

# **SWIM MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE**

## **CONGRATULATIONS!**

Your swimmer is ready for their first competitive swim meet. A swim meet is a fun and exciting time for you and your children. It's exciting to see all their hard work and effort pay off during the meets. As a parent, the health and safety of your child is of utmost importance. This includes correct sleep, nutrition, preparation, communication, rules, support and of course, having fun!

### **Before the Meet:**

Your child needs a good night's sleep before a meet! You may be getting up earlier than normal and remember to give them a nutritious breakfast before they get to the pool.

### **Getting to the Swim Meet:**

Getting your children to the meet on time is important. Swimmers need to be on deck 15 minutes before warm up at every meet. They need plenty of time for warm-up swims, getting acclimated with the set up of the pool including the locker room, team meeting area, staging area, where parents will be, pool, bathroom, and snack bar etc. Children should stay with their team on deck. Sitting with friends will help them through their swim meets.

### **Swim Meet Attire**

We ask that all Tsunami swimmers wear their red or navy Tsunami swim cap at swim meets. Tsunami's team swimsuit is a navy blue Speedo available at Swim Things. This is the preferred suit to wear to all meets. Our preference is also to not wear an expensive tech suit until you are in the Senior or Elite program. A Speedo Aquablade, however, is an acceptable championship suit to wear for all swimmers and can be found at Swim Things. We ask all parents wear Tsunami apparel or colors too so we will be unified in our efforts.

Before a swim meet, an event page is created on our team website that will have the meet information regarding the facility and warmup times. You can find this by clicking on the name of the meet (not “Attend This Event”). An e-mail will be sent the week of the meet with other important information, i.e. what shirts to wear each day, what to bring, etc.

**In your Swimmers bag:** (Packing the night before saves time in the AM)

- Suit, goggles, bathing cap
- A few towels to keep swimmers dry and warm for each race they will be in (they also have warm up and cool down swims)
- It is a good idea to label your things.  
Parents all shop at the same stores so chances are someone else may have the same stuff.
- Flip Flops or sandals
- Sweat suit or sweat shirt to stay warm when not swimming.
- Water Bottle (can usually be purchased at concession if forgotten or finished)
- Healthy Snacks such as fruit, granola bars, nuts, etc (stay away from salty or greasy snacks.)
- Activities: cards, game books, novels, etc.
- Pen / sharpie marker
- Folding chair/Stadium blanket to sit on/to keep warm

**KEEP YOUR CHILDREN WITH TSUNAMI ON DECK AND HAVE A GOOD SEAT IN THE STANDS!**

Your swimmer needs to stay with Tsunami on deck at some meets like Championship meets. Parents are to stay in the bleachers or in designated crash area (gym). Parents are not allowed on the deck. Coaches will be looking for swimmers for warm-ups and to line them up for events, often 3 or more events before they will be swimming, depending on # of heats. If your child stays with the team you will know where they are, and you will see them with their team or in line for their events behind the blocks.

## **In the Parent Bag:**

Parents sit for a long time, so keep this in mind and make the best use of your idle time. You will have your kids in warm-up for 1 hour before, and usually 30+ minutes between and after events.

- Reading material, hand held games, puzzle books, etc.
- The pool area gets hot, so dress in layers if you can. The crash areas are usually very cool.
- Drink & snack. There are usually plenty of food & drink available at the concession bar from the host team.
- Pen & highlighter for the program/heat sheet. It is a good idea to sit with other Tsunami parents to help guide you through the day. You may have a few more questions about seeding, time placement, etc. as the meet is in progress.
- Let your swimmer(s) know where you are sitting so they can find you.

## **RULES OF THE POOL & POOL DECK:**

**The pool deck is OFF LIMITS to parents & spectators**

If there is anything you need your swimmer to know, you will have to contact a Tsunami coach to relay the information. Time permitting; swimmers can meet their parents in the bleachers at the pool facilities. Swim meets are sanctioned by Missouri Valley Swimming and follow USA Swimming Rules. There are 'DECK MARSHALLS' (POOL POLICE) who ensure ONLY authorized people have access to the pool deck. The pool may be roped off, and only coaches, officials, timers and swimmers are allowed in this area.

Don't worry about your swimmer having a TOWEL when they finish. Usually they take their towels with them when lining up, and will have their towel with them when they get out of the water. Their coaches will meet with them after their heat to review their swim, stroke, performance, etc.

## **KNOW THE EVENTS YOUR SWIMMERS ARE IN!**

It is a good idea to bring the list of events that you used to sign your children up for the meet. It will help you find their events in the program. Swimmers will need to know the following: **Event Number** and **Event Name**.

