

How to Prepare for a Swim Meet/What to Pack

Wisdom and Advice from a Seasoned Swim Mom

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The night before a swim meet you should eat a **healthy dinner**, pack & organize your meet bag for the next day and **go to bed as early as possible**. You will feel prepared to race in the morning.

Parents should look on the Storm web page under the **Meet Information** to see if there is a **Meet Program/Heat Sheet** pdf to print, as well as a **Meet Timeline** pdf. If the Meet Program is unavailable on the Storm web page the night before the meet, it is likely going to be sold in paper format at the meet. Bring approximately \$20 cash to the meet in case of meet program/heat sheet fees. Costs vary from \$5-\$25. Storm hosted home meets are almost always available online and not sold at the meet-so print the info at home before arrival. Away meets by other host teams vary. Most programs are free to print online a day or two before the meet. Championship season meet programs are often sold in paper format at the meet. Additional information can be found in the app, "Meet Mobile." There is a nominal fee to use this app, charged by Apple or Google. See the **Storm Technology Guide** under the **Parent Resources** tab on the web page for further info on helpful swimming apps.

Bring along some **cash for concession food and/or parking** if the meet is in a downtown like location, such as the University of Minnesota. Sometimes the U of M collects cash for parking on event days. Other times they accept credit cards.

Parents should also check the **Storm web site** or use the **On Deck mobile app** to verify which events their swimmer is entered in, as well as to see if the coaches have assigned their swimmer to any relays. Parents should assist swimmers to write down their event type, event number, heat number and lane number for each event they are racing. Parents should write down all the events for the day.

Check the web site or the **ON DECK app** to see if your swimmer has been placed onto **relay teams**. Coaches assign relay teams, parents do not register swimmers for relays. When you register for a multi-day meet, notate in the meet registration notes if your swimmer will be unavailable any days of the meet. This ensures your swimmer will not be registered for relays on days your swimmer will be absent from the pool.

Swimmers are responsible to **watch the scoreboard** and keep track of when they are racing. Coaches will do their best to help younger and newer swimmers to get to their races. The more independent swimmers can be, the less chance of the swimmer missing their race. If they do miss their race, they should inform their coach and sometimes the coach can help them race in

another heat. This is not guaranteed. Swimmers should not be glued to electronic devices and should be paying attention to the meet and cheering for their teammates. Swimmers should not leave the deck without informing the Storm swim coach on deck that they are going to the locker room/restroom/concessions/leaving for the day, etc. Swimmers should visit their coach after EVERY race to receive feedback on their race.

Some parents elect to write these events on their swimmer's leg or arm with ball point pen or sharpie. Other parents elect to write the information on a piece of paper or on the printed timeline. Do what works best for your family-no specific rules, just helpful hints. The swimmer should keep the paper in their swim bag on deck at the meet. A plastic sheet protector is recommended, so it doesn't get wet and tear apart.

For example, write down: ***Event #5, 8&U girls 50 fly, Heat 7, Lane 4.***

Parents should read through the Meet Info to see what time of day their swimmer will race. Please note the **warm-up time** for each day of the meet as well as each session. Verify which session your swimmer will race in. Do not become complacent and skip reading the meet info or you may miss important info from the host team. Often times the web site meet info will specify specific warm up times and **lane assignments** for each team. Notate or print this information and arrive on the pool deck at least 15 minutes prior to your swimmer's assigned warm-up time. Daily warm-up assignments can vary, so look at all the days your swimmer is participating.

Please note that the **Meet Timeline** is simply a rough guide and not a hard and fast timeline. Event start times may vary if the meet is running ahead of schedule or behind schedule. Occasionally timing equipment malfunctions and causes a meet delay. Swimmers and parents should keep track of the event and heat numbers posted on the pool deck scoreboard, to know exactly where we are at with the day's schedule.

Parents should map out driving times to the meets and **check the weather** for potential snow or hazardous weather. Leave extra early on snow days and allow time to clear snow from your driveway, warm your vehicle, drive slowly & safely to the meet and look for parking. Dress swimmers warmly with jackets, hats and gloves. Swimmers should always aim to be on deck and suited up a minimum of fifteen minutes before their assigned warm up time.

