

MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE

General guidelines:

To facilitate a positive experience and result at a swim meet, NASA Wildcat Aquatics offers a few guidelines:

- Check in with the coaches upon arrival.
- Be ready to enter the water at warm-ups. Time is limited.
- Know your events. (Heats and lanes will be available before the start of the meet and after warm ups are over).
- Be prompt to each event when it is called.
- Never leave a meet without checking with your coach – you may still be in a relay event after your individual events are completed

General Meet Terms:

1. Warm-up: This is the first thing that happens each meet. This is the time for your athlete to loosen up and prepare for their races that day. This will be done with their specific age group, or practice group, depending on the meet. **Warm-up times and arrival times are different and will be communicated in emails leading up to the event. It is important that you show up on time for warm ups, so plan to arrive promptly!**
2. Warm-down: Depending on the meet, there may be pool space available after races for the swimmers to stretch out following their races. This becomes more and more important as the athletes get older and develop more.
3. Positive Check-In: This is often seen as a list of each team's athletes. Your swimmer will be responsible for going to the check-in sheet and highlighting their name. Generally check-in closes 30 minutes after the start of warm-ups. **If they do not check-in they may be unable to swim.**
4. Prelims: In some meets (mainly championship meets) events will be swum prelims/finals. The prelims session is the qualifying round for the finals session. Depending on the meet there are generally A and B finals, with the potential for C finals and beyond. During prelims/finals events the athletes need to be listening for the results to see where they end up to know if they will be swimming finals, or if they need to scratch.
5. Timed Finals: This is a separate session at prelims/finals meets, and the swimmers are required to attend these sessions if they qualify. Not only can they face disqualification if they miss finals at some meets, if they qualify and don't attend, that makes it so a swimmer who just missed qualifying doesn't get the chance to swim that they may have been excited for- be a good sportsman here!
6. Scratches- If you are unable to attend a finals session, or will not be at a session you will "scratch" an event. This lets the meet staff know that you won't be there, which helps them assign lanes for all the swimmers at any given meet.

Types of meets:

Swimmers compete in events according to their age. The most common age groupings for competition are: 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15 & above. Some events are offered as “open” which means any age can swim, although usually the competitors in open events are 15 & over.

Dual Meets

Two teams compete, usually on a week night. All age group events are conducted in a single session. These are usually completed in under 3 hours (including warm-up time.) Parent volunteer timers are critical for these meets since only 2 clubs are present.

Invitational Meets- several teams compete, usually over a weekend. Both morning and afternoon sessions involving different age groups are held each day (i.e. 9-10 and 11-12 compete Saturday and Sunday mornings, 8 & under and 13 & over compete in the afternoons.) These meets run longer, with each session lasting 3-5 hours (including warm-up time.) Each club is assigned to provide timers and parents are expected to volunteer.

Prelims/Finals Meets- similar to invitational meets, except that a third “finals” session is held in the evening. Swimmers swim in the morning and afternoon sessions. Only the swimmers with the top times in each event (usually the top 8 or 16) come back that evening to swim the same event again in “finals”. (This is the format of most championship meets.) The finals session usually lasts an additional 3 hours (including warm-up time.) Again, parent timers are needed for all sessions.

Qualifying Meets- some invitational meets and all championship meets require swimmers to have achieved qualifying times to attend. Qualifying times can be used as goals to help motivate swimmers to attend practice and work on technique.

Illinois swimming and USA swimming time standards are used to set the meet standards and can be found on their respective websites: www.ilswim.org and www.usaswimming.org

For Swimmers:

The following things should be brought to every meet:

1. Team Suit (Required)- This needs to be worn during the warm-ups regardless if you have a technical suit that you plan on wearing during the meet. We all represent the team with pride!
2. Team Cap (required if you plan to wear a cap)- Again, this needs to be worn during all races- the exception is if you are not wearing a cap to swim, or you have a dome cap specifically for your races.
3. Two pairs of goggles- You never know what might go wrong with one pair, so a backup is always valuable to have. You might even help out a teammate if theirs break and you are the only one with an extra pair!
4. Two towels- With the amount of racing, and in-and-out from the pool, it's a sure thing that your towel will be soaked by the end of the meet, so a second one to keep warm is a great idea!
5. Team Warm-Up jacket (Strongly Recommended) or warm and dry clothes- Again, these meets can be close to 4 hours per session, so it's important to stay dry and warm the whole time!
6. Change of clothes for after the meet- No one wants to travel home in cold, wet clothes! If there is the option to change after the meets, take advantage of that.
7. Water/Gatorade & Healthy Snacks- With the amount of racing that goes on, your body will be losing a lot of water, and burning a lot of calories. It's important to fuel your body throughout the meet. If you have specific questions on foods/drinks to bring, don't hesitate to ask your coach for help!
8. *Optional* Cards or other fun things to share with your team! These meets can go on for a while, so why not learn a new card game and get to know your team- or other teams!
9. A great attitude! Not every race will go the way that you wanted it to, and sometimes it'll go way better! Each race you have is just practice for the next time, so take every chance to race as a fun way to see where you are during the season. Some of the best races, and biggest positive changes in technique can come during races that don't see best times!

While we are at a swim meet, it's important to remember that we are a team. Don't be embarrassed to get up and cheer for your team! The more energy and enthusiasm we have each race, the more confidence your peers may have! We also often compete for points overall as a team, so even if you don't get a best time, each point we score matters. 1 point can make the difference between 1st and 2nd at a big meet!

Before and after each race it is expected that you talk to your coaches to go over a race plan, and then receive follow up feedback on how the race went. You can't improve without knowing what to improve!

For Parents:

1. Ensure that your athlete arrives at least 15 minutes prior to their assigned warm-up time. If they miss warm-up they might not be set up to swim as well as they could have.
 - a. We also have to do what is called positive check-in. This closes fairly early in the meet, and if your swimmer is not checked in, there is no guarantee that they will be able to swim in the meet.
2. Parents are not allowed on the pool deck during the meet unless they are a timer or official. It is important for you to plan a way of communicating and meeting up with your swimmer during and after the meet. Often, the swimmers will sit with their team and coaches and the parents will be viewing from the stands. Cell phones as well as predetermined locations and times work well to ensure good communication (eg. outside the locker room after the last event or by the concession stand after your second race.) Please remind your swimmer to talk with the coach immediately after every race for feedback.
3. *During Covid - if parents are not able to spectate, a webcast will be available and sent to families by the start of the meet. Sit altogether! The team spirit starts from you. Coaches and parents are role models; if you want your child(ren) to learn how to be a good teammate, then lead by example!
4. Volunteer! We need your help to make meets a successful experience for all swimmers.
5. Wear NASA gear. If you do not have it, reach out to our apparel team, and they'll help you out!
6. Cheer for all NASA swimmers. We're a team, while the sport may seem very individual at times, we often compete for points against the other teams, so all the encouragement our athletes can get the better!
7. Respect the Officials. They are parents just like you who are volunteering their time to make the meet happen. Without them, meets cannot happen.
8. Do not coach your child! Respect the coaches and let them help your swimmers achieve their goals.
9. DO NOT COMPARE! Children are all different and they may be at different stages of their development.

Meet Results:

Typically meet results are posted to the "Meet Mobile" app. This app will allow you to favorite our team and follow along results in real time! In order to find our team on the app, you can go to the Star icon on the app, which takes you to the "Favorites" menu. Here you can search for **NASA WILDCAT AQUATICS** or **WILD - IL**, and that should follow our team, and alert you to all events that are being swum under our name!

