

How Do Coaches Pick My Swimmer's Events?

As soon as the DELTA entries are posted on the website for any given meet, I am usually inundated with emails from parents of swimmers asking me if there is a way that events can be changed, if I really think that their swimmer is capable of handling these events, or telling me that their swimmer doesn't want to swim the 200 fly.

How do coaches pick my swimmer's events?

When coaches sit down to do their swimmers' entries they have the following in mind:

What have we been working on in practice that I would like to see translated in to racing at a meet?

Are there certain weaknesses that this swimmer has in their better event that another race might help them strengthen?

Does the swimmer have a chance of qualifying for a championship meet in a certain event?

Are there certain events that a swimmer has not swam in a long time that will allow him/her to achieve a best time and feel good about it?

Am I helping this swimmer develop their skills to become a well-rounded swimmer?

Am I helping this swimmer grow as a person and get over their fear of trying new things?

Not all of these apply to all swimmers or all decisions but in general your swimmer's events are well thought out and planned by your coach.

What have we been working on in practice that I would like to see translated in to racing at a meet?

During certain training cycles your swimmer's coach may be emphasizing a certain stroke, race, turn or other skill that we may want to see them demonstrate, try for the first time, or improve on in a racing situation. You might see all of the swimmers in a certain group swimming the same event at a given meet to achieve this goal.

Are there certain weaknesses that this swimmer has in their better event that another race might help them strengthen?

The classic example is a swimmer that has three good strokes but their IM is hampered by one really bad one. Racing the 100 of that bad stroke and getting a better feel for doing it fast may help that swimmer's IM.

Another example is a distance swimmer that doesn't take their 200 free out fast enough; racing the 50 free might help that person get a better idea of how to attack the first 50 of their 200. We know what your swimmer's strengths are; we just may want to see them continue to grow in other events especially as they are changing physically.

Does the swimmer have a chance of qualifying for a championship meet in a certain event?

If your swimmer is close to qualifying for a meet such as Regionals, Age-Group State, Senior State, Sectionals, Junior Nationals, U.S. Open or Olympic Trials, you may see them swim that event on a fairly regular basis to give them as many chances to qualify as possible. If you have questions about Time Standards you can find them on the DELTA Website under the Meets/Events tab.

Are there certain events that a swimmer has not swam in a long time that will allow them to achieve a best time and feel good about it?

Part of our job as coaches outside of making sure our swimmers are going fast is keeping them interested in the sport and managing their psyches. Example: USA Olympian Margaret Hoelzer has said while in high school she did not go a best time in any of her best events. Plateaus will occur in certain events and it is our job as coaches to make sure that our swimmers are constantly given new challenges so that they can experience certain amounts of success and maintain their excitement about the sport.

Am I helping this swimmer develop their skills and become a well-rounded swimmer?

We pride ourselves at DELTA, especially at the 14 & under level, in making sure we train kids in all strokes to avoid having them specialize until they are older and their bodies are done developing. We train in a very IM based manner and want to make sure that the swimmers develop all four of their strokes while they are young. Our event selections have and will very much reflect that. Example: we make a point of trying to have all of swimmers swim every event at least once during the season.

Am I helping this swimmer grow as a person and get over their fear of trying new things?

Finally, and maybe most importantly, we are trying to help develop our swimmers as young people. Overcoming fears of trying new things is a great skill that they can take away from this sport and apply later in their lives. We realize that kids in general are probably going to be intimidated and nervous the first time we enter them in a 200 fly or 400 IM. Know that we have not entered them without confidence that they are ready to do it and will get something out of it. It may be just a sense of pride that they are able to complete the event, it might be gaining the realization that they are better at longer distances, or it might be even be qualifying for a meet. This is why there needs to be the trust between swimmer, coach, and parent that the coaching staff is doing what is best for each swimmer and their development as an athlete and a person.

If swimmers have apprehensions about an event they are entered in, encourage them to speak to their coach directly to understand why they are swimming the event and in order to help them develop a race strategy before the meet. This will allow the swimmer/coach to build a trusting relationship as well as help prepare the swimmers in a proper manner before trying an event for the first time.

All in all, we are trying to do our best when we select events for meets to make sure that the swimmers are improving, engaged, developing, growing and progressing at a rate that keeps them in the sport and feeling successful.

Thanks!

Coach Jessica