Swim meet mornings begin VERY early. For example, families often wake at 5 am, depart their home at 6 am and arrive at the pool at 7 am for warm-up, followed by an 8 am meet start time. Make sure your family plans an early evening the night before a meet. Some meets run in two or more separate sessions, so you may have one swimmer competing in the morning session and another swimmer racing in the afternoon session. Look for this information within the Meet Information and Timeline. It can be helpful to ask veteran swim parents for advice on visiting particular pool facilities, as we tend to revisit the same facilities from year to year. Helpful hints will often be posted alongside the meet info. Swimming pool visitor bleachers tend to fill up very quickly with spectators. Arrive early to secure seating or there may not be

room for you to sit. The early bird gets the worm in the sport of swimming! It does get hot and humid in the stands, so dress in lightweight attire.

Illness-If a swimmer becomes ill before a meet day begins, please email:

stormswim@mnstorm.org to inform the coaching staff that your swimmer will not be attending the meet and specify which sessions/days the swimmer will be absent.

Safety-Only swimmers and designated volunteers are allowed on the deck at swim meets.

Parents should NOT go onto the deck. Arrange a meeting place with your child after the meet.

Parents are not allowed in the locker rooms. If you need to assist your swimmer with a swim suit, then you should utilize a bathroom stall in a bathroom facility outside of the locker room.

Your swimmer should visit you in the stands or the camping area-only after notifying their coach that they are departing the pool deck.

USA Swimming has a **Minor Athlete Abuse**

Prevention Policy (MAAP) for the benefit of the swimmers. Please adhere to these rules.

Photography is generally allowed from the stands. Only designated photographers with team permission can take photos and videos from the deck area. No photography or videos are

allowed at Storm swim practices. Please do not bring glass bottles or glass of any kind into the spectator area or onto the pool deck.

Camping-some facilities offer "camping." This means they have opened up a gym or other large

room where swimmers and families can set up camping chairs, blankets, etc. It is a place to hang out. If you bring small siblings or relatives/friends to a meet, this can be a comfortable,

quiet and climate controlled location to wait in between your swimmer's races. Check the meet info or ask veteran parents if a particular facility will offer camping. Follow host team

rules and only camp and set up chairs in designated/posted camping areas.

One Heat Seating-some host teams offer or require "one heat seating." This seating is available

to "campers" who walk into the pool area just to watch their own swimmer race and then they depart the bleachers. One heat seating tends to fill very quickly during relays. Be sure to vacate

one heat seating as soon as your swimmer concludes their race. Stadium seats should not be

used in designated one heat seating zones.

Awards-Swimmers are responsible to look for and pick up their own awards at a meet. Coaches

and host teams will not pick up and deliver awards for swimmers unless there are unusual

circumstances such as a broken label printer or they run out of awards. Swimmers 13 & over

typically do not receive awards except at championship style meets. Read the meet info to

verify who is eligible for awards and which categories will be offered. Typically, there are meet

results posted on the wall in a designated Awards area. Swimmers who are supposed to

receive an award will see a sticker with their name on it. Peel the sticker and take it to the

Awards table to receive your award. Awards are offered in various categories, so newer

swimmers can receive awards alongside faster veteran swimmers. Always check to see!

Sometimes there are certificates available for achieving a new time standard. There are also

may be heat winner awards or best time ribbons delivered to your swimmer after their race.

Other meets may offer high point awards and these are given out in a ceremony at the end of the meet. Some host teams offer a bag tag as a participation award or do not offer any awards.

Hotels-Storm often books room blocks at a slight discount for our team members for our travel meets. Check the Meet description for links and details on room blocks. Families are not required to stay at the team hotel. The room block is set up for your convenience.

Volunteering-If you are scheduled to volunteer, please verify your volunteering slot time. Sometimes adjustments need to be made to the starting and ending times for volunteering. Emails and communications will be sent to you directly to notify you of these changes. It is best to keep a flexible schedule on the days that you volunteer for meets. Storm volunteer t shirts are complimentary (one per volunteer). You can typically pick up a volunteer t shirt at our fall, winter or spring Storm home meets. Volunteers are asked to wear the designated volunteer t-shirt while volunteering for Storm. Volunteers should sign-in with our check-in desk at the front entrance lobbies of our home meets. This is critical for USA Swimming Safe Sport purposes and so that you are credited by Storm for the volunteer work you performed.

If you are volunteering on the pool deck you should wear comfortable non-slip footwear. If you are timing or officiating YOU WILL GET SPLASHED. Dress for the tropics when you are working on the pool deck. Volunteers tend to get very warm. Some volunteers like to wear shorts or capris or quick dry fabric pants.

What to Pack in the Swim Meet Bag

Remember the RULE of TWO when it comes to packing a bag for a swim meet.

TWO swimsuits, TWO pairs of Goggles, TWO swim caps and TWO or more towels.

