



April 28 2021

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR L&A OSC SWIMMERS AND PARENTS REGARDING SWIM MEETS**

The following is some information that is important for you to know and understand so that your child will get the most out of everything that swimming with L&A OSC has to offer. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to read this.

We are glad you have chosen to take the next step in swimming with your child and are giving them an opportunity to experience a sport that can provide life-long, invaluable skills and open some exciting doors for them in the future.

As with any new sport or activity you choose to enroll your children in, there is much to learn and the first few weeks (even months) may seem a bit overwhelming until you get a handle on how this new sport works. The first thing you will probably notice is that competitive swimming is very different than swimming lessons. Swim lessons that are provided through Community Recreation Centers teach children the fundamentals of swimming by focusing on efficiency for self-preservation. A competitive swim club will teach your child to swim with efficiency for speed. This leads to one of the main differences between competitive swimming and lessons, which is how we measure improvement. In the sport of competitive swimming, swimmers attend swim meets (appropriate to their level and experience) so that you have the opportunity to *see* the improvements in a concrete, objective manner. The level your swimmer is at will dictate which meets they should attend but most often, the first meet your child should attend will be the **Novice** or **Intra Club** meet, which are hosted at Walnut Grove Pool once per month.

\*\* Speed and racing are **NOT** main factors for swimmers who attend Novice and Interclub meets! The focus for swimmers at this level is on **skill progression, development** and **technique**. Your child cannot swim fast until they can swim well, so they are not expected to do so until they can!

Speed and racing will become important factors when your swimmer (if s/he chooses to do so) moves onto the Regional, Provincial, and National levels in the sport.

### **Intra Club meets & Novice meets**

Novice meets are very low key, mini - competitions for swimmers who; are new to swimming, are at the developmental level or who want to maintain their current level of swimming. These meets are; usually attended by one or two teams outside of our own team, take place once/month (usually on a Saturday morning) and run for approximately 4 hours.

Intra Club meets are in-house competitions (attended by our teams only) and held three times a year (October, December and June). These meets are a lot of fun for the kids; are great for promoting team unity, team spirit and give the younger, newer swimmers an opportunity to watch and learn from our older, more accomplished swimmers. These meets are also scheduled to run approximately 4 hours on a Saturday morning with a Christmas family brunch following the December meet and an awards banquet following the last meet in June.

### **When will my child be ready to try a Novice or Intra Club Meet?**

Your child will only be put in events which s/he can complete successfully (as decided by their coach) so most children are fine to attend the first meet of the season. If your child tends to be anxious, cautious or hesitant, we would suggest they spend a bit more time getting used to swimming beforehand. If this applies to you, your child's coach will help you decide when it will be best for him/her to attend their first meet.

### **What/how many races will my child be swimming?**

This depends on how experienced/strong your swimmer is and what they are capable of doing. Most developmental swimmers will only swim 3 - 6 times swimming 25 meter races (one length). More experienced swimmers will swim 4 - 6 races, ranging in distances 50m to 200m (2 - 8 lengths) Our goal is to ensure that all swimmers have a great first experience, so we will error on the side of caution by having your child swim races that may be easier rather than more difficult to ensure they feel success rather than failure after they complete their races.

Remember that it is normal for kids to be anxious/nervous before a race. It is also normal for parents to be anxious/nervous for their kids before they race - if this is the case for you, know that your anxiety will only increase theirs if they are aware of it (they will pick up the most subtle of signs), so it is in your child's best interest if they do not know how you are feeling. Your children will likely come to you right after their races - after you have congratulated them, please send them back to their coaches for some post race feedback.

**My child has a conflict with another activity on weekends that will interfere in his/her ability to attend these meets.**

We encourage our developmental swimmers to take part in other sports so we understand that there will be conflicts. However, swim meets are only held once/month while most other sports have competitions every weekend. With a little juggling and understanding from the team/coach on the other side, balance is possible and in the best interest of your swimmer.

**Where do I find information about these meets?**

We email the permission forms a few weeks in advance of the meet plus the meets are posted on the website where you can also commit to attend. To confirm entry into the meet you must provide payment (\$20.00) to his or her coach by the entry deadline. The meet schedule is posted on the website (subject to changes) where you can plan for the meets for the year. If you have questions, please speak with your child's coach.

**Parents Role at the Swim Meet**

Please make sure your child arrives at the pool on time so they can stretch with the team. Parents will be needed and expected to help out as these swim meets cannot run without volunteers. No experience is necessary. Look for one of the coaches going around asking for timers and officials, then just jump in there and join all the other parents who are in the same boat you are.

Parents will not be allowed to sit on the same side as the coaches and swimmers (hot tub side) and will be directed to sit across the pool in the bleachers that will be set up along the windowed wall. This is so the coaches always know where their swimmers are at all times and can get them to their events on time and talk to them after their races.

Please remember that it is the coaches' job to coach and yours as a parent to support and cheer. Encourage your child to go to their coach straight after their race for feedback.

**Swimmers Role at the Swim Meet**

Swimmers need to be on time to stretch and take part in the short warm up in the pool before the meet starts. The warm up lets you get ready to swim, practice diving off the blocks and helps to steady your nerves, especially if you don't normally swim at Walnut Grove pool. Stay by your coach at all times or let your coach know if you are visiting your parents or the washroom. Know which number your events are and keep an eye on the board to see which event/heat is next. Your coach needs to know where you are at all times so you don't miss your race. Ask your timer for your time and go straight to your coach after your race for feedback.

**What to bring to the meet**

The swimmer needs to bring their red suit, team cap (if they wear one), goggles, team t-shirt, 2 towels, flip flops (if they have them), a water bottle plus some light snacks (trail mix, power bar etc) and a large bag to put everything in.

Although it is normal for new swimmers to be anxious to attend swim meets for the first time, the overwhelming majority of kids end up loving the experience. As a parent, your instinct may be to avoid swim meets so as not to cause your child any undue stress but we, as professional coaches, strongly encourage you to have your child try one before you decide they are not for you/your family.

These swim meets provide invaluable information to your swimmers coach about; which skills should be taught, when more advanced skills should be introduced and are essential for your swimmers continued development in the sport. Your swimmer needs to see their improvement so they will understand what all their hard work is getting them. Swimmers who do not attend meets do not excel as fast and do not enjoy their experiences as much as those who do.

Thank you & Happy Swimming!

L&A OSC Staff