



PARENTS' GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE SWIM MEETS

A guide to understanding and enjoying your child's swim meet

WHAT IS COMPETITION?

We use swimming as a vehicle to teach children life skills and how to reach their athletic potential. In competition, the most important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most. The critical measure is who learned and enjoyed the most from the competitive experience. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: concentration, listening skills, sportsmanship, and working toward a goal.

WHICH MEETS SHOULD MY CHILD ENTER?

- 1). Meet schedule is posted on the TeamUnify website (please read the description of the meet)
- 2). Every swimmer should be entered into every potential swim meet.
- 3). Each family gets an email on the upcoming meets
- 4). Parents are responsible to sign up their children for the swim meet.

We will note on the meet information if the meet is for a specific group of swimmers. If there is no specification then the meet is recommended for all athletes. The coaches will also announce at practices prior to meet sign up if their group should attend. In the Developmental Group, each child has a different experience level and levels of expectations. If you are new to the sport and are unsure if your athlete is ready to compete, please discuss this with your coach.

THE COMPETITION DAY

WHAT TO BRING TO A MEET

1. Team Suit- If you do not have one- a regular swimmer's suit will do. If they plan to compete often a team suit is recommended.
2. Team Swim Cap - given out in the early season or at the swimmer's first meet of the season.
3. Racing goggles & spare goggles with names on them.
4. At least 1 towel (BETTER 2 TOWELS)
5. Team t-shirts (make sure to wear a proper color of it), sweatshirts, and or parkas to wear between events, spare dry clothes, and covered shoes
6. Lawn chairs – some meets provide seating, some do not.
7. You may bring drinks and snacks for your child. Snacks are available for purchase at each meet.
8. Sharpie Pen and ballpoint pen– to be covered later
9. If you have already the heat sheet, while at home write the number of the event, heat, and lane on the arm of the swimmer for better guidelines at the meet



WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT A MEET

1. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the warm-up start so your child will be ready to get in the water by warm-up time.
2. Look for other team tents or members to establish a team area.
3. Send your child over to the coach for warm-up.
4. Print heat sheets for free or purchase heat sheets from Clerk-of-Course (averages \$5 - \$10).
5. Your child may want to write their events, heat number, and lane numbers on their legs or arms. This is done just after warm-up and prior to the start of the meeting. (Sharpie Pen)
6. Your child will report behind the blocks two to three heats prior to their race to the lane that is in the heat sheet.
7. It is the coach's, parent's, and child's responsibility to see that the child is at the starting block for each event on time.
8. Meet announcer will make announcements for each event. They will also announce the last call for a particular event. Please make sure you are listening to send your child down on time.
9. If your child is not on the starting block upon the call for their heat, they will be prohibited from swimming in that event.
10. Parents are not allowed behind the starting area or the coaches' area.
11. Parents are not allowed to talk directly to an official, if they have a problem understanding an infraction they should communicate with the coach as long as it doesn't interfere with the coaching of an athlete.

THE MEET

1. Check the meet entry sheet for warm-up times. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the warm-up start so your child will be ready to get in the water by warm-up time.
2. If you are registered for a meet and cannot attend, please notify the coach by phone or voicemail.
3. If your child is more than 30 minutes late for the meet warm-up, he or she will not be entered in a relay.
4. There will be a team meeting for the swimmers directly after warm-up. Relays will be announced.
5. If relays are at the end of the meet, please make sure you do not leave before checking the relay assignment.
6. There is no refund for not attending a meet.

ONCE YOUR CHILD HAS SWUM THEIR EVENT

1. Timers will give your child their time and at most meets, the times will be electronically posted.
2. We expect swimmers to remember their times, review their posted times, and log them.
3. Immediately after they have swum, they need to go talk to the Coach first.
4. When your child talks to the Coach after they swim, the coach will discuss their performance and offer them

constructive criticism, positive encouragement, and technical advice.



5. DQ or Disqualification – When a swimmer does not swim the stroke technically correctly, the official will tell the child when he or she gets out of the water that they were disqualified. 6. Remember your responsibility as a parent is to make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic-you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. 7. Allow the coach the opportunity to coach. The relationship between the swimmer and coach is most important. When a parent interferes with the coach's opinion as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable and oftentimes insurmountable confusion as to whom the swimmer should listen to. Remember, the coach is a trained professional in the sport and holds the knowledge necessary to allow your child to become the best athlete possible. If you have a problem or concern, please contact the coach away from the meet so you may discuss your concern.

