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## – How many meets to swim each season?

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Most new parents and swimmers are familiar with the summer league and school swim season schedules which are typified by a competition each week. The USS Club swimming season is different in that more emphasis is placed on solid training geared towards a major competition each quarter. While it may seem that there are less opportunities for a swimmer to improve if there are fewer meets to swim in, quite the opposite is true. Focusing on a few big meets will allow for the big drops in time providing that a consistent practice schedule is maintained.

It is important to learn how to race, and the more an athlete can race the better. Participating in competitions is a very planned part of each seasons' training schedule and is an essential measuring tool for success in the sport, but swimming from meet to meet will not provide the long term improvement an athlete desires. Often parents mistake the participation in competitions as the only way to improve and help their athlete reach their goals in swimming.

As an athlete improves and grows into new levels of training, the choice of competitions will also begin to play a role. In order to maximize the gains to be attained from every competition the selection of the type of competitions and how many to include in a season will need to be assessed with their coach.

The most important factor that plays into consideration for meet participation is how many practices an athlete attends during the season. If an athlete's practice attendance has been on and off because of illness and/or school competitions; keeping them from training at a consistent level, then adding another meet may not be advisable.

It is important to keep in mind that our coaches have a planned training cycle for the swimming season. Typically, every swimmer should hit a good 6 weeks of training or more before racing in a competition. This is why Tiger Aquatics hosts only 4 meets a year--a Fall Invite in early October ; our Christmas Invite in December; then Mardi Gras in February, and the Summer Classic in June. This allows our athletes ample time to be consistent in their training and attendance, build endurance, and learn proper technique before putting themselves in a racing situation. It also helps builds their fire to swim much faster the next time they compete and encourages drops in times. These cycles are extremely crucial for age group athletes. They need time in the water to prepare for meets and this can only be done with consistent practices.

Be sure to meet with your coach to discuss which meets you will focus on each season.