



# PARENT'S 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 the most and enjoyed the competitive experience.

Winners are not only the swimmer that comes in first place, but who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, have the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: concentration, listening skills, sportsmanship, and working toward a goal.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records, and other material benefits. They will however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, reaching potential, dedication, and enhanced self-image. These are things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential, and to contribute to the world in which they live.

## **WHICH MEETS SHOULD MY CHILD ENTER?**

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 addition, this information will be included in Croc Chronicles. If you are new to the sport and unsure if your athlete is ready to compete, please discuss it with your coach.

## **THE DAY OF...**

## **WHAT TO BRING TO A MEET:**

1. Swim suit- we do not have a team suit. You may compete in any suit you feel comfortable in that meets the guidelines set for USA Swim. If you are not sure if your suit is in compliance, please ask a coach prior to the meet.
2. Team Swim Cap- every swimmer is given a CAST cap when they join the team. Additional caps, both latex and silicone, are available for purchase from the coach. These can be bought on deck during practice or at the swim meet. \*\*Swim caps are not required, but highly recommended.\*\*
3. Goggles and spare goggles- some swimmers may have racing goggles that they only use for competition. Please bring a spare set of goggles in case one breaks or a strap snaps.
4. Towels- at least two!
5. Team t shirts, sweatshirts, and/or parka to wear between events.
6. Camp chairs- some meets provide seating, but most do not. Each meet will have different regulations as to what chairs are allowed. Please read the sanction before leaving home.
7. Drinks and snacks- your swimmer will get both hungry and thirsty. Make sure you have plenty of water and snacks your child is happy to consume. Some meets have concessions, but never plan on them being there.
8. Highlighter- to be covered later.
9. Sharpie pen and ball point pen- to be covered later.
10. Entertainment- books, iPad, card games, etc. There may be a long wait between events and you don't want your swimmer to get bored.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT A MEET**

1. Look for other team members to establish informal team areas.
2. Purchase heat sheets from the clerk of course. This usually requires cash. (Average cost \$5-10)
3. Send your child to the coach to warm-up. Look for the coach to be behind one of the starting blocks. The heat sheet will also list what lane your team has for warm ups.
4. While your child is warming up, locate your child's events in the heat sheet.
5. Highlight event, heat number, and lane number your child will be swimming.
6. Your child will report behind the blocks to their assigned lane two to three heats prior to their race.
7. It is the parent's and child's responsibility to see that the child is at the starting block for each event on time. RACES WILL NOT BE HELD IF YOU ARE LATE!
8. Your child may want to write their events, heat number, and lane number on their arm or leg. This is done prior to the start of the meet and done with the Sharpie mentioned earlier.
9. The meet announcer will make announcements for each event. They will also announce the last call for a particular event. Make sure you are listening to send your child down on time. Some facilities also have a board that will display what event and heat that are currently in process.

10. Have your child check in with their coach both before and after they swim. Make sure they report to their coach in enough time to briefly talk to them before they report to the starting block. Remember, it is their responsibility to be on the block on time, so leave plenty of time to meet with the coach and if the coach is too busy with other swimmers – get to the block.
11. Parents are not allowed to talk directly to an official. If you have a problem understanding an infraction you should communicate with the coach as long as it doesn't interfere with the coaching of an athlete.

## **THE MEET**

1. Check meet entry sheet for warm up times. This will also be sent out in Croc Chronicles prior to the meet. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to warm up 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 email.
3. There will be a team meeting for swimmers directly after warm up. Relays will be announced.
4. If relays are at the end of the meet, please make sure you do not leave before checking relay assignment.
5. There is no refund for not attending a meet.

## **ONCE YOUR CHILD HAS SWAM THEIR EVENT**

1. Timers will give your child their time and at most meets the times will be ~~electronically~~ posted.
2. Immediately after they have swam, the swimmer needs to talk to the coach ~~first~~.
3. When your child talks to the coach after their swim, the coach will discuss their performance and offer constructive criticism, positive encouragement, and technical advice.
4. DQ or Disqualification- when a swimmer does not swim the stroke technically correct, they can be disqualified. Parents and children should look at this as a learning experience. As their stroke technique improves, the frequency of disqualifications will drop. Even the most experienced swimmers occasionally get disqualified.
5. Remember your responsibilities as a parent is to make sure your child knows that win or lose, you love him/her, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life that they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
6. Allow the coach to coach. The relationship between the swimmer and the coach is important. When a parent interferes with the coach's opinion as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable confusion for the swimmer as to whom they 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 can discuss your concern.

### **BEFORE LEAVING THE MEET**

1. Check relay assignment.
2. Clean your area.
3. Thank your coach.

### **OUT OF TOWN MEETS**

Out of town meets are a great opportunity 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.

Hotel reservations are the individual's responsibility. At some meets there is a team hotel listed with the travel information that may offer a discount. You are not required to stay in this hotel. Many hotels fill early, so check your schedule and make your reservations as soon as you are able to.