



# NEW PARENT GUIDE

## SARPY COUNTY SWIM CLUB

[www.sarpycountyswimclub.com](http://www.sarpycountyswimclub.com)

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## Preface

While this is by no means the all-inclusive guide to swimming, it will most definitely help you to understand some of the basics that your fellow seasoned parents sitting next to you in the stands may already know. We have tried to compile as much information as possible within the guide to help answer any of your questions that may come up randomly during the day. However, you will undoubtedly have a question that can't be answered with this. This guide will provide you with information about the sport of swimming, team specific information can be found in the team handbook on the team website.

## What is USA Swimming?

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States. Membership is comprised of swimmers of every age and ability, all the way up to the Olympic Team, as well as coaches, officials, and volunteers. USA Swimming is governed by a board of directors and full-time staff in Colorado Springs. As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and

procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information, and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

Website: [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

#### How Is USA Swimming Organized?

International - The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through United States Aquatic 5 Sports (USAS), made up of the four aquatic sports – swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

National - USA Swimming is a National Governing Body (NGB) of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and has voting representation in the USOC House of Delegates.

Zone - We are divided into four separate zones – central, eastern, southern, and western. Each zone elects two representatives to the national Board of Directors. *SCSC is in the central zone.*

Local - Within the United States, there are fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs). Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws under which it operates. A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of the LSC. *SCSC is a part of the Midwestern Swimming LSC (MWS).*

Midwestern Swimming: [www.mwswim.org](http://www.mwswim.org)

## Swimming Terms/Glossary

Available on the team website under 'Parent Resources'.

## Strokes

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. The combination of all four strokes is called individual medley.

In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is freestyle, sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the surface of the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick.

Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

The breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion like the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish.

The individual medley, commonly referred to as the IM, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

## Disqualification/Illegal Strokes (DQ)

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules that is observed by an official, a disqualification (DQ) will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. A disqualification may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

DQs are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

**Freestyle:** Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.

**Backstroke:** Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the stomach before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.

**Breaststroke:** An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly - except for one during the pullout), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

Butterfly: Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

## What Equipment Does My Swimmer Need?

Below are suggested items that will help kickstart your career in swimming:

- Swimsuits
  - We recommend starting with 2-3 suits for your swimmer. These suits can be worn at practice and at meets. SCSC encourages all swimmers to wear a black suit while at swim meets
    - One piece suit for girls
    - Jammers or briefs for boys
      - Per USA Swimming competition policy, please ensure jammers do not go below the kneecaps or above the navel; swimmers may be disqualified for this
  - We have a team store setup at [SwimOutlet.com](http://SwimOutlet.com). On the team store you can find black meet swimsuits that have the SCSC logo printed on them. Swimsuits can be purchased from anywhere. Checkout these [tips](#) on finding the right size.
- Goggles
  - We recommend buying at least 2 sets of goggles for your swimmer, as accidents happen, and they can break at any time.
    - During the summer long course months, many meets are held at outdoor pools, and we suggest purchasing 'mirrored goggles'. These are like sunglasses but in goggle form so your swimmer can see where they are.
  - Every swimmer has a preferred set of goggles, below are some popular models you may want to try:
    - Speedo Vanquisher 2.0, Michael Phelps K180, Aegend Anti-Fog Swim Goggles
  - Goggles will fog up when swimming/stopping, and become an annoyance to swimmers
    - Checkout this [antifog spray](#) that may help your swimmer
  - [Bungee Straps](#): We recommend purchasing 'Bungee Straps' for your swimmer's goggles. These straps replace the standard goggle straps and allow the swimmer to put their goggles on/adjust them easier.
  -
- Swim Cap
  - There are two types of swim caps: Latex and Silicone. Latex caps are thinner than silicone and typically cheaper to purchase, while silicone are thicker and more expensive. Every swimmer will have their own preference as to which they like better.
  - We recommend having 2+ swim caps, as they can rip easily

- Younger swimmers will need help, here is a [video](#) on how to put on a swim cap
  - SCSC has latex and silicone team caps available for purchase through coaches
- Towels
  - We recommend 2-3 towels to start off and add more as needed. Your swimmer will only need 1 towel at practice, but it is recommended you bring multiple to swim meets as they get used often and will be soaked by the end of the session.
- Backpack
  - Many swimmers will have [swimming-specific bags](#) that can easily store all their equipment and are water-resistant.

