

What is Safe Sport?

USA Swimming's Safe Sport program, a comprehensive abuse prevention program, consists of a multi-layered approach to keep kids safe, including: required policies and best practice guidelines; mandatory screening, including criminal background checks and employment screening; training and education; monitoring, supervision and mandatory reporting. These measures are informed by experts in the field of child safety and are among the strongest safeguards found in youth-serving organizations.

What is a swim meet?

A swimming competition between individual athletes or between two or more swim teams, organized by a swimming organization or governing body. Swim meets can be held in indoor or outdoor pools. The goal of competing is to finish your events as fast as possible, ideally to log a new personal best time or qualify for a larger meet, such as regionals. You will earn points for your overall place in each event. The team with the most points at the end of the meet wins the meet.

What is an event?

An event is an individual swim race. Events are broken down by distance (25, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1650), stroke (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly or I.M.) and oftentimes by age, gender and relay type. You will typically swim 1-5 events in a swim meet, and most meets have a limit to the number of events each swimmer is allowed to register for. You will never swim every event in a swim meet. Each team hosting a swim meet typically has varying costs associated with each event a swimmer participates in, called "meet fees". For example, a team might charge a \$10 facility fee, plus \$4 for each event the swimmer swims. If your swimmer participates in 6 events, the total cost for that meet would be \$10 + \$4/event x 6 events= \$34. To see more about paying meet fees, please see the Payment/Fees FAQ's.

What is a heat?

In each event, there can be many swimmers competing. Depending on the size of the pool, only a limited number of swimmers can race at a time. If a pool has six lanes, then six swimmers will race in the event at a time, which is called one "heat." If there are 60 swimmers competing in the 100 freestyle event in that six-lane pool, there will be 10 heats. Typically, the swimmers with the slowest seed (entry) times will swim in the first heat, ending with the fastest swimmers in the last heat. Some formats use a circle seed, where swimmers of varying speeds are mixed up within heats. If you win your heat, you may not have won the entire event. Be sure to check the official results sheet to see where you placed. Usually, official results will be posted within a few minutes of all heats concluding for that event. Heat winners are sometimes given awards as they exit the pool after their race.

What are Heat Sheets?

This is where you find out what you're swimming, when, and where. Most meets print these out and tape them on the pool walls. Some even sell them at the door for a few extra dollars. *Most meets utilize a paid app (Meet Mobile) as a digital heat sheet where you will also see final results posted. For more information on apps utilized, please see Apps FAQ's.

What is a seed time?

The swimmer's fastest time prior to this meet. Seeding is the method of placing swimmers in lanes in order of their entry times.

What is a lane assignment/number?

This is your assigned lane in the pool that you will be racing in, during your heat. Typically, the fastest swimmers in each heat get assigned to the middle lanes.

What is a relay?

A relay is typically a combination of four swimmers on the same team. The swimmers take turns completing parts of the race, typically 1/4 of the total distance. Relays are usually either freestyle or a medley. A 200 freestyle medley means that swimmer #1 swims 50 yards freestyle, then swimmer #2 immediately swims the second leg, then swimmers #3 and #4 swim legs 3 and 4 consecutively. The fastest swimmer is responsible for the last “leg” of the race, and the entire group’s time is the final result of the race. A medley relay is similar, but each swimmer is responsible for completing a different stroke of the I.M. Swimmer #1 does backstroke, swimmer #2 does breaststroke, swimmer #3 does butterfly, and swimmer #4 does freestyle. Swimmers on a relay team must all be in the same age group.

What is the writing all over a swimmer’s arm for?

The easiest way for a swimmer, coaches, timers, and officials to know what event a swimmer is participating in, as well as their heat and lane assignment. When we ask to label your swimmer’s arm with their events in permanent marker, you can find each event your swimmer is registered for on Team Unify or via the On Deck app (see Apps FAQ for more info on this). We ask that you write the swimmer’s event number, event, and leave an empty space for heat and lane that coaches will fill in after a swimmer has checked in at a meet. For example, if your swimmer is swimming Event #14, 25m butterfly, you would label their arm as “#14 25FLY H L “. Stroke abbreviations are as follows: FR: Freestyle FLY: Butterfly BK: Backstroke BR: Breaststroke IM: Individual Medley MR: Medley Relay

What is an I.M.?

Slang for individual medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four competitive strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. The 100, 200 and 400 IM may be found at swim meets.

What does it mean to DQ (Disqualify/Disqualification)?

A DQ is a disqualification from an event. At most meets, stroke and turn judges observe the swimmers to ensure that the starts, strokes, turns, and finishes are performed according to the rules. If you are disqualified in a race, it means that you have broken one or more of the rules designated for that stroke or for that event. The judge will raise their arm, then fill out a DQ slip. Coaches will be notified of your DQ after your race, and your time will not be counted. Coaches typically receive the DQ slips at the conclusion of the meet and can review them with your swimmer at the next practice. Examples include: diving off the block before the horn is blown, wearing illegal equipment, swimming the wrong stroke in a heat, doing a flutter kick in a breaststroke event, or grabbing onto a lane line. A disqualification is a technical breaking of the rules for that particular event. DQs are an important part of the learning process for each swimmer. While it may seem like a tragedy in the moment to the swimmer, it is an expected part of the learning process for every swimmer. As a parent, when talking with your child after a DQ, simply ask what they learned from that event and reinforce that this is a normal part of the learning process. It is important for your swimmer to know they are not in trouble for a disqualification; they happen often and we expect them to! It’s a part of the learning process, especially for beginner swimmers.

What does it mean to Scratch?

Scratching an event is declaring that, while you are at the meet and intend to race, you will not be participating in a particular race. Or, if you have not arrived to the swim meet on time to be checked in by a coach, you have been scratched from your races by the host team.

