



Everything you need to know for your 1st swim meet!

First of all, *relax!* Swim meets are a fun learning experience. Getting nervous is normal, but don't let this ruin the meet. You are probably nervous because you don't know what to expect. After you participate in one meet, it gets much easier and you won't be so nervous.

Entering the meet - As a general rule, entries will be due about two weeks before the meet. Read the meet sheet carefully the first time you enter a meet. Most of the information is the same for every meet, so you don't need to thoroughly read the meet sheet every time. Soon you'll be a pro at finding the important information: location, date, and start times.

You can get entry cards from your coach or at our website www.northcountyaquatics.org. If you have any questions, ask your coach as soon as possible, so your entries won't be delayed.

Arriving at the meet. You should be at the meet at least 15 minutes before the listed warm up time. Be there on time or early to give yourself plenty of time for a good warm up. Look for the North County Aquatics area and swimmers wearing NCA swim caps, dragon hats, etc. You should drop your stuff off at the team tent area and immediately go to check-in.

Here are the things you need to do before your 1st event:

1. Check in at the meet administration table.
3. Set up stuff for yourself and the Club.
4. Warm-up as instructed by your coach.

Before every event:

1. Get your heat and lane from the Event Board.
2. Check in with your coach prior to each event.

What do my parent(s) do at the meet? As soon as you arrive, your parent(s) must sign up for a time slot on the NCA white board in the NCA tent. **All parents must help time during the meet.** NCA is assigned a number of timing chairs by the host of the meet and the number of chairs depends solely on the number of entries we have in the meet. This means that the parent may need to time even if the swimmer is finished for the day.

Why do I have to check in? You said you were coming when you entered the meet two weeks ago, but at the beginning of every meet day you must let the officials know that you are there. Sometimes things come up and you may not be able to stay the whole day, or maybe you and your coach have decided that you're not ready to swim every event you entered, so you don't want to check in for those events.

How do I check in? Go to the check in (meet administration) tables. The tables are divided for girls and boys, and often by age group. Get in the right line. When you get to the front of the line, tell the administrator your name. When they find your name, they (or you) will circle or highlight the event numbers you are going to swim. Don't circle anything that you're not going to swim. Make sure all the circled events are correct, and then initial the paper right by your name. It's a good idea to have your meet sheet with you when you check in so you can see what the event numbers mean. It is a good idea (especially for younger swimmers) to write the event numbers in waterproof marker on your wrist – most admin tables have markers there for that purpose.

*Don't scratch (remove your entry for an event) unless you and your coach have talked about it first.

After you check in, it's time to talk to your coach and get in for warm-up. The first thing your coach will ask you is: "Did you check in?" Be ready to say, "Yes!"

Checking your event postings. As the meet goes on, the events are seeded with everyone checked in being assigned a heat and lane. You need to check the postings to see where and when you are supposed to swim. To locate the postings, you need to find the Event Board. Ask a coach or go with other swimmers the first time. Find your name and go across to your heat and lane. Go directly to your coach and tell him/her your heat and lane.

Your Events. Watch the postings on the Event Board to make sure you are on time at the starting blocks for your event(s). Use the bathroom well in advance of your event(s) since events can go by very quickly if only a few people are signed up for the event. If you have signed in for an event and don't show up at the event, you will not be permitted to swim at your next event.

After you swim a race. When you've finished racing you need to do three things, and the order depends on the weather. ABOVE ALL, STAY WARM!

1. Always warm down after you swim. Usually you warm down until your heart rate returns to normal and you're not breathing hard. Sometimes your coach tells you exactly how much warm down to do.
2. Talk to your coach. Your coach has things to tell you about your swim.
3. Get dressed, including footwear. If the weather is bad, get dressed before you talk to your coach.

What do I wear? Dress warmly and be prepared for everything! You can always take layers off, but if you didn't bring enough clothes, your body is wasting energy before you race. If you have them, wear your Team T -shirt, sweatshirt, sweat pants, parka, shoes and socks, hat, and maybe mittens. Because your stuff looks like everyone else's, be sure to have your name on everything.

What do I bring?

- Towels (at least one for each event and one for warm up -- especially on cold wet days because they won't get dry between swims).
- Racing suit, cap and goggles, including extra suits and goggles. You never know when you're going to break something or lose something, so be prepared! You might want to pack extra clothing, including underwear and T-shirt, in a zip lock bag on rainy days, so you have something dry to change into.
- Sun screen
- Food and drinks. Usually there's a snack bar, but the food choices are sometimes iffy. Bring healthy snacks and plenty of fluids from home to eat and drink. No glass containers!
- Swim Meets can be long, so bring things to do: homework, reading, cards, travel games, etc. Some people even bring their own tent.
- You should bring folding chairs for yourself and parent(s) or friends who come to the meet. While sometimes there are benches to sit on, there are never enough for everyone.

Do I have to wear a Team Cap and Swimsuit?

We would like all swimmers to wear NCA swim caps. Team or black swim suits are preferred, but not mandatory.

Things to remember

The coaches are there to watch every swim, so their first priority is to the swimmers in the water. Please be patient when you come over with heat and lane information, or after you swim. Your coach will talk to you right away if possible; otherwise he/she will ask you to wait. For the coaches, the meet is like a 3-ring circus with people coming to give heats and lanes, people in the water, and people coming after swims to get feedback. They can't go into long discussions about everything, so if they are short with you please understand. You can always ask another swimmer a general question. The coaches aren't the only ones with the answers.

Relays

Our relay policy is that the fastest four swimmers that day are in the relay. Sometimes coaches have to make decisions based on intuition. They take into account how people have been swimming, if they have been sick, and who has been coming to practice. But the goal is to put together the best relay teams possible.

Free Relays are obvious, everyone swims free, but Medley Relays (the order is back, breast, fly, free) can be weird. You may not be swimming what you think is your best stroke, but the coaches have assembled the fastest relay team. So trust them!

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN AT YOUR FIRST MEET!