

## **THE FIRST SWIM MEET**

*Going to your first swim meet is a little intimidating. What do you bring? Where do you go? What do you do when you get there? Help!*

**Getting Ready to Go:** It may be stating the obvious, but **be sure your child has his or her swimsuit!** Yes, it's happened: there you are, ready to go and the suit is nowhere to be found. You will also need goggles, a CNS swim cap and a towel. Something warm to put on between swims is a good idea as well. You may want to bring something to sit on (sleeping bag, blanket) and snacks and drinks in a small cooler. Bring nutritious stuff that holds up - granola bars, bananas, peanut butter. A checklist is attached - use it as a guide.

*Okay - car packed? Got the suit? Directions to the pool? Sharpie? Leave in plenty of time - you want to arrive at least 15-20 minutes before scheduled warm-ups.*

**When You Get There:** Once you get to the pool, look for a familiar face or two - most of the CNS parents will sit together (please do, we like it when our crowd is loud). Join them - it's more fun and if you're at one of your first meets, an "old hand" can help you. Have your child check in with the coach - suit on, cap and goggles with them. Our coaches ask that the kids be behind the blocks about 10 minutes before warm up begins. Now, you let them warm up and take a look around. Find a place to sit and settle in.

**When Do I Swim?** You may want to get a **heat sheet**. This is a listing of events, heats and lanes. Basically, it tells you when and where your swimmer will be swimming and against whom. Here is a sample heat:

#23 Women 10 and Under 200 Freestyle			
Heat 8 of 11 Finals			
Lane	Name	Age	Team
1	Stamps, Marilise	10	CSC-MV
2	Daniels, Ashley	10	RSCA-OZ
3	Tackett, Kelley	9	JCAY-MV
4	Jones, Ariel	10	CPYM-MV
5	Heutel, Maddie	10	RSCA-OZ
6	Hulshof, Bentley	9	TST-MV
7	Harmon, Tori	10	SPA-MV
8	Lucken, Katherin e	9	RSCA-OZ

**What does this tell you?** In Event #23 - the Women's 10U 200 Free, there are 11 heats. In Heat 8, Lane 1 will be Marilise Stamps from CSC, Lane 2, Ashley Daniels from RSCA, etc. The Seed Time is what the fastest time they have swum the event in the past. **NT** means "No Time" - it's the first time they are swimming an event. Generally, meets are swum slowest to fastest. Look through the heat sheet and highlight your swimmer's name - it makes it easier to find. Once your child is done warming up, they will return to you and you can tell them when and where they will be swimming. Usually, you write it on their arm with your Sharpie in a little table like this:

E-H-L (Event, Heat, Lane)  
5-3-6 50 Free  
13-4-4 50 Breast  
21-5-3 100 IM

This swimmer is in Event #5, Heat 3, Lane 6 (the 50 Free), Event #13, Heat 4, Lane 4 (50 Breast) and Event #21, Heat 5, Lane 3 (100 IM).

**The Races:** Once the meet begins, there will be announcements about what event should report to the blocks. When an event your swimmer is participating in is called, your child should go behind the lane he or she will swim in, ready to go - cap on, goggles ready, towel if they want it. Some meets even have bullpen areas - a waiting area - especially for younger swimmers. If so, please be sure to use it. If not, you will probably want to help get your child to the blocks - but you can't stay back there. Send them over with a hug and "good luck." Get your swimmer over there with time to spare - remember - swim meets need to keep moving - they won't stop the meet to wait for someone. Now - watch them go! Take pictures - but don't use a flash or wait until they are in the water (no flash at the start). Times are listed on the scoreboard, but (especially for younger swimmers) may not be official - they will be posted somewhere around the pool area when they are. Some meets can be found on the Meet Mobile App.

**Afterwards:** When your swimmer is done, it may be a bit before you can see them. They need to get out of the pool and **report to the coach**. He or she will talk to your child about their swim - what was good, what they might want to change. If something was done incorrectly, the swimmer may get a **DQ** (disqualification). The referee who saw the problem (wrong turn, kick, etc.) will talk to the child about it, as will the coach. A DQ is nothing to worry about - they happen all the time - even in the Olympics! They may be sent to warm down. Then, after all that, they'll come see you. Say "good swim!" They did their best!

**Care and Feeding of Swimmers:** Between events, you can give your swimmer a snack - something light - and a drink. They should keep warm between events by putting on a shirt, sweatshirt, pants - whatever they feel comfortable in. Sometimes, it's a wait between swims, so you may want to have something for them to do - Gameboy, a book, cards - just be sure they don't get so caught up they miss their swims!

There's a lot more to swimming and the CNS website has a lot of great information. This is just to help you get through that first day. Remember - we've all been there. Many parents wear their CNS shirts to meets. If you have a question, look for that shirt and ask. We'll be happy to help!

**Checklist:**

**In swimmer's bag:**

- At least one Suit
- 2 pairs of Goggles
- CNS swim cap
- 2 Towels
- Separate set of clothes to put on between events, including socks
- Deck shoes (flip flops, crocs)

**Parents:**

- Directions to pool
- Sharpie (to write event information on swimmer)
- Highlighter (highlight swimmer's name in heat sheet)
- Snacks - suggestions - granola bars, bananas, cereal, peanut butter and crackers
- Drinks - water, sports drinks
- Dry clothes for afterwards

**May Want:**

- Entertainment (Gameboy, cards, book)
- Camera
- Entry list (on CNS website)

**Sound like a pro!**

*Heat sheet* - The swimming program that lists events, order, swimmers and times.

*Psych sheet* - A heat sheet but instead of breaking the swimmers into heats, it only lists the entrants in an event from fastest to slowest.

*Blocks* - The diving platforms behind each lane. Swimmers should go to their lanes/blocks before each swim.

*Crash area* - An area set aside for swimmers and their families to put their things, sit, etc. Usually away from the pool.

*A (AA, AAA, etc.) times* - National time standards set by USA Swimming. Based on age and event. The lowest is a B, moving to BB, A, AA, AAA and AAAA. You can download them at the SPA website.

**Remember: The most important thing for your swimmer is to HAVE FUN!**