

# Introduction to Swim Meets



You've decided to attend your first swim meet. Now what? If you are new to the world of competitive swimming you have likely already discovered that there is a lot to take in at first. The same can be said for swim meets. The good news is every swimmer has a first swim meet and first race. So, rest assured that everything will be fine. You should find the following information helpful in preparing both yourself and your swimmer for their first competition.

## Signing Up:

The first step to attending a swim meet is to get signed up. To do this simply visit the events page on the website:

HOME HISTORY ABOUT NEWS METRICS **EVENTS** LOCATIONS TEAM CALENDAR CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS

PARENT RESOURCES

USA SWIMMING LCA LEVEL 3

Current & Upcoming Past & Archived Hidden (Admin only) TouchPad Meet Admin Reports

Event Category: --ALL-- Search

November 9 2018  **Donner November Invite (Columbus, IN)**  
Nov 9, 2018 - Nov 11, 2018  
[ Edit ]  
Edit Commitment  
This meet is held at Columbus North High School. It is one of 2 key tuneups heading into the New Year.  
DONNER SWIM CLUB

December 7 2018  **IST Winter Invitational (Bloomington, IN)**  
Dec 7, 2018 - Dec 9, 2018  
[ Edit ]  
Edit Commitment

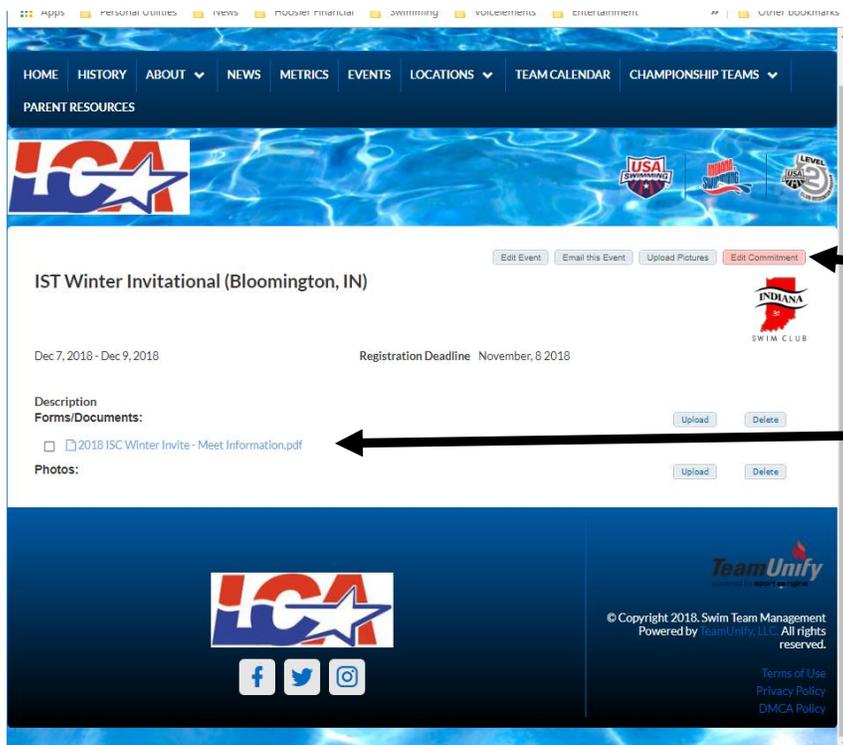
December 31 2018  **2nd Annual Pancake Practice**  
Dec 31, 2018 (08:00 AM) - Dec 31, 2018 (12:00 PM)

