

MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE

SWIMMER NECESSITIES

Team swimsuit and a spare suit – They do fall apart so make sure you have more than one suit with you!

Swim cap and a spare cap – They tear sometimes so always have an extra.

Goggles (2 pair minimum – straps break) – NEVER wear untested, new goggles at a meet

Deck sandals/flip flops or something to wear on your feet from staging area to bull pen.

Towels – Two minimum. A swimming shammy is a nice and quick way to dry off

Something warm (warm up suit, sweats, polar fleece) – swimmers should keep muscles warm between events

Water bottle or sports drink (no soda!) – Swimmers dehydrate easily. You don't realize you are sweating!

Healthy snacks – Fruits, veggies, pretzels, and crackers are examples of good snack foods to pack for the meet. Please be aware that away meets may NOT have a concession stand like we do at home meets.

Things to pass the time – Good book, CD or MP3 player, cards, homework. Since you will be at the meet for approximately 3 hours, you may want these things.

ON THE DECK

Before the Meet – Have a healthy breakfast and/or lunch (something with good carbohydrates). Nutrition is very important for a swimmer. Wear your team swimsuit.

Arrival – Plan on arriving 15 minutes before warm ups start. Check in with the coaches so they know you are there. Find your teammates and stake your claim on a piece of real estate to leave your bag. Be ready to swim at warm up time. Make sure you bring your goggles on deck.

After Warm Up – Look over the heat sheet. Mark your event, heat, and lane info for each race on your right hand. Be back in your team's staging area and lined up a few heats before your next swim.

Time to Swim – It is your responsibility to be ready to swim when your event is called. When it is time for your heat, the Referee/Starter blows his/her whistle in a series of short bursts, and then announces the race.

The Referee/Starter will then blow his/her whistle one-time indicating it is time to step up on the blocks. The Starter will say, "Take your mark." When everyone is set, s/he will start the race with a loud horn/beep.

** Occasionally we will do a "**Fly-Over**" Start – When you finish your race, you will stay in the water hugging the wall under the starting block, until the next race has started. You may then climb out of the pool. We will notify the swimmers before the meet if fly over starts are necessary.

After Your Event – Find your coaches after each event so they can congratulate you or explain how to improve.

The main thing is to realize that you are there to beat your own times, and in doing so, you may have also beaten other swimmers. Swimmers do not get angry, pout, scowl, or brag. We are good sports! Congratulate the other swimmers. You tried your best, and so did they.

Waiting for your next event –Have a drink (water or sports drink) and a light snack. Cheer for your teammates!

PARENT NECESSITIES

Sharpie Marker – If you have a swimmer 10 years old or younger, help them put their Event, Heat, and Lane information on their hand.

Meds – If your child is asthmatic, don't forget their inhaler, this is the most important thing they own. Different environments have different triggers that can set off an attack. Make sure you can easily access their inhalers.

Stadium Cushion or Blanket - bleachers are much softer with a stadium cushion or blanket on them.

Lawn Chair - If you would like to relax in the rest area and read a good book while you are waiting for your swimmer's event, you may not want to sit on the floor, so bring a lawn chair. Lawn chairs are NOT allowed on the pool deck.

Things to pass the Time - Good book, office work. Since your swimmer will be at the meet for approximately 3 hours, you may want to catch up on some important things.

IN THE STANDS

Clothing - All meets are usually hot and humid so wear lightweight clothing. You will be there for approx. 3 hrs.

Arrival - Plan on arriving 15 minutes before warm ups starts. Parents usually sit in the bleachers or in the lobby. Some meets get very crowded. Sit with other parents and get to know each other. We're a happy and friendly bunch! Please be courteous of others – try to avoid taking more space than you need. Please try not to store your swimmers bags in the bleachers. There are swimmers' rest areas at every pool where they can store their belongings.

Heat Sheets - Heat sheets are posted around the building. Make sure your swimmer's events are written on their hand, arm or leg so there is no confusion.

During the Meet – Cheer for the entire team!

After the Meet - Praise, congratulate or console your swimmer, but not criticize. After all, they have practiced and trained for many hours and are trying their best.

Results - When your swimmer's times are official, they will be posted on the team's website.

MEET PERSONNEL

Officials - please do not disturb any swim officials during a meet.

Referee/Starter – The Referee is in charge of the swim meet. He or she is the person on the deck with the whistle who keeps the meet running. The referee settles any disputes or problems that occur during the meet. Parents should address any questions or concerns directly with the coach – not the referee. The Starter announces each race. After the Referee turns the heat over to the starter (with a hand signal), he or she tells the swimmers to “take their mark” and then starts the race (with loud horn or beep). If the starter sees a swimmer leave the blocks early or move during the start, the starter will disqualify the swimmer. The Referee must confirm false starts.

Stroke & Turn Judge – The stroke & turn judges watch the swimmers to make sure they are swimming the strokes according to USA Swimming Rules. If a stroke & turn judge sees an infraction, they will raise their hand indicating a possible disqualification. After the race, the judge will seek the swimmer (or coach if the swimmer is not available) and explain the reason for the disqualification.

SWIMMING TERMS

Block - The platform on which the swimmer stands and pushes off to start each race.

Cap - A latex, silicone, or lycra swim cap used during a race or practice to protect a swimmer's hair from the effects of chlorine in the water as well as help cut down water resistance from the swimmer's hair.

DQ – Acronym for Disqualification. A disqualification indicates the swimmer involved has committed some infraction of the rules of the start, turn, or stroke of the event being swum. No time is recorded.

Event - An event is a race that includes the stroke and the distance (e g., Boys 11-12 50 yard butterfly).

False start - Occurs when a swimmer leaves the starting block, or is moving on the block, before the starter officially starts the race. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in an automatic disqualification from the race.

Heat sheet - This is a published schedule of the day's events which is displayed on a wall at every meet. A heat sheet tells what event, heat, and lane each swimmer will compete.

Heats - At most meets there are generally more than enough swimmers to fill each lane. When this happens, the swimmers are placed in different heats.

Individual Medley (IM) - An event in which the swimmer uses all four competitive strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

Lanes - The lanes are the divided sections of the pool designated 1 through 6 or 8 in which the swimmer swims his practice or races in the meet.

Lane lines - The dividers used to delineate the individual lanes. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable that rotate on the cable when hit by a wave. The rotating disks dissipate surface tension waves in a competitive pool.

Official - A judge on the deck of the pool. Various judges watch the swimmer's strokes, turns, and finishes or are timers.

Seed - When a swimmer enters an event, his times are entered into a computer that sorts the times fastest to slowest and puts the swimmers into the appropriate heats, allowing the swimmers to compete with other swimmers with similar times.

Strokes - The four competitive strokes are butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Take Your Mark - A command that the starter gives the swimmer at the start of each race signaling the swimmer to take his starting position.

Touch pad - The area at the end of each lane in the pool where a swimmer's time is registered and sent electronically to the timing system then the scoreboard.

Warm up - A pre-meet swim used by the swimmer before the race to get his muscles loose and ready to race.