



SWIM MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE

"IMPROVEMENT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WINNING!"

*The following information has been adapted from USA Swimming Partners Program guide for "Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Swim Meets...But, Were Afraid To Ask (or didn't know what to ask)."

SWIM MEETS

Swim meets are fun and exciting! This is the time for your swimmer to see the results from all their hard work at practice and experience the world of "competitive swimming". Swim meets are also a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. They offer the opportunity to travel, make new friends, and get to know the team better. However, for the new swimming family that first meet can be rather intimidating. As more than one new parent has commented, the first impression is "TOTAL CHAOS". But take heart - there really is a method to the madness.

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 want you to be prepared.

DON'T HESITATE TO ASK ANY OTHER PARENT OR A COACH FOR HELP OR ADVICE.
WE LOVE TO HELP EACH OTHER!

GENERAL INFORMATION

1) EAST is a member of the Inland Empire Swimming (IES) Association. Each spring the IES has an annual meeting to discuss business concerning our LSC (Local Swim Committee, operating under USA Swimming), including setting up the swim meet schedule for the following year. After this time the EAST Coaches & Parent Board decide which meets are designated as TEAM EFFORT events. (EAST swimmers may participate in other meets as well.)

2) There are several types of swim meets. TEAM EFFORT meets are chosen based on proximity and competition level appropriate for ALL SWIMMERS ON THE TEAM. These meets are designated as "YES" on the meet schedule. Other meets where our swimmers compete include all Open Meets, those with Special Time Standards (STS), and Championship meets with qualifying times. TEAM EFFORT meets are held about once per month during the competition season (Short Course (25 yards) = Fall/Winter, Long Course (50 meters) = Spring/Summer).

3) Most of our Age Group swim meets are held on Saturday & Sunday, with the occasional Friday or Friday night. Friday night events are typically distance events for 11 & over swimmers. Saturday & Sunday duration depends on how many teams & swimmers are competing. Plan to be at the pool for most of the day, though this will vary from meet to meet depending on the event order and type of meet. Some meets split the older and younger swimmers into two sessions. You are not required to swim all days of the meet, but your swimmer may miss the opportunity to swim certain events.

4) Events are set by age group, with younger swimmers swimming shorter events and older swimmers have longer & more events. The age groups are 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-Over or Senior/Open. Once in awhile there may be a slight deviation on how the ages are split.

5) The yearly meet schedules are distributed to each family via email, and posted on the website (www.eastswim.org). The TEAM EFFORT meets are highlighted on the schedule as well as designated championship meets. These meet dates rarely change, so it is easy to plan for the year.

6) About a month before a scheduled meet, the host club sends out meet information, which will be posted on our website and distributed to each family via email. The meet information includes: Meet name, date & location, session times, order of events, contact people, and lodging information. Additional information regarding directions and lodging can be found at the IES website (www.ieswim.org).

ENTERING THE MEET

If possible please complete your meet registration a few days prior to the deadline.

1. Go to EAST website, www.eastswim.org.
2. Sign-In to your account.
3. Click on Meets/Events tab or select the meet listed under Events on the home page.
4. Select "Edit Commitment" on the meet you want to register for.
5. Click on the name of the EAST swimmer for registration.
6. Select Declaration and leave notes if necessary.
7. Select individual events. Please check the meet Information to confirm event days.
8. Save changes.

If you want the coach to select the events for your swimmer, please leave a note stating if you are attending both days or specific days, or any other circumstance that would influence the event selection. The coach will complete the relay entries if there are enough swimmers (EAST pays for all relays).

All swim meet fees are billed on the first of the month after the registration deadline or after the swim meet (depending on the date). Swim meet fees are non-refundable, for any reason, as the team must pay the fees with our registration into the meet. Host teams do not refund fees if a swimmer is absent from the meet for illness or any other reason.

BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

1) Arrive at the pool at least 30 minutes before your swimmers scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information. It is important to be on time for warm-ups because it can be a little crazy and it really helps the team if they can all start at the same time. You may need to arrive earlier for big meets, especially indoor meets, as the pool area will get crowded fast.

2) Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's swim bags & blankets or sleeping bags. Most teams usually sit together in one place, so look for some familiar faces. We will try to pair up a new family with an experienced family to help your and your swimmer understand the "organized chaos".

3) Certain events or meets require a pre-event check in. These are typically Friday night events or distance events, and special senior meets. The Coach will help with this process.

4) It is very important to buy a heat sheet at the meet (usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool). This will tell you what heats and lanes your swimmer will compete in. New swimmers are typically in one of the first few heats. There is also an approximate timeline included.

5) For younger swimmers especially, it is a good idea to write their events on their hands (permanent marker stays on best). Write the Event, Event #, Heat #, and Lane #, this will help them to remember what they are swimming and which event numbers to listen for. (This can be done after warm-ups if you're running a little late.) Events will be announced over the loudspeakers at the pool and will make calls to report to the next event. The Coach will be tracking the events, but the Coach is not responsible for writing on the swimmers or getting the

swimmers to their events. Don't worry, the coach or other EAST families will help our new families during their first few meets. It really does not take long to get the routine.

6) Your swimmers, with their TEAM cap and goggles, will reports to the pool & Coach for warm-up instructions. Each swimmer will be provided with a team cap, sometime prior to the meet or warm-ups (new swimmers will be given their first cap, and then additional caps will be charged to your monthly bill). It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day – they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before they can go all out.

7) After warm-up, your swimmer(s) will go back to the team area and wait until their event is called. The swimmers need to stay dressed and warm. This is also a good time to use the bathroom if necessary, fill water bottles, and relax.

