

## Swim Meet Primer

### **Long Course vs. Short Course:**

The short course season begins in September and usually runs through March or April. The long course season begins in April and runs through August. Most swimmers will take time off at the end of each of these seasons. That break will usually range from 2 to 4 weeks.

The short course pool will be either 25 yards (in US mostly) or 25 meters (US and International). The long course pool is primarily 50 meters.

Most meets are run in a SC (short course) pool during the SC season and most meets are run in a LC (long course) pool during the LC season.

### **Competition Groups:**

**Gender:** Male/Female

**Age Groups:** 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and seniors. Frequently, the 15-16, 17-18, & senior groups swim together and then are separated out for scoring and awards. Also, during the girls or boys high school season, the 13-14 through senior age groups will all swim in the senior/open group.

**Ability Levels:** Swim meets offered during a season are assigned ability levels. These levels are divided by what is called the “time standards” which are constructed and regulated by Minnesota Swimming, Inc. The ability levels are C, B, A, Championship, and Zone time standards. Beginning swimmers start in the “C” meets and then move up to the B, A, Champ, and Zone meets as their times improve. State Championship and Zone meets are where you will see some of the fastest and most experienced swimmers. Swimmers that achieve state championship times are eligible to represent Hopkins at the Minnesota State Championship Meet. Zone time swimmers earn a spot on the Minnesota state swim team and represent Minnesota at a Zone meet offered each summer

at which the top swimmers from several states compete.

### **Awards and Achievements:**

Grouping swimmers into similar ability levels, provides each swimmer with the opportunity to achieve goals and awards throughout their swimming experience. There are three types of awards swimmers may earn at each swim meet.

**Place awards:** These are awards given to the fastest swimmers in an event. Straight ribbons are given for C time events, rosette ribbons are given for B time events, and metals are given for A and higher events. The number of place awards given out for individual events at a meet is based on the number of lanes in the pool being used. (i.e. 5 lanes=1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> place) Relay awards are given out for 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> place.

**Time Standard Achievement Certificates:** These certificates are given out to every swimmer who has achieved a new B, A, or Championship time standard in an event.

**Team Trophies:** Some swim meets also calculate team scores. Each team is given points for every swimmer's place in each event. The team or teams with the highest points earn a team trophy.

### **Relays:**

When you sign up to attend a meet, you will only sign up for individual events. The coaches construct all relays based on who has entered each meet or session of a meet. Your swimmer will be notified of the relay(s) they will be swimming at each meet just after warm-ups. **Swimmers must be ON TIME for warm-ups in order to be considered for a relay spot.** At every meet, coaches are required to turn in "relay cards" listing the names and order of each swimmer in a relay to the timing or entry table. These relay cards are required to be handed in **30 minutes before each session starts.** This is one reason why **ALL** swimmers signed up for that session must be on time. If a swimmer does not show up on time or does not come to the meet at all to swim in a session that they signed up for, relays may have to be scratched from the swim meet. When a relay is scratched, LSSC loses that money spent on the relay entry and the

other swimmers do not get the opportunity to swim a relay, which is very disappointing.

### **Mark your calendars early:**

At the beginning of each season, a list of all meets that the Lake Superior Swim Club plans to attend will be posted on our website. Please mark your calendars as soon as possible so you can plan on attending these meets. Swimming is unique in that it is an individual as well as a team sport. Many of the swim meets we attend have team trophies along with the individual awards. Every swimmer entered in the meet helps the team earn points towards team trophies. **Every swimmer counts, so please come and swim for your team!!**

Meet sign up information will be posted on the home page of the website. Be sure to register for meets **by the due date listed on the entry information. Late entries are extremely problematic** for the coach doing the meet entries and will not guarantee you will be able to swim at the meet.

### **Equipment Needed:**

- Team swim suit
- LSSC swim cap
- 2 pairs of goggles
- 2 towels (one for during the meet and one for the end), warm-ups or something to wear over your wet swim suit between your events
- Water bottle
- **Healthy** snacks

**When to arrive:** The initial schedule of warm-up times for the afternoon sessions are just an estimate until the host club receives all entries for the meet from all teams attending the meet. Often by Thursday before a scheduled swim meets, the host club of a swim meet will send out information about their meet's actual time line the following weekend. Plan to arrive at the meet 10-15 minutes before your warm-ups start. Warm-ups are a very important time for each swimmer to get comfortable with a different pool as well as prepare the body for competition. During the warm-up period, coaches are

also required to hand into the meet director their finalized orders of swimmers for the relay events. Swimmers that have not arrived may need to be removed from a relay or a whole relay team may be eliminated from competition.

### **While at the Swim Meet:**

**When swimming an event:** Swimmers are assigned a heat and lane to swim in for each of the events that they sign up for. (See section on how to sign up for swim meets.) Swimmers are required to talk to their coach BEFORE and AFTER each of their races. Prior to the event, coaches will give the swimmer advice on how and when to swim. After each event coaches will provide information on how the swimmer swam that event and suggest any improvements needed.

**At the start of every event:** All swimmers and spectators need to remain quiet at the start of every race in the swim meet. Also, no flash photography is allowed at the start of every race. This is to assure that every swimmer is provided a fair start to their races.

**Between each event:** Swimmers are expected to sit on the pool deck with the swim team. Parents/spectators are not allowed on the pool deck. If a swimmer needs to leave the team area, they should first check with a coach before leaving.

**Disqualifications:** When a swimmer is disqualified (DQ), this means they did some thing in their race that was not within or against the rules of swimming set up by Minnesota Swimming, Inc. and USA swimming. Swimmers are encouraged to use the DQ as a learning experience and should not let it affect everything else they are swimming. (See the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations handbook for further information on swimming rules and regulations.)

**Parents:** The most important thing parents can provide their swimmer is unconditional support and encouragement. Swimmers need at least one person they can count on to tell them they are the greatest regardless of how they have swum at a meet.

**BE YOUR CHILD'S BEST FAN - Support your child unconditionally.**

Do not withdraw love when your child performs poorly. Your child should not have to perform to win your love!

***DO NOT BRIBE OR OFFER INCENTIVES*** - Your job is not to motivate. Leave this to the coaching staff. Bribes will distract your child from proper race concentration.

#### UNDERSTAND AND DISPLAY APPROPRIATE MEET BEHAVIOUR

- Remember your child's self-esteem and race performance is at stake. Be supportive and cheer but always be appropriate.

**REALITY TEST FOR YOUR CHILD** – If a swimmer, for example, comes out of the pool with a personal best time and a last place finish, help her understand that this is a "win". Help her keep things in their proper perspective including losses, disappointments and failures."

#### **At the end of a Swim Meet:**

**Awards:** Awards earned at a swim meet can be picked up by the swimmer at the swim meet 30 minutes after the results for their event is posted. When picking up your award, you will need to know the event number. One of the coaching staff will try to pick up any awards not already picked up by the swimmers at the end of the meet. These awards will be passed out to the swimmers the week after the swim meet has concluded.

**Times achieved:** It is a good idea, and very helpful to the coaching staff, for swimmers and parents to check the posted results at the swim meets. If you notice what looks like an error, please inform the coaching staff at the meet as soon as possible. It is much easier for a coach to fix an error in a swimmer's time at the swim meet rather than later in the week and coaches at the swim meet rarely have the opportunity to leave the pool deck to check all results. Sometimes errors happen and we greatly appreciate your help.