



## How do coaches choose swimmer's events at each meet?

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Believe it or not, there is a significant amount of thought process that goes into selecting a swimmer's events. When a coach selects events for a swimmer, they're going through the entry process with an individual plan in mind for each swimmer.

Each swimmer has their own past, present and future with swimming; therefore, each swimmer's event choices are unique to them based on several variables. Variable aspects for each swimmer include: age, birthday, recent achievement, past & future meet entries, past meet experiences, relative practice attendance & performance, and future goals. Additionally, many meet goals will revolve around the current focus and training of their respective practice group.

Below are stages of thought that go into choosing events. Depending on the variables above, each of the stages of thought will be more or less significant to each swimmer. While it may not be possible to choose the "perfect" events at every meet, there may be better events to choose than others.

### The Basics – Eligibility and parameters for each meet.

1. How many events can one enter per day? How many events can one enter for the entire meet?
2. What events are offered? 25's? 50's? 100's? 200's? Distance events?
3. Are there any qualifying times or cut-off times? Age restrictions? Special rules?

### Planning Stage – Make the meet competitively beneficial!

1. What are the swimmer's goals? What are the swimmer's needs?
2. How can this meet best serve this swimmer?
3. What events did the swimmer compete in at the last meet?
4. Is the swimmer locked into certain events at an upcoming meet?
5. If the swimmer skips a particular event at this meet, when will they have this opportunity again?

### Opportunity Stage – Achieve higher levels of the sport!

1. What are the swimmer's physical and technical strengths? What are their physical limits?
2. In what events can the swimmer see time improvement?
3. In what events can the swimmer earn a new time standard, IMX score, or qualify for a higher level meet?
4. Are there any new events/strokes/distances that can be swum?
5. Is team score being kept? Does the team need points? Are points relevant to this swimmer's events?
6. How can the swimmer be more competitive for the next oldest age-group?

### Psychological Stage – Race with confidence!

1. What does the swimmer want to swim? What are they comfortable with? What's fun?
2. What challenges will the swimmer accept and welcome?
3. How do I balance challenging the swimmer without overwhelming them with a heavy workload?
4. How often have they swum a particular event? Will this event become trite or stale?
5. What expectations need set up, and what conversations need to happen, for the swimmer to have confidence before the meet starts?

### Logistical Stage – Make the meet cost and time effective!

1. Where is the meet? What costs will be spent on attending (gas, food, hotel, entries, etc.)?
2. What are the entry fees and facility surcharges?
3. How long will the meet last? How much time will be spent at the pool and on travel?
4. Where is recovery built into the equation?

### Some common principals of developmental and age-group swimming:

1. Best events will change over time, usually for reasons beyond anyone's control.
2. A fast swim at a young age may not translate into a competitive stroke 2-3 years later.
3. Success in swimming is measured by progress over time – it may take a few months/meets to determine what works and how the swimmer is making progress.
4. Compare times season-to-season and year-to-year, not meet-to-meet; it's much easier to see improvement and success, and for the swimmer to get excited about their swimming.
5. The swimmer, parent, and coach almost always share the same desired outcomes for the swimmer, but may have a different idea/plan for how to get there. Communicate concerns ahead of time to ensure both parties are on the same path to the end goal.