

Everything You Wanted to Know About Swim Meets But Were Afraid To Ask

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach.

What To Take To The Meet

1. Most important: **Swim Suit, Team Cap and goggles**
2. Baby or talcum powder--To "dust" the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.
3. **Towels**-Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack **at least two**.
4. Something to sit on. **Chairs** - most pools don't have much seating on deck so bring your own chairs, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
5. **Team T-shirts**: Two or may be three. Same reason as above.
6. **Sweat suits: bring two**. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
7. **Sweat suit or Parka**, bring one.
8. Flip-flops, deck shoes or running shoes.
9. **Please LABEL EVERYTHING!!** After each meet we always find something that has been left behind, or several kids will have the same outfits. It helps us a lot if there is a name or an initial on the tags.
10. **Games**: travel games, coloring books, books, ipod, anything to pass the time.
11. **\$\$ for meet program**. Usually these are between \$2.00 - \$5.00 and will tell you when your child is swimming.
12. **Relays**. The **coach will let you know before the meet if possible or at the meet if your child will be in a relay**. The **parents do not select relays for the kids**.
13. **Highlighter** - for marking your child's races in the program. (If you have more than one child it helps to bring a different color for each.)
14. **Sharpies** - some of the kids like to write their events/lanes etc. on their arm.
15. As a spectator dress accordingly!! Outdoor meets: **sunscreen and a hat!**
16. Your meet sign up form will tell you what time warm-up begins, usually an hour before the first event. Coaches will remind the kids the day before the meet when to arrive at the pool.
17. **Food**: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a **small cooler**. It is better to **bring healthy snacks**. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but the lines are long and most of the time they only sell junk food. Suggestions for items to bring:
 - a) Drinks: Water, Gatorade. **Water bottle** - Even swimmers can get dehydrated - Drink lots of water.
 - b) Snacks: Granola bars, Fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, jello cubes, sandwiches

Before the Meet Starts

1. Arrive at the pool **on time for warm-up**. This time is listed in the meet sign up information handed out to all swimmers.
2. Upon arrival, **find Jupiter Dragons Swim Team tents** and put your swimmer's chair, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The coaches would like the kids to sit together as a team. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
3. Make sure your **swimmer checks in with his or her coach!**
4. **Purchase a program** (Heat sheet) so you will know when your child is swimming. During warm up you can highlight your child's events. **Notify the coaches when they are not busy if your child is missing from a race they were entered into**. Most meets we attend will be swum slowest to fastest. Kids with no times (NT) will usually swim in one of the first heats.

5. **Reading the Heat Sheet: What is an event?** An event is their “race.” There are 4 strokes in competitive swimming: Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Butterfly. There is also an IM which stands for Individual Medley. The IM consists of equal lengths of all 4 strokes in the following order: Fly, Back, Breaststroke, Freestyle.

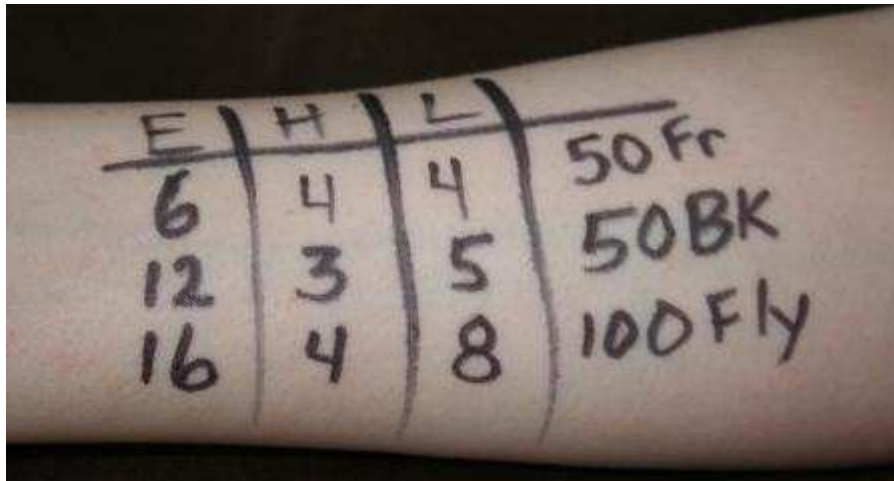
A relay is an event where 4 swimmers each swim an equal distance. When the first swimmer finishes, the next swimmer goes until all 4 have completed their lap(s). There are freestyle relays where all swimmers swim Freestyle, as well as the Medley Relay. In a Medley Relay each swimmer swims a different stroke. The Medley Relay is swum in the following order: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle.

What is a 50? What is a 100? In a 25 yard short course pool a 50 is two lengths of the pool and a 100 is 4 lengths. In the meet they need to swim this without stopping. The coach will determine who is ready for each event.

Events/Heats/Lanes? The number of heats is determined by the number of swimmers and the number of lanes in a pool. For example if 32 girls in the 9-10 yr old group sign up for 50 free then there would be 4 heats of 8 swimmers in each heat. The heats are raced slowest to fastest. So the last heat in each event has the fastest swimmers for that event. In an 8 lane pool Lane 4 has the fastest swimmer in each heat, then lane 3, lane 5 ...going out from there.