8) The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

WHEN THE 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 hand). They may swim right after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

2) A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and they will be asked to report to the starting end of the pool, or sometimes for 8 & Under, to the "Clerk Of Course". Generally girls' events are odd-numbered and boys' events are even-numbered. Swimmers need to have their caps and goggles with them. The Coach will want to talk to the swimmer before their event.

3) The swimmers will wait behind the timers until their heat is called and they are asked to step up to the blocks. For 8 & under swimmers, the Clerk (when there is one) will line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order or place them in the correct order. 8 & Under swimmers may start some of their events at the non-starting end of the pool. How many heats in each event depend on how many participants are entered in the meet for each age group.

4) The swimmer swims their race.

5) After each swim:

A) The swimmers ask the timers for their time, though the coach will almost always have their times.

B) They then go immediately to their Coach, to discuss their swim.

C) The Coach will generally follow these guidelines when discussing swims:

- Positive comments or praise.
- Suggestions for improvement.
- Splits.
- Positive comments.

D) Some swimmers will be expected to cool-down after their events when facilities are available.

6) Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

- Tell your swimmer how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them.
- Make sure they get back to the team area to relax.
- This is good time to use the bathroom, get a drink, or something light to eat.

7) Now the swimmer waits until the next event and starts the procedure all over again.

8) When a swimmer has completed all of their events, they get to go home. Make sure, however, to check in with the Coach before leaving. The exception to this would be EAST hosted meets where we will need families to help with teardown at the end of the meet.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR CHILD HAS A DISAPPOINTING SWIM

If your child has a poor race or comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things, and how proud of them you are. You never talk about the negative things.

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. Immediately start talking about the positive things.

WHAT TO TAKE TO THE MEET

1) Most important: Swim suit (team suit if possible), team cap, and goggles. EAST team suits are black racing style suits. You can purchase suits online or you can purchase a suit at some swim meets. The coach will provide a team cap for all swimmers (charged to your EAST account, except for new swimmers). To save wear and tear on expensive team suits and team caps, save them for swim meets only – have a separate suit & cap for practice.

2) Towels: Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.

3) Extra goggles, caps, suits, & towels: These items are easily misplaced or broken. The Coach will have extra team caps. A swimming merchandise vendor can be found at some meets to provide you with all of your swimming apparel & equipment needs. There are also many online vendors providing discount merchandise, swimoutlet.com or amazon are both good. Stores like Fred Meyer, Big 5 – carry goggles & caps. Check with the coach for the best style to get.

4) Sweats, shorts, t-shirts, jackets, and any other clothing appropriate to the season or facility. Remember to bring extra, because they will get wet and soggy.

5) Something to sit on (for you AND your swimmers): Sleeping bag, old blanket, beach chair, or anything that is comfortable to rest on and can get wet (The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it). Some facilities have bleachers, but they usually fill-up quickly.

6) Food & Drink: You may bring a cooler, and always have a water bottle (no glass containers). It is advised to bring light and easily digested food. Fatty foods, dairy products, & too much simple sugar (candy) all have detrimental effects on performance. Lots of liquid is needed to replace fluids lost by the body during a race and/or because of the heat (even inside). Swimmers sweat just as much in the water as other athletes do out.

Suggested Items:

Food - Crackers, cereal, bagels, fruits & vegetables, sandwiches, & sports bars.

Drink - Water (#1 idea), sport drinks, or fruit juice.

7) Books, games, music, homework - anything to pass the time.

8) A highlighter and pen: To highlight your swimmer(s) and teammates in the heat sheet, and to record times.

Extra Items for the Summer Season

1) Dark or mirrored goggles: To cut the glare of the sun off the water (this is especially important for backstroke).

2) Sunscreen: Getting sunburned is not only bad for the skin, but it dehydrates and drains energy.

3) Lots of Water & Ice: Prevents dehydration and keeps your food cool.

4) A shade tent: To get out of the sun and heat. The team usually meets to sets up in one spot and families shares their shade. The more shade the better, so if you can bring a shade tent please do so.

5) Please keep swimmers from running around and playing in the heat. Meets are meant to be fun, but we also want the swimmers to have energy for their races.

SPECIAL NOTE TO PARENTS

Swim meets are fun for the parents as well as the swimmers, but remember, they do take some time (anywhere from 4-8 hours each day). The pool area is usually warm (summer or not), and humid, seating can be limited, and bleachers tend to get very hard. Therefore make sure you dress appropriately and bring something soft to sit on (beach chairs or cushions). There is nothing worse than being hot and uncomfortable at a swim meet. (You and your things are bound to get wet.)

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. When you feel comfortable that your swimmer can get to events on their own, try to volunteer for timing at the meets. It's easy, it's fun, it really helps to pass the time, and you get to sit in the best seat in the house to watch the competition. (The host club will love you, too.) There will be a head timer more than willing to teach you what you need to know. Eventually you may even wish to train to be a stroke & turn official, this is a really easy way to learn the fundamentals of competitive swimming, help out your team, and meet a lot of great people from other teams.

Again, please do not hesitate to ask any parent or Coach on your team for help or information!

MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS

1) Please plan for which meets you will be attending for the season or year. Swim meets are not only fun, they are also important for team and swimmer growth & improvement. We want to have a good showing at the TEAM EFFORT meets. The team also has many motivational activities that are dependent on swim meet participation.

2) Most of our TEAM EFFORT meets are close to home and it is possible to drive each day. Some families may wish to stay overnight and a few meets do require an overnight stay. Make your reservations for lodging early. Sometimes we try to stay at the same place for TEAM EFFORT meets. Camping is also available at or around some facilities during the summer season.

3) EAST is a swimming family and there are times when families share rides, lodging, and sometimes take swimmers to meets whose parents are not able to attend. So as you get to know other families these options will be available. This is a unique sport and organization and it takes family involvement to make it successful!

PLEASE CONTACT THE COACH WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION