books, screens for games/movies and earphones, toys that won't easily get lost and can be played with in confined spaces.
3. Lunch bag for parents and siblings
Even the supporters need snacks and drinks ;) Not all swimming pools offer places to purchase drinks and food.

Pool areas are hot and humid places, please ensure that your whole family stays hydrated throughout the swim meet.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE SWIM MEET

1. As soon as you arrive at the pool please check in with your coach.
2. Get dressed and be prepared for the warm up.
Warm-up times will be stated in the package that Tina will post on our club website under the relevant swim meet. Please do not skip warm-up. This is a very important part of the meet for the swimmers. This is where they get to experience the pool, the water temperature, the diving blocks, the timing pads etc. Each pool provides a different experience for each swimmer. If you have an opportunity to speak to the older and more experienced swimmers in our club they will tell you which is their favourite pool to race in, which pool has the best diving blocks etc. Also, for the more anxious swimmer, this helps to alleviate some of their stress and anxiety. The warm-up is also important for avoiding injuries and for preparing the swimmers body for competition.
3. Check in with your coach before and after each race.
This is important for each swimmer, as the coach will have key information to share before each race and feedback after every swim.
4. Check in with your coach before leaving the pool area.
5. The swimmer is responsible for making sure they are at the starting blocks for their races. If your child misses their heat, they will not get another opportunity to swim the event they missed again at that meet.

WHAT TO WATCH AT THE SWIM MEET

There are 2 lengths for a swim meet – 25m known as a short course meet, 50m known as a long course meet.

Events are usually run from the youngest age group to the oldest. Most swim meets will be seeded so that they can compete against competitors with similar times, regardless of age in that stroke.

1. Heat sheets

These are usually sold at the beginning of the swim meet. Heat sheets list the order of events, as well as which swimmer is in each heat, their lane number and the time they entered the meet with for that particular event.

When you arrive at the pool, purchase the heat sheets. Bring along a highlighter to highlight your child's name. This makes it easier to keep track of when they are swimming. Most parents write on their child's arm their event, heat number, lane number on their arm. This helps to make sure the swimmers know when and where they need to be for their races, thus minimising the chance of them missing races. TIP: coconut oil does wonders in removing sharpie from the skin.

2. Meet Mobile

This is an app you can download onto your phone. It allows you to link in electronically to the swim meet and will send you the results at the meet. There is a cost attached to this app.

3. Events

Freestyle

Freestyle event distances are 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m.

Backstroke

This is the only event started in the pool. The swimmer must start with their feet under the surface of the water. In this stroke, the swimmer will swim on their back and use alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick.

Backstroke distances are 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m.

Breaststroke

This stroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms and legs on a horizontal plane. Note that the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously. This is a common error with younger swimmers.

Breaststroke distance are 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m.

Butterfly

This stroke features simultaneous overhead stroke of both arms combined with dolphin kick. No flutter kicking is allowed.

Butterfly distances are 25m, 50m, 100m, 200m.

Individual Medley (commonly referred to as IM)

This event is a combination of all 4 strokes. The order of strokes is Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. This is a challenging event for most swimmers. To progress from the Jamboree level of swim meets, a swimmer must attain a 200 IM time of 4 minutes or less.

Relays

Relays are swum with 4 swimmers on a team. The team may be mixed or the same gender. Each swimmer will complete a quarter of the set distance.

Freestyle relay - all 4 swimmers will swim the freestyle stroke

Medley relay – the 4 swimmers will each be allocated which leg of the relay they will swim thus determining which stroke they will swim. The strokes will be swum in this order, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle.

Disqualification (commonly known as DQ)

The first year your child swims competitively the chances are they will be disqualified at some point. Even the most experienced swimmers get disqualified at swim meets. The official making this decision will provide a reason, which your child's coach can inquire

about on your child's behalf. The coach will share that explanation with the swimmer to help gain some learning from this and to hopefully avoid it in the future.

Some examples of disqualification reasons are:

- False start
- Incorrect stroke technique e.g. freestyle kick with breaststroke arms
- No simultaneous hand touch for breaststroke and butterfly
- Turn may be executed incorrectly, a common mistake in backstroke
- Walking or pushing off the bottom
- Not completing a race
- Getting out of the water before being instructed to do so by the referee.

Deck Entry

A Deck Entry is used when a swimmer did not register for a swim meet or swim event in advance and would like to register on the day of the meet for the meet and/or add an additional event to swim. Payment is required at the same time as the entry being accepted which is normally \$4-\$5 more per event if entered on time. Deck entries are usually denoted by an EXH next the swimmers name on the heat sheet. The EXH stands for exhibition swimmer, this is a swimmer who can swim an event for time ONLY. This swimmer cannot place, score or be awarded a ribbon/medal.

HOW CAN PARENTS PARTICIPATE AT THE SWIM MEET?

Parent participation is vital to the success of any swim meet. All the officials you see around the pool performing timing, stroke and turn judge, referee, starter, etc. are all fulfilling their service requirement to be part of the club and are generally parents of our Club. To ensure that we as a Club can host and offer our swim meets, we rely on our parents.

Our Club does offer free courses to parents wishing to participate for any of these positions. If you are unsure of the level of commitment that each role requires, please contact Ken Hees, our KAJ Club Officials Co-ordinator officials@kelownaaquajets.com or refer to the Club Service Requirements which is posted on the website.

There are a variety of jobs, so please do have a look and see where you may be able to fulfil your required hours.

If you have any more questions or need any information please don't hesitate to speak to your coach.

Good-luck and have fun!!