The very first time your child swims a race they will be listed as 'NT' meaning they do not have an official time in that event. Once they have an official time, their time will be recorded as their 'seed time' at the next swim meet and their heat will be based on this time. The Events are posted in order usually alternating girls (odd) and boys (even) events

6. Write or have the swimmer **write each event-number on his or her forearm in ink.** We recommend using a **Sharpie marker.** This helps them remember what events they are swimming and what event number to listen or watch for. Sometime we will add the actual event as well so next to the last column we may abbreviate 50 fr for 50 yard freestyle. See image below for sample:



7. Your **swimmer now gets their cap and goggles and reports to the coach for warm-up instructions.** **It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.** A swimmer's body is just like a car on a cold day-they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before they can go all out.
8. **After warm-up,** your swimmer will **go back to the area where the team is sitting and wait until their first event** is called. This is a good time to make sure they go to the **bathroom if necessary, get a drink, or just get settled in.**
9. The meet will usually start about 5 minutes after warm-ups are over.
10. **All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a coach.** He or she in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

Meet Starts

1. **It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers they are swimming** (again, why they should have the numbers on their forearm). They may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. Generally, **girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered**. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle"
3. Your **child should talk to their coach before and after their races. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions**. The coaches sit in a designated area on the deck so the kids can easily find them.
4. Most meets are computerized. A **swimmer usually reports directly to their lane for competition a number of heats before they actually swim**. Make sure your child gets to their lane, behind their block on time. Coaches will be watching swimmers and talking to swimmers about their races and cannot be looking for swimmers.
5. The swimmer swims his or her race.
6. After each swim:
 - a) The swimmer should **ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) for their time**.
 - b) Depending on the coaches instructions, the swimmer may be asked to do some **recovery swimming if a "warm down" pool or lanes are available**.
 - c) The **swimmer should then go immediately to their coach**. The **coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer**. Some coaches may wish to talk with the swimmer before her recovery swim.
7. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - a) **Positive comments or praise**.
 - b) **Suggestions for improvement and discuss stroke technique with him**.
 - c) **Positive comments**.
8. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - a) You need to tell them **how proud you are and what a great job they did**.
 - b) Take him/her back to the team area and relax.
 - c) This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
 - d) The swimmer now waits until his next event and starts the procedure again.
9. Encourage your child to **cheer for their team mates** when they are not swimming.
10. When a swimmer has completed all of their events they get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, **check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay**. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and they are not there. **Before you leave please make sure the are your child was sitting is clean**.
11. **Results** are usually posted somewhere in the facility as they become available. These will show their official time and place for each event. **Check the results and if there is any discrepancy in the time posted and what the coaches time is advise the coach immediately so he/she can straighten the problem**. The coaches also get all results after the meet and the results are available on the swim team website at **www.idswim.com**.
12. **Awards** are often gathered for a team and given to the coach at the end of the meet. **The coach will give the awards to those swimmers who place in event at practice**. How the meet is scored and awarded is usually on the meet information or the meet program and can vary from meet to meet. Awards can be medals for Championships or ABC standard meets or ribbons for Developmental or Sizzler meets. **Encourage your child to go out and have fun and not worry about placing or getting medals/ribbons**.

Very Basic Swimming Rules

rules for swimming are very in depth, these are just a few quick pointers you can watch for Starts

The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not), they may be taken out of the race.

Turns and finishes

a) **Freestyle:** feet have to touch the wall

b) **Backstroke:** swimmers have to be **on their back when they touch the wall.** After they touch, they can then turn around, but they must **push off on their back.** More advanced swimmers may use a flip turn, where they will roll onto their stomach right before the wall and execute a **flip turn which must be done in one continuous motion.** At the finish a swimmer must **finish on their back.** A swimmer may not roll over and grab the wall until they have first touched it.

c) **Breaststroke and Butterfly:**

A. Swimmers have to **touch with both hands at the same time.**

B. A swimmer **may not freestyle kick off the wall in either breaststroke or butterfly.**

C. When swimming **butterfly, both arms must move at the same time.**

D. **No scissor kick is allowed.**

Disqualifications: If your child is disqualified (DQ'ed) in an event the officials will usually talk to them after the race and explain why. The coaches are also notified of the reason and will talk to your child. This helps them learn the rules and helps the coaches know what they need to work on in practice. As a developmental swimmer you can expect these, they are a part of the learning process. If your swimmer gets a DQ their name will be listed on the bottom of the result sheet with the letters DQ next to it. What this means is that what ever time they swim will not count. If they got their best time ever, it will not count and they will have to swim it again in the next meet. Please do not worry about this at all! These kids are young and most of them are brand new to the sport. **Try to keep your child from getting discouraged when this happens.** The most important thing to remind your child is to go out and have fun!!

What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim?

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling badly, **talk about the good things.** The first thing you say is, "Hey, that is not like you. I know you are disappointed, but it's not the end of the world!" Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. **Don't talk about the negative things and don't keep talking about the race.** Drop it and **get your child to focus on the next race or something enjoyable coming up after the meet! Limit the "post mortems!"**

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. **The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it.** You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. **How do you think you can do better next time?!** **Immediately start talking about the positive things.**

Receiving Awards in Public

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to **be prompt and to cooperate fully with dignity and respect at the presentations.** A **team uniform should be worn when accepting the award.** It is also customary for the Jupiter Dragons swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a "thank you". Good sportsmanship is essential. If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team.

Team dinners:

Occasionally the team will organize a team dinner at an out of town meet. Listen for announcements of this during the meet for the time and place. This is a great way to for you and your child to meet other swim families and is a great team building activity.

Meets can be a lot of fun for the swimmers! They get to spend time with friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. They also get to "race" and see how much they have improved from all the hard work put in at practice.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine.

Please do not hesitate go to your coach for help or information!