Team Suit- The recommended Storm racing swim suit is a SOLID BLACK racing swim suit of your choice. We have some swimsuits featured for sale on our web site under GEAR & APPAREL. Storm feels that swimmers should select the style and price point that is comfortable to them. Racing suits should have a snug fit and are typically at least one size smaller than practice suits. When in doubt, stop at a full-service swim shop for a professional fitting.

Practice Suit- Storm recommends a practice suit with a high quantity of polyester. Attending three or more swim practices per week is quite damaging to swim suits and they will wear out quickly. Some swimmers will warm up with a practice suit over a more expensive racing suit to protect it from snags.

Storm Swim Cap-Storm will provide swimmers with one complimentary black latex Storm logo cap. A Storm Swim Cap is a required item for swimmers on our team to wear at meets. At swim practice, swimmers may wear a swim cap with a fun print of their choice. Storm silicone logo

caps and Storm personalized silicone logo caps are offered as a special online order only one to two times per year. Other Storm logo caps are generally available from our Storm volunteer apparel rep at our fall and winter home meet.

Goggles-Storm recommends purchasing competitive style racing goggles from a swim shop such as the one on our web page or from a professional sporting goods store. Goggles found at regular retailers are typically manufactured for recreation and will not be secure for swim practice and competitions.

Bungee Cords-A popular item with almost all of our swimmers. These are used to replace the goggle straps that are sold with your racing goggles. A bungee cord set-up allows swimmers to make quick and easy goggle adjustments. Tighten for diving off the blocks, loosen a bit for practice. Coaches are quite busy at practices and meets and don't have time to make goggle adjustments for swimmers. Bungee cords help younger swimmers to be independent with their goggles.

Towels-Swimmers should bring a minimum of two towels. Some swimmers like to bring one towel for every event they are swimming. A modern choice is a microfiber towel. These towels dry very quickly, are light and take up minimal packing space in a swim bag. Remember to label your towel tag with your swimmer's full name and team.

Water/Sports drink-Swimmers train and race hard and must stay hydrated. Bring at least two bottles of water or a preferred sport drink with electrolytes. It is not recommended to drink soda or juice, even if it is watered down. Remember, NO GLASS WATERBOTTLES or BOTTLES of any sort are allowed on the deck or in the spectator area. Thank you.

Food/Snacks-Pack a small lunch size cooler with healthy snacks & food for the meet. Concessions are available at many meets, but not all. Our large home meets will offer concessions, but our IntraSquad meets will not. Please follow facility guidelines and host team guidelines on food. Some facilities do not allow food on the pool deck.

Shoes- Deck footwear is recommended. Flip flops, Soccer slide shoes and Crocs are all popular choices. Remember not to run on the deck, it gets very slippery.

Team T-Shirt- Team shirts are sold at our fall and winter Storm home meets as well as via our web site under "Gear and Apparel." Championship t-shirt orders are collected twice per year for special t-shirts commemorating each championship season. Watch for announcements on these and sign up via our web site. Championship season shirts are for swimmers & their supporters participating in our season ending meets. MAC, MRC, State, Sectionals and Nationals.

Sweatshirt/Robe/Swim Parka/Warm-ups-Bring clothing items onto the deck to keep warm between your races. It may be hot in the viewing area for parents, but it is often cold on the deck for wet swimmers. This is especially important at outdoor meets in the mornings. Team

apparel is available on our web page and at our home meets and looks great, but is not required by Storm. Questions on Storm apparel can be emailed to: apparel@mnstorm.org

IF YOU ARE ASTHMATIC: Bring your inhaler. This is an important tool that you own. Ensure your swimmer's medical information is up to date with your registration. Make sure your coaches know that you have an inhaler. You never know what might be a trigger.

Remember to bring socks, shoes, coats, hat/gloves, hair turban & undergarments to wear AFTER the meet. Store them in a plastic bag to prevent them from getting wet in your swim bag on the deck. It is often chilly outside. Cover up wet hair when you go out.

NICE to HAVES-

Playing cards, books, magazines, music (please NO VIDEO GAMES-these games have the ability to cause the swimmer to zone out and many swimmers have missed their event due to video games). Don't bring anything of great value to the meet. Keep your items zipped up in your swim bag and do not leave swim bags unattended in the locker rooms at practice or swim meets. Pilfering does take place.

Optional: Sharpie or pen to write events on your leg or arm.

*Important- Take a FULL INVENTORY of your swimmer's bag before departing a meet. Many swimmers misplace or forget expensive items at meets. Oftentimes those missing items will be gone forever.