

A Swimmer's (and Parent's) First Meet

With everyone's first meet comes many questions ranging from "I know this is a silly question, but..." to "I'll never make heads of tails of this...!" RELAX – all of us have had the same questions.

Types of Swim Meets

Dual or Tri meets are one-day meets (lasting approximately 3-4 hours) held on occasional Friday evenings throughout the Short Course season and involve one or two other teams. There are no entry fees, as this type of meet is not a fundraiser. Dual meets are for the new swimmer to get experience in a competitive situation and for the experienced swimmer to better their personal times. These meets are team events and the coaches create a line-up with the entire team in mind. The Lakers compete in the Macomb County Swim League (MCSL) with 4-5 other teams.

Invitationals are two and three day long meets involving many swim teams from around Michigan, as well as other states and Canada. You can choose to participate in one day only, two days or all three based on your personal schedules as well as the offered events on any given day.

It is meet time, what do I do now? You already know where the meet is, what events your swimmer is entered in, and what time warm-ups begin for your child's session. It is a good idea to write your swimmer's events on their hand in ink. This reminds them what they are swimming and what their event numbers are. Refer to the meet procedure below for more details.

Should my child eat before the meet? This depends on your child. Normally, a light snack is in order an hour before warm-ups begin. Foods high in sugar should be avoided. Recommended foods include fruit or bagels. Refer to the nutrition information on the website.

Who will my swimmer compete against? Refer to time standards and meet progressions on the website.

Is my child in a relay? The relays are put together by the coaches after they know who is signed up to attend the meet. If time permits a list of the events the swimmers will be swimming in will be posted on the bulletin board at the pool and/or sent out via email. At the meet the coach will have a list of who is swimming on the relay teams. Have your swimmer check with the coach as soon as they get to the meet.

What do they mean by a "heat" and "lane"? If there are more swimmers entered in an event than number of lanes provided for competition (this is usually the case at the weekend invitationals; not always at the dual/tri meets), the swimmers are ranked in order by time from slowest to fastest, based on their "seed" time (the time they are entered with*). Then, beginning with the slower swimmers they will swim heat 1, the next group heat 2, next, then heat 3, and so on until every swimmer has had a chance to swim that event. A swimmer may win their heat, but they are competing against everyone entered in the event. At the conclusion of the event, all swim times are then ranked again from fastest to slowest to determine which place the swimmers achieved against the competition.

**For the swimmer's first time swimming each event they will either be entered with no time (NT) or their coach will make up a time for them based on their practice performance and what they feel this swimmer can accomplish. After the initial swim for each event, the swimmer will then always be entered with their best time achieved to date.*

What do the parents do while the swim meet is going on? Relax, enjoy the meet from the stands, sit with other team parents and cheer for the swimmers. The coaches have the responsibility of your swimmers for the next 4 hours! Look forward to the occasional wet hugs when they come to see you in the stands! ☺

Meet Procedure

In order to identify our swimmers, we encourage all team members to wear the Lakers Aquatic Club team swim suits and swim caps at the meets. Swimmers should arrive at the pool approximately 15 to 30 minutes **BEFORE** the stated warm-up time to provide time for check-in, locker room change, stretching, etc.

FIRST, they should locate the sign-in sheets, which are usually posted on a wall near the entrance or by the locker rooms. Each swimmer **MUST** check off their name to confirm their presence. This is a very important

process, as this check-in time period usually expires within 15 minutes after warm-up, at which time the swimmer is scratched from the meet and cannot compete. State Championship meets and dual/tri meets do not have check-ins.

NEXT, the swimmer should proceed to the “team area.” This is the area designated for the swimmers to put their belongings (blanket, swim bag, entertainment items, etc). The Lakers will have an area that we claim as our team location. This is where the swimmer should remain between events and with their teammates.

FINALLY, the swimmer should report to their coach; ready to swim warm-ups. The warm-up is done as a team. The warm-ups pools get very crowded in the lanes and a group of swimmers warming up together manage more efficiently than a latecomer fighting the waters without their teammates, who have already warmed-up.

Once the meet starts, some swim meets have a marshalling area to help organize the swimmers. This is an additional check-in prior to each swimming event. The announcer will call out the event information (i.e. “This is the first call for: Event #5, Girls 8 & Under, 25 Yard Free”, and “Please report to marshalling.”) The swimmer would report to the area designated for marshalling and sit down. The clerk will call out each swimmer’s name to assure attendance and assign them a heat and lane. This information will be placed on a small card and given to the swimmer. The swimmers are lined up and led to the pool area where they wait for their event.

Most meets do not have this procedure in place. At these meets, the heat and lane assignments are posted on a wall in the pool area after check-in has been closed. It is the swimmer’s responsibility to refer to this sheet to know which heat and lane they will be swimming in and report to the blocks accordingly. The coaching staff will aid all new swimmers with either of these procedures. While it may be overwhelming at first, once the procedure is experienced it is easy.

AFTER each event, the swimmer needs to go directly to the coach to receive feedback. This is the most beneficial for the swimmers growth and development. Also after each race, the swimmer should ask their time by checking with the timers or by looking at the board. After they receive their feedback from the race, it is critical that DEV, JR, SR swimmers “warm-down” if a warm-down pool is available. This will help prepare their muscles for the next race, and will help to prevent muscle tightening which can result in injury.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Notice the scratch rule stated in the meet information in all packets. This rule states: **any swimmer entered in an event must swim in that event unless scratched by the posted time. If a swimmer fails to swim a non-scratched event, the swimmer will be barred from their next individual event in which they are entered on that day or the next meet day, whichever is first.**

This rule also applies to a swimmer accidentally missing an event because they are not in the right place at the right time. Because of this rule, it is always best for swimmers to remain on the pool deck between events, rather than visiting in the stands with their parents. The coaching staff on duty at the meet cannot take time to look for the swimmers. If a swimmer does want to go to the stands for a congratulations hug or a little hello, they must check with their coaches first and let them know where they are going and find out how much time they have before they must return. Failure to note this rule can result in great disappointment to the swimmer.

What To Bring To A Meet

- Lakers swim cap (highly encouraged, as it helps locate our swimmers)
- Team Meet Swim Suit
- 2 pair of goggles
- 1-2 towels
- T-shirt and/or warm-up suit
- Flip-flops or Croc-type pool deck shoes
- Blanket or sleeping bag to sit on (or more towels)
- Small travel type entertainment items (i.e. paper, pens, books, MP-3 players, cards, games)
- Small cooler or lunch box for drinks and snacks* (food is available at the concession stand)