BEFORE LEAVING THE MEET

1. Check the relay assignment
2. Warm down
3. Clean the area
4. Thank your coaches and let them know you are leaving

TRAVEL MEETS

Out-of-town travel meets are a great opportunity for teammates to build deeper friendships, and to race other competitors they may not know. It also allows them to learn how to handle a new environment. We encourage our athletes to enjoy this aspect of the sport. Each parent is responsible for their child's travel to and from swim meets as well as for overnight accommodations. In situations where a parent is unable to attend a meet with their child, the parent is responsible for making arrangements with another parent to take their child to the meet and to serve as that child's chaperone. It is suggested that the chaperoned athlete offers to share a percentage of the expenses with the chaperone.

1. Hotel reservations are the individual's responsibility.
2. There will be a team hotel listed on TeamUnify with the travel meet information. Many of the hotels fill early, so check your travel schedule, and make reservations as soon as you are able to.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Deck Entry (some meets) – if you have not previously entered your child into an event or a meet, you may be able to deck enter your child - if space is available. You will have to check with the Clerk of Course at that meet for availability. The average cost of deck entry per meet is double the normal entry fee, plus meets surcharges.
2. If your child is hesitant to swim an event that he/she has previously entered, please have

him/her discuss it with the Coach prior to the event.



3. Relays – at most meets there are two types of relays per age group. There is a freestyle relay and a medley relay. In a freestyle relay, the swimmers only swim freestyle. In a medley relay, the swimmers will swim a particular stroke. This will be Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, and Freestyle in that order. The Coach will determine who will participate in the relay and assign the stroke and order.

4. If you have any questions that have not been answered here, please do not hesitate to ask your Coaches or another parent.

5. Swimming is a team effort. Please cheer on other Gulliver swimmers, sit with the team, and wear your Team t-shirt.

7. Encouragement – please stay positive no matter what your child's performance may be. Swimmers tend to be very self-critical and they know when they have not turned in a good performance.

8. Please do not approach the Coach during swim events, as this is their busiest time. 9. Final results for each event will be posted outside of the pool area at the meet by Swim Officials. We encourage you and your child to keep a log of your child's best times from each meet. This helps the athlete take responsibility for their performances. You may also look up your child's results on the team website on the Meet Mobile App, after the event. 10. Please encourage your child to pick up trash around the team rest area and thank the volunteers.

GET INVOLVED AT THE MEET

Almost all officials, meet directors and timers are parents who choose to get involved and volunteer their time. We encourage you to assist them with timing or other needs they may call for. If you are interested in becoming an official, express your interest to Coach Chris. Please make sure you thank the timers, and meet officials and coaches for their time and energy. Also, help your child clean up the team area. This shows respect for the host team for taking the time to provide this opportunity for your child.

WHEN IT'S OUR TURN TO HOST A MEET

We host several meets a year at the Gulliver Prep Upper Campus Pool. It takes every parent to volunteer in some way to provide this racing opportunity for our athletes. Mark your calendar and be able to help out. Please make sure you "pitch in" when asked.

OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE VOLUNTEERING

[https://www.teamunify.com/fggsc/_doc_/Volunteer%20Policy%20%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.teamunify.com/fggsc/_doc_/Volunteer%20Policy%20%20(2).pdf)

USA SWIMMING LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENTS

There are seven different age group classifications: 8 & under, 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and senior. The senior classification includes any age-registered swimmer who has achieved a prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every meet. The swimmer's age on the first day of the meet will govern the swimmer's age for

the entire meet. Within each age group, there are different nationally recognized levels of



achievement based on time. All swimmers begin as “C” swimmers. As they improve they advance from “C” to “B”, “BB”, “A”, “AA”, “AAA”, “and AAAA”. The times required for each ability level are published each year by United States Swimming. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels. Some swim meets set certain qualifying standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification.

TYPES OF MEETS

- 1.) Open (Developmental) Meets- These meet generally do not have qualifying times. Most of the time they offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each age group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter 5 events per day. Most are just one-day meets.
- 2.) Invitational – These are usually open meets for swimmers of all levels and abilities.
- 3.) Qualification Meets (BC, BB) - These meets have some type of qualification time standards that a swimmer must achieve before entering the meet.
- 4.) Age Group Champs (JO’s)- this competition is for swimmers aged 14 and under that have achieved a qualifying time standard. They compete against athletes across the State.
- 5.) Zone Championship - Zones are held after the State Championship meets in the summer. Florida Gold Coast is a member of the Southern Zone. A swimmer must achieve a qualifying time standard to participate. Swimmers compete within their age bracket.
- 6.) Sectionals/ Region VIII - Sectionals is a qualifying meet held toward the end of each season. The United States is divided up into 14 Regions. Swimmers compete against each other regardless of age.
- 7.) Junior Nationals- this competition is for swimmers aged 18 and under, that have achieved a qualifying time standard. They compete against athletes across the State.