BOA2018.mov Show all

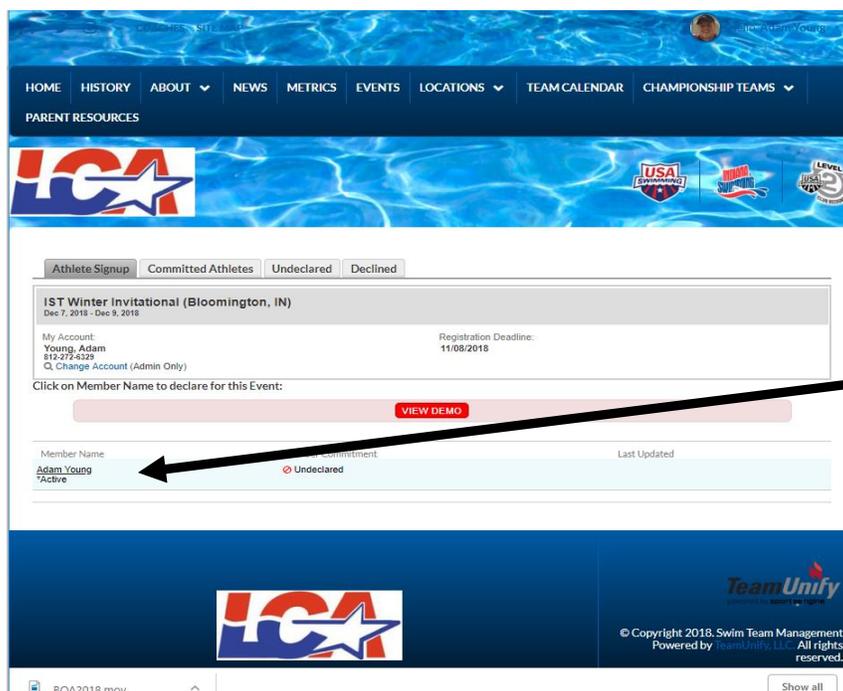
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Select the meet and then select “edit commitment”. This is also where you can view the meet letter.



At this point you will need to choose the member you wish to commit.



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Next indicate your commitment with the drop-down menu. Make sure you not which days you will be attending. If you do not specifically note which days you plan to attend it will be assumed that the swimmer will be attending the entire meet.

The screenshot shows a web form for the IST Winter Invitational (Bloomington, IN) from Dec 7, 2018, to Dec 9, 2018. The form is titled 'DIVE INTO RECRUITING' and includes the NCSA logo. The member athlete is Adam Young. There is a dropdown menu for 'Declaration' currently set to '--SELECT--'. Below this is a text area for 'Notes (days cannot attend, etc.)'. A 'Save Changes' button is located at the bottom right of the form. A callout box with a black border and white background contains the text 'Be sure to note which days you plan to attend!' with a black arrow pointing to the Declaration dropdown menu.

Be sure to note which days you plan to attend!

It is important to become familiar with meet letters as they are your go to resource for all details concerning a meet. This is where you will find details such as what time warm-ups start, which age groups swim in which sessions, entry limitations etc.

There are some fees associated with attending meets. These include a per event fee (usually \$4-5), and Indiana Swimming surcharge (\$2 per swimmer per meet) and an LCA surcharge (\$2 per swimmer per meet). The per event fees go to the host. The Indiana Swimming surcharge supports our LSC (Local Swimming Committee) and the LCA surcharge helps to cover the cost of both relays and coaching expenses.

**\*\*\*Once the host entry deadline has passed swimmers who still wish to compete will have to be entered at the meet as deck entries. Deck entry fees are usually double and there is no guarantee that they will be able to enter.**

**\*\*\*Once entries have been submitted and processed you are responsible for all fees regardless of whether you attend the meet or not.**

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## Swim Meet Structure:

Meets come in all kinds of different flavors. Some are a single session. Some are a single day. Some are 3 days. Overall you will find that most swim meets we attend have a common structure. The most common is a 5 session meet with a single session Friday evening and two sessions on Saturday and Sunday. The Friday session is usually where you will find the longer events such as the mile, the 500 free, the 400 I.M. as well as events such as the 200 Free or 200 I.M. for younger swimmers.

On Saturdays and Sundays the four age groups (10 & Under, 11-12, 13-14 and 15 & Over) are divided up with 2 in each session.