## Short Course vs Long Course

There are two types of swim courses that swimmers will participate in. The first is short course, this is 25 yards and is swam from August – March. For example, the PLHS pool is a short course yard pool that can be converted to meters by moving the bulkhead. The second type is long course, this is also known as an ‘Olympic Size Pool’ which is 50 meters in length. Long course is swam from April – July.

## Types of Swim Meets/Time Standards

The Midwestern Swimming LSC establishes short course and long course Qualifying Time Standards. SCSC swimmers who meet these time standards are expected to participate in the MWS Championship Meet. Qualifying times must have been swum within 365 days prior to the starting date of the meet. MWS Qualifying times may be found on the team website.

USA Swimming has separate competition by age, sex, and ability. For each age group, it has also established standard times to help promote competition among swimmers with similar abilities. These standards are known as National Age Group Motivational Times. Out-of-state swim meets and special meets may require swimmers to meet a specified minimum time standard to be entered. These requirements will be specified on the meet flyer. Questions about qualifying times for a specific meet should be directed to the coaching staff or the Team Administrator.

- Intrasquad Meet- only SCSC swimmers
- Dual Meet- Two teams competing against each other
- Invitational- Multiple teams, some will have high point awards and prelims/finals; these meets run much longer than Intrasquad or dual meets
- Qualifying Time Meets- Some meets have minimum and maximum qualifying times, and the swimmer must have those times to participate
  - Swim meets are often categorized by the time standards required to compete in the meet. The time standards are usually referred to like this, from fastest to slowest...
    - AAAA, AAA, AA, A, BB, B
    - To view these time standards, visit the Times & Records Page on the team website

- Most of our local meets are categorized as B+ or B- meets. A "B+" meet means that a swimmer must have achieved at least a B time in an event to enter that meet. This type of meet might also be called a "B minimum" meet. A "B-" meet means that a swimmer's best time in an event must be slower than the B time standard to enter that meet. This type of meet might also be called a "B maximum" meet.
    - You might see meets categorized as BB+ or BB-, A+, etc. It works the same way as the B+ or B- meets, just using a different time standard.
  - D2s/Championship Challenge: These meets have a maximum time requirement (cannot have a championship cut in that event) and is the last chance meet for swimmers to qualify for the championship meet
  - D1s/Championships: Swimmers must have a qualifying time or must be invited to swim on a relay
  - All Stars/Zones- USA Swimming "AAA" motivational time
  - Sectionals/Jr. Nats/Nationals- USA Swimming meet qualifying time
- Timed Finals, Prelims/Finals Meets
    - Timed Finals: Timed finals is the typical format for most swim meets, and the 12 & Under Sessions of the MWS Championship Meet. Timed finals mean your swimmer will only swim once, and that is their final time.
    - Prelims/Finals: All swimmers who are entered in a particular event will swim that event during prelims (typically in the morning) and of those swimmers typically the top 8 or 16 top times from the prelim session will advance to the final's session (typically in the evening) where they will swim the same event again to determine their final place. The 13 & Over sessions of the MWS Championship meet and national level meets are typically held in prelim/finals formats.

## Swim Meets 101

### Meet Schedule

- Generally, a schedule will be posted at the beginning of the season with a list of meets that our team will be attending. Additional meets may be added throughout the season and will be posted/mailed when added.

### Signing Up for Swim Meets

- You will need to sign your swimmer up ahead of time to enter a swim meet. Parents will receive an email notifying of entry period start and close dates. View the team website for instructions on how to sign up.

### When to Arrive

- Check the warm-up time listed on the meet event page as well as in the pre-meet email and arrive at least 15 minutes prior to give your athlete(s) the opportunity to prepare for warm-ups and find their coach.