What are points for at swim meets?

Points are awarded to the team for swimmers placing in individual events and in relays. Each place corresponds to a total number of points awarded. At some meets, "High Points" winners are recognized with individual awards, and team total points can also be awarded by the hosting team. While earning points is a great achievement, we focus more on individual improvement with OCS and competing against your own best times.

What are the age groups in competition?

Generally competitions are divided in the following age groups: 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14 and 15 & Over, or even as 13&up. You will also see some competitions where events are labeled 10 & Under (open to any swimmers younger than 11), and some have Open events which are open to all ages, but generally refer to senior swimmers 13 & Over. Swim meets are divided into "sessions" by age groups.

How often should my child attend meets?

Competition is important and THE BEST part of swim team. While we do not require meet participation, we STRONGLY encourage it. This is a great way for your kids to race against friends and other teams, and see how far they have come in their abilities. We put a lot of emphasis on swimming "your personal best" and encouraging the kids to work hard to beat their own time records. We always do recognition at practice following meets for swimmers who drop times in their races, and who place in individual and/or relay events. Attending meets is where the kids get to see their hard work paying off and earn recognition for it!

Who enters my child in events?

The coaching staff enters all swimmers in events in each meet. The coaches make the decisions as part of the overall development of the swimmer. If there is a particular race you want your swimmer to participate in, send the coach a message or add it to the notes on your meet commitment.

How long do meets last?

Meets are broken into sessions. Some meets are one day/one session, while others may go 2 or more days, offering multiple sessions. Generally, each session of a meet is between 3-4 hours long. Dual meets may be shorter. Some meets offer one session per day for each age group, while others offer a prelim/final format where the fastest swimmers in preliminaries each day come back later that day to compete in finals and swim their events for a second time. Your swimmer is welcome to stay after their events have finished to cheer on their teammates, or leave their session after they have completed all of their events. They need to check in with a coach to let them know if they plan to leave.

What should we bring to the meet?

During the fall/winter season, your swimmer needs to wear their team suit, so that is the first piece of equipment that is needed for any meet. During the summer season, any 1 piece swimsuit for girls is fine (but please use the team suit if you purchased it!), and boys may choose to wear swim trunks or "jammers" (again, please use the team suit if you purchased it). You will also need to pack at least two pairs of goggles (they break at the most inconvenient times), one or more towels, a swim cap for longer hair, sufficient clothing to keep your swimmer warm and comfortable throughout the day (during the fall/winter season, you will see most swimmers in a bathrobe or swim parka over their suit in between events), 1-2 water bottles or sport drinks, and appropriate snacks for your swimmer while they are at the meet. No junk food or soda! For summer meets, don't forget the sunscreen & bag chairs. We will notify you prior to each meet of any special things to bring.

Where do I find information about times/events/sessions?

Meet Information for every meet in which we compete is posted on our website on the page for that meet. We will also send an email with the meet information before you are asked to commit to a meet. All finalized meet information will be sent to participating swimmers the week before the meet.

What is a bullpen?

For younger swimmers, the host team may operate a bullpen to get all swimmers lined up and ready to go to the blocks for their event. It is a way for meet hosts to efficiently serve dozens of young swimmers without delaying the meet.

How do I know which meets to sign-up for?

Any meet that is on our schedule is a meet you can sign your swimmer up for. You can choose to attend 1 day if it is a 2 day meet, or both days. All of this information will be provided to you before you commit to the meet. If you have questions about which meets are best for your swimmer, talk to a coach.

How do I cancel a meet sign-up?

To cancel a meet registration you have already completed before the entry deadline, you simply reverse the process you used to register for the meet in the first place.

Once the entry deadline for a meet has passed, you cannot withdraw from the meet. Immediately following the entry deadline, coaches select events and submit the team entry including entry fees to the meet host. Once that entry is submitted, you are responsible for any entry fees incurred on behalf of your swimmer even if your swimmer does not attend the meet.

Meet entries are generally submitted 2-4 weeks prior to the meet. If you know your swimmer will not attend a meet and the entry deadline has already passed, please notify a coach so he/she is aware your swimmer will not attend the meet.

When do I pay for meets?

Our club bills for meets through your team account. Meets are typically billed right after they conclude. Please see Payment FAQs for more info.

How can I get more feedback on the meets and events my child should swim in the season?

A coach is the best person to ask about the most appropriate meets for your swimmer. Coaches have the responsibility to select events for your swimmer in any meet in which he/she swims. If you have questions about the events selected for your child, please contact a coach via email at olympiacountryswimmers@gmail.com.

How do I know for which meets I have registered?

Meet registrations must be done by parents/guardians. When a new meet is added to the schedule, a team email will be sent out asking you to commit to the meet as attend/decline. Please **ALWAYS** either "commit" if you are coming, "decline" if you are not so we know who to plan for at each meet. If you can't remember which meets you registered for, click on the "Edit my Commitment" button under the meet in question. On the Event Signup page you will see your swimmer's name listed and the word Committed with a red check mark next to it if you are signed up for this meet. If the words Not Committed are next to your swimmer's name, you are not signed up for this meet.

How do I know what events my child is swimming? The events they will swim in any meet will be selected by the coaches. Once a coach has selected the events, you can login to your Team Unify account and they will be listed under Coach Approved on the Event Signup page for each meet. You can find this same information in the OnDeck app.

Am I able to enter a meet after the registration deadline?

Each meet has a registration deadline, often a few weeks before the actual swim meet. Once that deadline has passed, you cannot be added to the meet. Please pay close attention to meet registration emails and select your meets prior to the registration deadline. The registration deadline for each meet is listed on the homepage for that meet on the website. To view the homepage for any meet, click on the meet name on our website.