

## **All about Swim Meets**

Swimmers' participation in swim meets is highly encouraged. Swim meets provide the experience and thrill of competition. Swim meets provide most swimmers with a purpose for the efforts they apply during practices. Swim meets provide a gauge for improvement. Swim meets also provide a forum for swimmers and swim parents to meet and share in the swimming experience. Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Swim meets may be at home or away. Away meets do take time and involve some costs, but they provide most swimmers with many benefits, including growth, experience, variety and improvement. The coaches can provide guidance on what is appropriate for each swimmer.

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 tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask a coach or other parent.

### **Signing up for a Meet**

The Coaching staff has developed a Meet Schedule for the season. If a swimmer wishes to attend a meet that is not scheduled as a team meet, they must first get approval from their coach. Although it is expected that each swimmer will participate in all of the developmentally appropriate meets, we realize that there may be conflicts which prevent your child from participating. Therefore, we encourage parents to sign up their swimmer for all of the meets in which they are able to participate. The sign up sheets will be kept in a meet signup book at the pool. Each sign up sheet will indicate the deadline for sign up for that particular meet. The deadline will typically be several weeks before the meet. You may make changes to the signup sheet until the deadline. Because swim meets are typically two to three days in length, you will need to indicate on the sign-up sheet which day(s) you are able to participate. The sign-up sheets will be removed from the notebook after the deadline has passed. From the sign-up sheets, the coaches will generate a list of swimmers and the events in which they are entered, which will be sent to the host swim club. We try not to swim on two consecutive weekends, if at all possible, in order to give swimmers adequate rest between meets. Try to review the meet entries for each meet as soon as they are available or posted to check for correctness. Any errors that are caught early may be able to be corrected.

A few of the meets are limited to Senior swimmers or swimmers who have achieved a certain time standard. The Meet Schedule notes a few of these

restrictions. However, if you have any questions about the appropriateness of a meet, please contact your swimmer's coach.

Home meets are mandatory for all targeted swimmers. All targeted swimmers are automatically entered in and billed for Boilermaker Aquatics home meets. However, we realize there may be circumstances that prevent your swimmer from participating one or more days of a home meet (e.g., family wedding or special event, required school activities, religious activities, etc.) If your swimmer is unavailable to participate in a home meet, please indicate so in the meet entry book at least one week prior to the meet.

### Types of Meets

**INTRA-SQUAD MEETS:** Low key meets held at our own pools for BA swimmers only. The purpose of these meets is to provide meet experience and establish times. All team members will participate at the coaches' discretion.

**DUAL MEETS:** Competition between two teams. Meet may be held at a home pool or at another team's pool. All team members should participate if eligible. Swimmers are assigned to events to maximize the chances of individual and team success. Any swimmer who is entered in a scoring event is expected to be present and to swim all assigned events. Line-ups are done about a week in advance. If for any reason a swimmer is not able to participate, it is the parents' responsibility to notify the coaching staff prior to the meet. There are usually no entry fees for dual meets; the host club usually assumes all costs.

**INVITATIONAL MEETS:** One, two, or three day meets. Invitational meets are usually for all age groups: 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 11/12, 13/14, and 15 & Over. Within each age group, there are three different ability levels; A, B, and C. Time standards, established each year by USA Swimming are set for each ability level. Developmental or invitational meets generally do not have qualifying time standard requirements, so all BA swimmers are usually eligible for these meets. Coaches decide what events each swimmer will swim.

### Championship Meets

#### **CONFEDERATION OF INDIANA SWIM CLUBS (CISC)**

**CHAMPIONSHIP:** CISC sponsors a two or three day conference championship at the end of each season. Teams compete for overall team and age group trophies. All BA swimmers are eligible and urged to participate.

**DIVISIONAL/SEMI-STATE:** This three day meet is for swimmers who have achieved minimum time standards, usually BB cuts, but not state times. The meet is held at the end of winter short course season only. It is run on a championship format with preliminaries in the morning and

finals in the afternoon/ evening. Qualified swimmers will be notified and will be expected to participate.

AGE GROUP STATE: This is the exciting climax to each season for all swimmers age 14 and below who have achieved qualifying times. This meet is a three day meet run on championship format with preliminaries in the morning and finals in the afternoon/evening.

Qualified swimmers will be notified and are expected to participate.

SENIOR STATE: This meet is open to any age swimmer who meets the qualifying times. Usually these are older swimmers, and this meet represents the conclusion to their season.

ZONE AGE GROUP: This championship is held at the end of summer (long course) season. Swimmers from several states who have achieved AAA times compete in this meet.

USA NATIONAL JUNIOR OLYMPICS (JUNIOR NATIONALS): There are two Junior Nationals at the very end of each season, one for swimmers east of the Mississippi, and one for those swimmers west of the Mississippi. Swimmers meeting qualifying time standards for this meet travel to compete against the best young (under 18) swimmers in the nation.

USA NATIONALS (SENIOR NATIONALS): Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held once very four years, this is the highest level of competition in the United States for senior swimmers.

### Before the Meet Starts

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information posted on the web site or in the meet packet.
2. Find the check-in place and either you or your swimmer will need to check the swimmer in.
  - a. This is usually posted on a wall or on a registration table.
  - b. Check for special posted instructions in the area. Usually one will need to circle the swimmer's name or highlight the swimmer's name. This is done so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet.
  - c. If scratching a swimmer or events, do not just mark through it. Write "scratch" next to it and initial it. Make sure you scratch the right name or event.
  - d. Most meets have positive check-in. You must check-in before the deadline. If this is not done, the swimmer may not be allowed to swim that day.
  - e. If you miss the check-in time, there may be an option to deck register if there are spaces available, but this is difficult and not all meets allow this. Talk to your coach as soon as possible.