## Crash Room

- At most meets, there will be a crash room for swimmers and their families. We encourage our families and swimmers to sit in the same area, whether it is in a gym or at an outdoor pool.
  - This helps our swimmers get to know each other better and allows parents a time to further connect.
  - Parents are also able to help get their swimmers to their race on time and helps coaches find our team in one area
  - Please make sure to pick up after yourself when you leave for the day

## What to Bring

### Parent/Athlete Supplies

- Cash- Admission/meet programs and concessions
- Blankets- for the floor in the crash area
- Folding/Camping Chairs- most crash areas do not have provided seating
- Entertainment: Cards/Books/Games- there is usually down time between events
- Food & Drinks: Snacks, Fruit, Veggies, Sport Drinks, Water, etc.- Most venues will have concessions and you are welcome to purchase from them; however, we encourage our swimmers to bring healthy snacks, sports drinks, and water to stay fueled up in between races
- Sharpies, Pens, Highlighters, Clipboard- To highlight meet programs and mark your swimmer
- Bleacher seat (if desired)
- (Outdoor Meets) Sunscreen, bug spray, etc.
  - Note: Pop-Up tents- SCSC has multiple tents for our team area at outdoor meets, parents can bring an additional tent if they would like
    - Swimmers have priority seating under tents in the team area
    - At times we may need parents help setting up/taking down tents

### Athlete Supplies for Swim Meets

- Swimsuit (x2 a backup is a must have)
  - Swimmers should wear a black suit or black team suit
- Goggles (x2, a backup is a must have)
- Swim Cap (x2)
  - Swimmers should wear a SCSC swim cap
- Towels (x2-3)
- Sweats/parka to keep warm between events and after warm-ups

## Events

- Meet programs (heat sheets) can be purchased upon arrival; these heat sheets will include your swimmer's event, heat and lane assignment. Programs/admission will typically cost between \$5-10, sometimes more, sometimes less
  - SCSC-MW is the team's name listed in the meet program

- Highlight your athlete's events in the meet program to help keep track of when your swimmer is swimming
- Some venues will have an announcer/video system in the crash room to assist with getting athletes to their events on time. Not all meets have this, so be sure your swimmer is paying attention to when their next event is. It is the swimmer's responsibility to talk to their coach and be behind the blocks for their race
- Lots of athletes keep track of their events on their arms:

Event #	Heat #	Lane #	Stroke
1	2	3	Fly
13	4	1	Free



## Relays

- SCSC typically only participates in relays at championship meets
- Coaches will form relay teams before the meet and swimmers/parents will be notified ahead of time
- If age group numbers allow, we will add alternate spots to relays
  - Alternates may be asked to swim if any of the first four athletes cannot attend
- The medley relay order differs from the individual medley: Back, Breast, Fly, Free

## Awards

- Some meets (including championship meets) will present awards to swimmers (1-3, 1-8, 1-16)
  - Coaches will notify swimmers if they should report to the awards area
- Some meets will also present high point and team awards at the end of the meet
  - Coaches will notify swimmers if they should report to the awards area
- Some meets will not present awards but rather will distribute awards/ribbons at the end of the meet to coaches. Coaches will hand out awards during the meet or at practice the following week

## Meet Mobile App

- App available on iOS App Store and Android Play Store
- Most meets will post results online through the app, this is a great way to see your swimmers progress and ranking throughout the meet
  - Not all meets will have this, and some may post results immediately, while others take a while to upload

- Yearly and monthly subscription available

## Meet Etiquette & Tips for Parents

Below are some tips on how to navigate your first swim meet:

- Sit with the team! Whether this is in the crash room, tent or in the bleachers we are all here to support our athletes.
- Keeping all your swimmer comments positive. The parents of that struggling swimmer could be sitting behind you, and they will remember your comments...forever.
- Cheer loud! Whether it's for your own swimmer or a teammate, swimmers appreciate and will feed off parent support from the stands.
  - Swimming is a sport of tenths and hundredths of seconds. If you are talking too loud, standing in the wrong place on the deck, clapping or using flash photography you could distract the swimmers and be responsible for a slow start or a disqualified swimmer.
- No flash photography, especially at the start of a race
  - The starting system box contains a strobe light for swimmers, flash photography can cause a false start and delay the meet
- Parents cannot be on the pool deck
  - Due to USA Swimming policy and limited deck space, parents are not permitted on the pool deck unless they are volunteering in an official capacity. Want the best view in the pool? Visit the team website to learn how to become a certified meet official!
- Most indoor pools are very hot and humid in the bleachers, dress in layers that can be removed as needed
- Volunteering when the call goes out. If timing for two to four hours is too long, you can also find another parent (or two) to split up the time.