**\*\*\*Indiana Swimming requires that sessions last no longer than 4 hours.**

<b>2018 ISC Winter Invite</b> December 7 - 9, 2018 Indiana University / Bloomington, Indiana Counsilman/Billingsley Aquatic Center Natatorium <a href="http://www.indianaswimclub.com">www.indianaswimclub.com</a>					
Sanction #: IN19108					
<b>Warm-up</b> 4:30pm <b>GIRLS</b> 1 3 5 7 9	<b>FRIDAY NIGHT SESSION</b>  <b>EVENT</b> 13-14 500 Free 12 & U 200 I.M. Open 400 I.M. 11-12 500 Free Open 1000 Free	<b>Meet Starts</b> 5:30pm  <b>BOYS</b> 2 4 6 8 10	<b>Friday Night Events:</b> Warm-up: 4:30 – 5:15pm Check-in Close: 5:00pm Meet Starts: 5:30pm  <b>AM Sessions:</b> Warm-up: 7:00 – 7:45am Check-in Close: 7:30am Meet Starts: 8:00am  <b>PM Sessions:</b> Warm-up NET: 12:00 – 12:45pm Check-in Close NET: 12:30pm Meet Starts NET: 1:00pm		
<b>Warm-up</b> 7:00am <b>GIRLS</b> 11 13 15 17 19 21 23 25 27 29 31	<b>SATURDAY MORNING SESSION</b>  <b>EVENT</b> 13-14 200 I.M. 11-12 50 Fly 13-14 100 Fly 11-12 100 Breast 13-14 200 Breast 11-12 100 Back 13-14 100 Back 11-12 100 Free 13-14 100 Free 11-12 200 Medley Relay 13-14 200 Medley Relay	<b>Meet Starts</b> 8:00am  <b>BOYS</b> 12 14 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32	<b>Warm-up</b> 7:00am <b>GIRLS</b> 65 67 69 71 73 75 77 79 81 83 85 87	<b>SUNDAY MORNING SESSION</b>  <b>EVENT</b> 11-12 200 Free Relay 13-14 400 Free Relay 11-12 50 Breast 13-14 100 Breast 11-12 200 Free 13-14 200 Free 11-12 50 Back 13-14 200 Back 11-12 100 Fly 13-14 200 Fly 11-12 50 Free 13-14 50 Free	<b>Meet Starts</b> 8:00am  <b>BOYS</b> 66 68 70 72 74 76 78 80 82 84 86 88
<b>Warm-up</b> Noon <b>GIRLS</b> 33 35 37 39 41 43 45 47 49 51 53 55 57 59 61 63	<b>SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION</b>  <b>EVENT</b> 10 & U 100 I.M. 8 & U 25 Back Open 200 I.M. 9-10 50 Back 8 & U 25 Fly Open 100 Back 10 & U 50 Fly 8 & U 50 Free Open 100 Fly 10 & U 100 Free Open 100 Free 10 & U 100 Breast Open 200 Breast 10 & U 200 Medley Relay Open 400 Medley Relay <i>10 Minute Break</i> Open 500 Free	<b>Meet Starts</b> 1:00pm  <b>BOYS</b> 34 36 38 40 42 44 46 48 50 52 54 56 58 60 62 64	<b>Warm-up</b> Noon <b>GIRLS</b> 89 91 93 95 97 99 101 103 105 107 109 111 113 115 117	<b>SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION</b>  <b>EVENT</b> 10 & U 200 Free Relay Open 400 Free Relay 10 & U 100 Fly Open 200 Fly 8 & U 50 Back 10 & U 100 Back Open 200 Back 10 & U 200 Free Open 200 Free 8 & U 25 Breast 10 & U 50 Breast Open 100 Breast 8 & U 25 Free 9-10 50 Free Open 50 Free	<b>Meet Starts</b> 1:00pm  <b>BOYS</b> 90 92 94 96 98 100 102 104 106 108 110 112 114 116 118

Sample event lineup from a meet letter listing which age groups and events are conducted during each session. Warm-Up time, Check in deadlines and Meet start time are listed as well.

This meet has 11-12 and 13-14 age groups in the morning sessions and 10 & Under and Open age groups in the afternoon.

**\*Any age may compete in "open" events.**

**\*This meet has 8 & Under events as well as 10 & Under. This means that an 8 year old swimmer could compete in either.**

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## Before Competition:

Breakfast is important. Something is better than nothing but making a good choice can have a direct impact on performance. Oatmeal, eggs, toast, non-sweetened cereal and smoothies are excellent choices. Avoid processed foods and fast food. Also, try and have a meal at least an hour before swimming.

Often there will be positive sign in. This means that swimmers must highlight their name on a list of swimmers indicating that they are present. There is usually a table with sheets and highlighters or they are posted on the wall.

Prior to the start of a session there is usually a 45 minute to 1 hour warm up. I expect swimmers to be on deck dressed and ready 15 minutes prior to the start of warm-ups. There are a few reasons for this:

- 1) We have time to do some active stretching. This is always preferred over jumping in the pool cold.
- 2) Rarely are there assigned lanes for warm up so we are usually sharing with other teams. Getting in late forces us to have to work around the other team rather than the other way around. Further, you will find that the lanes can be very crowded during warm-up. Again, starting together as a group allows everyone to stay on the same general pace.