3. Once "checked in", write each event-number on your swimmer's hand or arm in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for when it is announced over the P.A. system.
4. Find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
5. Swimmers that are 8 & Under should locate the "Clerk of Course". They will need to report there for each event when it is time.
6. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.
7. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until his/her first event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the restroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
8. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
9. According to USS rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
10. Heat Sheets. A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for one to five dollars per day or meet. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entries were sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event are listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. The heat with the fastest seed times will usually swim last.

### The Meet Starts

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers written on their hand or arm). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile. The lane and heat assignments are posted shortly before the meet starts. The swimmer should check his/her assignments for each event that they are scheduled for.
2. When a swimmer's event number is called, usually over the loudspeaker, he/she will be asked to report for the event. Swimmer's that are 8 & Under should report to the "Clerk of Course". Older swimmers should report to the end of the pool by the starting platforms. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles. Generally, girl's events are odd-numbered and

boy's events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 Freestyle"

3. A "Clerk of Course" area is usually set up for swimmers that are 8 & Under.
  - a. The people running the "Clerk of Course" will give a card to each of the swimmers that are swimming that event. This card will tell each swimmer his/her heat and lane number.
  - b. The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them to the pool in correct order.
  - c. Depending on the meet, either the people at clerk will give the card to the timers at the end of each lane or the people at the clerk will instruct the swimmers to hand their cards to the timers when it is their turn to swim. These cards are important because they tell the people running the meet who actually swam each event.
4. You can expect at least 1-12 heats for each event depending on the number of swimmers at the meet.
5. Swimmers should have their cap and goggles on before their heat is ready. The swimmer swims their race when it is time.
6. After each swim:
  - a. He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.
  - b. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
    - Positive comments or praise
    - Suggestions for improvement
7. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
  - a. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them if needed. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
  - b. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.
  - c. This is another good time to check out the restrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
  - d. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again at the "Clerk of Course" for 8 & Under swimmers.
8. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events, he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you or your swimmer check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included in a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim in a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there.

#### What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey, that is not like you. You usually

swim well." Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. Don't 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. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things.

### What to Take to the Meet

1. Most important: Swim Suit--and cap and goggles (if your swimmer uses them).
2. Baby or talcum powder--To "dust" the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.
3. Large towels and/or chamois--Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
4. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
5. Sweat suits: bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
6. Sandals, flip flops or water shoes.
7. Gym bag large enough to carry gear.
8. T-shirts: Two or three. Same reason as above.
7. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time. Something to amuse the swimmer quietly between events: books, cards, video games. (Note: bring something to do for everyone attending the meet. Swim meets start early and can last all day.)
8. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler if desired. It is better to bring nutritious snacks. Nutritious snacks such as: fresh or dried fruit, fruit or sport drinks, Hi-C, fruit juice, Gatorade, bottled water, yogurt, muffins, bread, crackers, granola bars, ready to eat dry cereals, low fat lunch meat/cheese, Jell-O cubes, fresh vegetables, sandwiches. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but the lines may be long and most sell junk food which is difficult to resist. Concession stand higher-fat fast-food snacks and junk food should be eaten in moderation during the meet.
6. A change of clothes for the trip home.
7. A sweat shirt/jacket for the trip home if it is cool weather outside.
8. A coat and gloves/mittens for the trip home if it is cold outside.
9. Record notebook to record your swimmer's times.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other parent for help or information!

Meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, parents need to make sure they dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! At most of the meets not held at the natatorium, the parents are allowed to sit with the swimmers in the blanket or camp area. Some meets have special "camping" areas for the swimmers that are not part of the pool and may be cool (especially for the wet swimmers). If you don't think that a gym floor is comfortable, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on. Non-swimmers are not allowed on the pool deck.

### Very Basic Swimming Rules

#### Starts

The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not-it does not matter), they may be taken out of the race.

#### Turns and finishes

1. Freestyle: feet or hands have to touch the wall
2. Backstroke: swimmers have to be on their back when they touch the wall. After he/she touches, he/she can then turn around, but he/she must push off on their back. At the finish a swimmer must finish on his/her back. A swimmer may not roll over and grab the wall until they have first touched it.
3. Breaststroke and Butterfly:
  - a. Swimmers have to touch with both hands at the same time.
  - b. A swimmer may not freestyle kick off the wall in either breaststroke or butterfly.
  - c. When swimming butterfly, both arms must move at the same time.

### Out of Town Meets

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer's career while advancing through the age group ranks.

1. Parents are to be responsible for arranging transportation and lodging to away meets. **DO NOT ASK YOUR SWIMMER(S) TO HANDLE THIS JOB.** Oftentimes, a certain hotel will be designated as "team headquarters."

2. Parents are encouraged to attend out-of-town meets with their swimmers and to chaperon other swimmers. These trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike. They also are a rare opportunity to participate in a special way in each swimmer's career.
3. A coach has too many responsibilities to the entire team to accept responsibility for an individual swimmer. Therefore, do not ask a coach to provide transportation.
4. Any swimmer riding in a car is responsible to the parent/driver for his/her behavior.
5. A medical release and emergency telephone number should be given to the parent/driver with whom your swimmer is riding in case emergency medical treatment is required.
6. An appropriate contribution is expected from each passenger in a car to the driver/owner to help defray gasoline and related expenses.
7. If driving, get directions and get familiar with the route before leaving. Leave early enough so that you are not rushed while driving and your swimmer is not rushed when you arrive at the meet.