

BDSC Swimming Meet Survival Guide

Swimming meets are the culmination of what your child works for in practice everyday. The meet is a measurement by which you can tell if they are learning anything and if so, what. They can be fun for the swimmer and an opportunity for you to get to know the other parents. They can also be filled with stress, confusion, and headaches if you are not informed and prepared. Once you have been to a few meets you will develop your own rituals and techniques. Until then, this survival guide will attempt to teach you the basics of attending a meet successfully.

Before you leave:

Get informed:

- Where is the meet – Make sure you know the location of the meet.
- Find out how to get there. We attend swim meets at several different pools. Addresses to the pool can be found in the meet packet on our website.
- Find out what events your child is swimming. Having your child prepared and walked through the order of events before you get to the pool helps.
- Find out when warm-ups start. Swim meets start without you. If you're not there when the sign up period ends, you usually can't swim. Communicate with the coaches if you are going to be late.

Pack:

- Gear. Pack a swim bag with everything you will need to compete.
 - Team suit/competition suit
 - Back up suit- Take a spare suit of any color. When a suit is lost or rips you want a back up. Buying a suit at a meet may cost you more than you want to spend.
 - Goggles- Take a good pair. When your swimmer goes to put on their goggles right before an event it is not a good time for a rotten strap to break.
 - Back up goggles- Swimmers lose goggles a lot! They won't know they've lost them until right before their next event. It is a lot easier to pull out a spare pair than begin to panic. Panicked swimmers and swimmers without goggles don't usually swim fast.
 - Cap- Take a team cap. Team caps help identify your swimmer and where they belong.
 - Towels- Your swimmer will be wet and need to dry off after warm-ups and each event. Wet swimmers get cold and cold swimmers do not swim as fast as warm swimmers. Bring plenty of towels.

- Extra clothes- Take a change of clothes to wear between events. Sweats and loose fitting clothing work best. Make sure your swimmer has dry clothes to wear home.
- Food- Pack nutritious snacks that are high in carbohydrates and complex sugars. Bagels, fruit, and granola bars are a good source of energy. Also, bring something to drink.
- Entertainment- There can be up to an hour between your swimmer's events. Take something for them to do. Homework can be done but it runs a high risk of getting wet. Take cards, music, etc.

LABEL EVERYTHING AND HAVE AN INVENTORY OF EVERYTHING YOU TAKE!

Prepare your swimmer:

- Events- Using a water proof pen or marker, write the events your swimmer will be swimming that day on the back of their hand. Include event number, stroke, and distance. Leave room to write down the heat and lane of each event. This information will be available at the meet.
- Lecture- Walk them through their events. Remind them to report to their coach after each event. Remind them to dry off and get dressed between events, and to behave on deck since you won't be down there to scold them. Remind them to keep track of their stuff and bring it all home. Tell them to do their best and listen to the coaches. Most of all, tell them to have fun!

The Meet:

Before the meet starts:

- Leave on time- Warm-up start times are when kids should be in the pool. You need to figure on travel time, parking time, and dressing time to determine when to leave. If you know you will be late please let a coach know in advance.
- Parking- Some pools charge to park.
- Sign in- Most meets have "positive check in". This requires that all swimmers acknowledge their presence at the meet. If you do not sign in with the allowed time, you probably will not be able to swim. Look for signs directing you to the sign in location. Circle or highlight you name and all events. Sign in when you first arrive so you don't forget.
- Report to BDSC team area- It is important for team unity and to assist the coaching staff that all of the team is in the same area. Have your swimmers keep their swim gear in this area. Parents are not allowed on the pool deck.

- Get ready- Have your swimmer get into their suit, goggles, and cap, and report to their coach.
- Go sit down- You will have to pay admission at most meets. Look for other BDSC parents. Sitting with an experienced swim parent will help you understand what's going on. Sitting with the team also promotes team unity in the stands. Try to wear BDSC team colors as often as possible.

During the meet:

- Heat sheets- Heat sheets will be made after the sign in sheets are taken down. These list the events, heats, and lanes that will actually be swum at the meet. These will be posted on the wall at several locations around the pool. After they are posted, your swimmer will have to find out which lane and heat they are in for each race. They should write this information on their hand. A coach will always make sure that the swimmer knows when to swim.
- Root for the team- Swim meets can be very long if all you are doing is waiting for your swimmer to swim. If you watch for all of the BDSC swimmers, you have something to do and someone to root for. This will have the added benefit of familiarizing yourself with other swimmers on the team and the sport of swimming.
- Time standards- There are regional and state time standards to be used as goals for your swimmer's improvement. These time standards are usually listed in the Psyche Sheets. They are also posted on the USA Swimming web site.
- Bad meets, Bad swims- Sometimes bad things happen to good swimmers. Your swimmer will most likely be devastated the first time they are disqualified, miss an event, or swim much slower than a previous meet. How to handle a disappointment is a major lesson to be learned by swimming. Be supportive and keep perspective. There will always be another swim. One hundred percent effort is nothing to be ashamed of regardless of the result.

After the meet:

- Check their swim bag- Make sure your swimmer leaves with everything they brought. If they are missing something, look for the "lost and found".

CONGRATULATE THEM ON A GREAT EFFORT AND A GREAT MEET!