## What To Bring:

- 1) A couple of towels.
- 2) An extra pair of goggles.
- 3) An extra swim cap. (Everyone gets an LCA cap when they sign up. Additional caps are available for \$5)
- 4) Something to help keep warm between events. Sweats, a Parka or a robe are all good ideas.
- 5) The right snacks and drinks:
  - a. Light snacks such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, hummus, beef jerky, and minimally seasoned crackers are all good ideas. Avoid sugar, dairy, fried food and the like. There will be plenty of well-earned opportunities for such things after the meet.
  - b. Water really is the best drink. Beware sports drinks. Some can have as much sugar as soda. Always check the label and make decisions based on sugar content.
- 6) Something to do between events. No doubt there can be some downtime between swims. This is usually filled with post-race cool down, feedback from the coach and cheering for teammates. That said, there is nothing wrong with a deck of cards, Uno or something else that can be enjoyed with other swimmers.

***\*\*\*Electronics are the leading cause of missed races.***

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## After Competition:

At the end of a session swimmers should take a moment to make sure they aren't leaving anything behind. Swimmers are also expected to clean up any trash or food in our area. My expectation is that we leave things as we found them.

***\*\*\*The default setting is that swimmers stay until the team's last race is completed. While you may be the first one done one day you may also be the last one done on another. Everyone deserves a cheering section. So, if you need to leave early for a family function or something important please make me aware of that by leaving a note when you sign up for the meet.***

Often swimmers and families will meet for a meal after the meet. Sometimes for lunch after the morning session and sometimes for dinner at the end of the evening session. This is arranged through parents and while encouraged is completely optional. I will usually join the group either Friday or Saturday evening. It is a great opportunity for everyone to get together and get to know each other. All are welcome.

***\*\*\*After competition is when swimmers get to truly enjoy one of the great fringe benefits of swimming. Eating as much of whatever you want. If you have never witnessed swimmers eat after a competition prepare to be amazed.***

## Awards:

Most meets award ribbons for top swimmers in each event. Some meets even award medals. These may be awarded to the top 8 swimmers, top 12 or top 16. Sometimes a new swimmer may become disappointed because they won their heat not realizing that there may have been 10 or more heats. For this reason, many host clubs will award a heat winner prize.

Another award at many meets is the high point award. A swimmer earns points if they place high enough in each event they swim. Much like ribbons the point structure can vary from meet to meet. Swimmers that accumulate the most points throughout a meet win. The high point award is not awarded at every meet. When it is it is usually awarded to a male and female swimmer in each age group. To win the high point award a swimmer usually must compete in as many events as possible over the duration of the meet.

Some meets feature special contests based on things like completing a certain lineup of events. The IMX challenge and pentathlon are examples of these types of contests. Usually they feature challenging events that reward excellence in all four strokes. Awards for these may include t-shirts, trophies or medals.

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Finally, some meets award team trophies. This is usually for the top 3 teams. Most of the time the host team is not eligible. The teams with the most swimmers usually, but not always, have the best opportunity to pick up team trophies.

## Championship Meets:

As a swimmer gets faster they usually begin to think about getting qualifying times or cuts. There are a variety of meets that require a certain time to attend. Usually the first championship meet a swimmer qualifies for is the Divisional Meet. The next step after that is to qualify for either the Age Group State meet or the Senior State meet. Age group state is for swimmers age 14 & under and is divided up by standard age groups (10 & Under, 11-12 & 13-14). While any age may qualify for the Senior State meet you will mostly find swimmer age 15 & Over including college age swimmers. Beyond these meets are additional steps up the ladder all the way to the Olympics. You can find qualifying times for Divisional and State meets on the Indiana Swimming website or the LCA website.

## Glossary:

**Age Groups:** Swimmers are divided into competition groups by age. There are 4 age groups. 10 & Under, 11 – 12, 13-14 and 15 & Over (sometimes called “senior”). Sometimes competition groups are broken down further with an 8 & Under division being the most common. While “Open” is not an age group it is a class of events you will often see. You will usually find mostly Senior swimmers in open events however; any swimmer of any age may compete in an open event. So, sometimes it makes sense for a younger swimmer to swim open events. For example, if it is necessary for 2 swimmers to compete in the same session rather than 2 separate sessions.

**Clerk of Course:** At many meets a special area is set aside for swimmers age 8 & under. Swimmers are lined up, organized and then led to the blocks. This is done to help the youngest swimmers get where they need to be and avoid missing a swim.