Swimmers will find out from their coach or the program which heat they are in. When/if you buy a program, it will help you better identify:

- the Where - which HEAT and Lane they will be swimming in
- the When - often the program will give an approximate start time for every heat

Your children will ALSO need to know the sequence they are swimming in (the **E**vent number, **H**eat, **L**ane, Event Name). You can find the list of events your swimmers are in on the team website. Go to the meet schedule, click on “Attend This Event” much like you did when you signed up. From there it will give you the list of events and their event numbers.

### **Why Do You Need a Sharpie?**

The swim coaches will help the swimmers write the following: *E / H / L /*

- E=Event#
- H = The Heat they will be swimming in (series of 6 or 8 swimmers based on NT (No Time) & their age to the fastest swim time.)
- L = The Lane they will be swimming in.
- Event Name = important for your children to have so they don't get mixed up on what event they are swimming, and if it is a Relay, they should know what position they will swim for their relay.

**Team Website** - Our team website has valuable information and links on each event page or throughout the site, including:

- Time Standards by age group (Under “Events & Records” – “Time Standards”)
- Missouri Valley & USA Swimming links
- New Parent Page (Under “Parent Resources”)
- Meet Event Pages - Meet information, sign ups, and results (“Events & Records”)

Take time to familiarize yourself with these links and the site as your swimmer advances and takes more interest in swimming.

## **WHAT DOES "DQ" MEAN?** (No, we're not talking about Dairy Queen...)

Meets are officiated by USA Swimming Officials. It is common for swimmers to get a DQ (Disqualified). The Official and their coach will talk to the swimmer after a DQ to let them know what they did wrong so that they can correct it. Common mistakes are if they don't do the appropriate stroke approach the wall, flip turn, etc.

If your child gets disqualified, more importantly, they swam, they did a great job, they finished and there is always another meet to try again. Don't worry about a DQ, even the best swimmers DQ.

## **The Score Board & Announcements**

Each scoreboard can be a bit different, but should have the EVENT and HEAT listed. In some cases the scoreboard may not work, so it's important that you and your swimmer listen to announcements so they know when to line up. Swimmers should be listening to the events, and learn to line up, or ask coaches when they should be lining up for their event.

If your child misses an event, have the swimmer see a referee or official or coach immediately! Often times they can makeup the swim in another heat or event if there is space. Nothing is guaranteed, however, and if they do miss an event, they can always swim the event at another swim meet, and should focus on their next swim.

If your child misses an event at a championship meet it is missed! There is nothing that can be done to have them 'squeeze in'. The events are all scheduled to flow to complete the meet on time.

## **Cheer on your children -**

Record their time in the heat sheet! This is what parents do best – be supportive of your swimmer! Everyone wins in swimming. It's all about improving PERSONAL swim times and technique; not winning every 'heat,' but improving your time and stroke from meet to meet or learning to grow or learn a new skill. Do not compare your swimmer to another swimmer. Tell your swimmer "I LOVE TO WATCH YOU SWIM!" after each race.

## **Why Should I Buy A Heat Sheet?**

Heat sheets are for sale at every meet. The heat sheet has events, heats, and previous times your swimmer has swam. If it is a long meet, you will know how long a wait there is between events and what time you should be back in the pool area to see your child swim. You will also be able to see when other Tsunami swimmers are swimming to cheer them on too!

## **When is it OK to take your swimmer home?**

No, you and your swimmer don't need to stay for the entire meet. After your child has finished swimming their **individual and relay** events and they have finished their cool-down, **and** you have told the coach you are taking them home, they are free to leave. **Always check with a coach to make sure you are not in a relay before you leave early.**

Please make sure your child cleans up after themselves and looks around to see if they have everything they brought. If they see something that belongs to another swimmer, let someone know that you are taking it, and try to make contact with that swimmer (coach, etc).

## **Relays!**

Swimmers are not always listed by name in the heat sheet for relays. Please check with a coach to determine if your swimmer is in a relay, especially if you are planning to leave before a session ends. Every swimmer counts in relays and if all are not present they cannot swim. Check the meet information or with the coach before the meet to see if there are relays.

## **Posted Results...**

After all heats are completed for an event, the results are posted outside the pool area. If the timing system fails, or there are problems with the meet software, the results may be delayed, as the times need to be entered manually. If your child 'places' they may receive a ribbon or medal, which will be handed out at practice the week after the meet. Some awards may be ready at the conclusion of the meet.