**Cool-down:** After finishing a race swimmers are expected to swim a certain amount of yardage. This process lowers muscle temperature, “cleans” muscles, and helps return the body to neutral in preparation for the next race.

**Cuts:** Specific times a swimmer must achieve to attend championship meets.

**Deck:** The area surrounding the pool at practices and meets, not including the bleachers or stands. USA Swimming rules prohibit parents from being on the deck at practice. At meets, only swimmers, coaches, officials and select volunteers may be on the deck.

**Deck Entry:** Swimmers that miss the entry deadline for a meet or those wishing to add events at the meet must do so in the form of a deck entry. Deck entry fees are usually double and are payable upon

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entry. Coaches do not keep money on hand to pay for deck entries so you must provide payment. All deck entries must be made by the head coach.

**DQ:** This is an abbreviation for disqualification. As with any sport there are a variety of rules and regulations. Every swimmer gets disqualified. Even Olympians get disqualified. Obviously new and inexperienced swimmers are more likely to get disqualified. This is natural and perfectly acceptable part of getting better and learning.

**False Start:** A type of disqualification resulting from flinching or leaving the block early.

**Heat:** Most competition pools will have anywhere from 6 to 10 lanes. All the swimmers entered in an event are divided into heats based on their seed time (*see: Seeding*). This ensures that swimmers will be racing against others with similar times.

**Heat Sheet:** This is the meet program. Heat Sheets show you the order of events, who swims in which heat and sometimes will include cut times and records. This is how you can keep track of when your swimmer races and who they race against.

**I.M.:** Abbreviation for Individual Medley. This event requires swimmers to perform all four strokes in the following order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.

**IMX:** A motivational program that allows swimmers across the nation to compare themselves to the thousands of other athletes in their age group. The program promotes a well-rounded approach to swimming and includes all four strokes with distances varying by age. Some meets include an IMX challenge as part of the competition.

**Lead Off:** The first swimmer in a relay. Times from the lead off leg of a relay count as official times the same as an individual event.

**Long Course:** A 50-meter pool. This is the true definition of an Olympic-sized pool.

**Meet Mobile:** A mobile app that provides live updates during a meet. You do have to pay for the app.

**Medley Relay:** The I.M. in relay form. The order is different: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle.

**NT:** This is an abbreviation for No Time. Swimmers entered in an event that they have not done before will be entered with no time and will swim in the first heat/s of the event. This does not necessarily mean that every swimmer in the first few heats is slow. Sometimes a swimmer with “NT” on the heat sheet ends up winning the event.

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**Positive Check In:** If a meet has a positive check in swimmers must indicate they are present by highlighting their name on a list of swimmers. This is usually placed in front of the entrance to the locker rooms.

**Prelim-Finals:** Meets conducted in a championship format have prelim swims in the morning with the top swimmers (16 – 32 swimmers depending on the meet) advancing for a championship swim later in the day.

**Psyche Sheet:** A pre-competition ranking of entered swimmers in order of their entry time.

**Session:** Portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by events offered and age groups competing.

**Scratch:** Sometimes a swimmer will scratch an event for any number of reasons. A scratch is a proactive step taken to remove a swimmer from an event during the meet. All scratches are done by the head coach. Generally, for me to scratch a swimmer a very good reason is required. I usually will not scratch an event without first communicating with the parents.

**Seeding:** This is the process of placing swimmers in heats based on their entry times. This ensures that swimmers compete against others of around the same skill level.

**Short Course:** In America, this term usually means a 25-yard pool.

**Split:** The time for a portion of a race, such as each 50 of a 100-yard race. A negative split means the swimmer swam the second half of a race faster than the first. The first 50, 100, 200, 400/500 and 800/1000 can count as official times for those distance events. In theory a swimmer could get a personal record or cut in the 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 freestyle during a single 1650/mile freestyle swim.

**Timed Finals:** Meet format in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times. This is the format usually used for 10 & Under swimmers at championship meets.

**Warm-up:** Dynamic warm up is essential in preparing the body for exercise and avoiding injury. Warm-up helps deliver oxygen to muscles, increases body temperature, increases blood flow and primes the body for performance.

**Zones:** A regional long-course championship meet held at the end of the summer comprised of age-group swimmers from one of four zones. LCA is in the Central zone. Zone cuts are usually faster than State cuts.

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