



# **All About Swim Meets**

Although this document was written specifically for members of the Irving Swimmers swim team in Irving Texas, other teams may benefit from reading it. Always consult with your coach, team or LSC for procedures that may differ from ours.

Pink caps rule the pool.

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## All About Swim Meets

Swim meets are important in the training of a swimmer. Competition is the vehicle that tests the training regimen of a swimmer. Competing against other swimmers from other teams with diverse skills allows an athlete to determine how she stands against a set of standards developed and judged by USA Swimming officials. Each swim event both teaches the swimmer how she performs the standard skills of swimming, and provides extra motivation by giving her something for which to reach. Swim meets provide opportunities for coaches to evaluate swimmers in the best of circumstances and one-on-one chances for the coach to teach athletes exact skills immediately after a race.



Each member of Irving Swimmers should plan to attend as many of the IS scheduled USA Swimming swim meets as possible. Swim meets are part of the work of an Irving Swimmer. Parents should also endeavor to attend these swim meets, if possible. This not only provides an opportunity for a parent to evaluate the swim program for their child, but also provides opportunity for the parent to praise their child for their successes and encourage him after a disappointing performance. Any parent who has difficulty with attending, or paying for, a swim meet should discuss this with the Head Coach.

### **USA SWIMMING** ([www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org))



USA Swimming (USAS) is our governing organization that is made up of swimmers from the lowest level all the way up to Olympic swimmers like Michael Phelps. When your child is a member of USA Swimming, she is a teammate of all the member swimmers from the United States. USAS is broken up into 59 separate regional units called "Local Swim Committees" or LSCs. Our LSC is North Texas (NT) Swimming. Irving Swimmers is one of 28 teams in the NT LSC. Every swim team and every LSC follows the major rules of USAS but we also have a few rules and procedures of our own.

The USA Swimming website contains lots of great information for swimmers, parents, volunteers, coaches and officials. Peruse the site when you can. Most information will be found under the Member Resources tab. Visit [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org).

A swimmer **MUST** be a registered member of USA Swimming to compete in a USA swim meet. All meets attended by Irving Swimmers are USAS meets.

### **NORTH TEXAS SWIMMING** ([www.ntswwim.org](http://www.ntswwim.org))

Our LSC (North Texas Swimming) has determined "divisions" within its boundaries to limit the size of swim meets. We are a large LSC with an ever-growing membership of talented athletes. Having every swimmer at one meet would make the meet too long and make swimmers and spectators unhappy.

Therefore, currently our B/C meets are separated into three divisions, our BB meets are in two divisions and A meets are a single division. (More about B/C, BB and A later.)

Irving Swimmers is in Division 2 of all B/C meets and in Division 1 of all BB meets. If a B/C meet is scheduled for a weekend, North Texas Swimming website will list three separate B/C meets, who will host them, and where they will be held. When you click on the Meet Information of any of those three meets, you will see a screen listing the teams that will participate in that meet. If you see "IS", you're in the right place!



Occasionally, NT will combine divisions to swim together in a single meet if they think the meet will not be attended as heavily as usual. Championship meets at the end of a season are generally set up with all divisions together.

## SWIM MEET TYPES

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There are three formats of swim meets—Short Course Yards (25 yards), Short Course Meters (25 meters) and Long Course Meters (50 meters). Many swim meet venues can facilitate more than one type of meet. Pools can be set up in different ways:

- Dedicated 25 yard/meter lanes with permanent pool deck at each end
- Two separate 25 yard/meter pools separated by a moveable "bulkhead"
- One long 50 meter pool (the only setup used for Long Course meets)



NorthLake pool can accommodate all formats with the movement of the Bulkhead (the moveable platform that is set across the shortest length of the pool). Some venues may feature separate lanes or pools that are used for swimmers' "warm-up" and "warm-down". There is more information regarding swim meet venues later.

Short Course season generally runs from October through April and Long Course season is May through July. There are usually a short breaks immediately following the conclusion of the Short Course and Long Course seasons. Most teams take a break from practices and meets during August.

## THE "MEET INFORMATION" DOCUMENT

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All swim meets in our LSC are set up similarly. The "Meet Information" is a standardized document that will tell you all the specifics about a particular meet. You will find these at [www.ntswim.org](http://www.ntswim.org) by clicking Meet Information at the left of the home page. They are usually posted about one month before the meet date. More information is offered on specific sections later. Let's walk through a typical Meet Information document:

- **Header:** Lists the name and date of the meet, the hosting team and the official sanction number.
- **Location/Facility:** Lists the address of where the meet is held and sometimes includes directions or special rules or information about the facility.
- **Pool measurement & Sanction:** Most pools are not "certified" as to their official length unless it is expected that a state or national record may be broken by an attending swimmer. The Sanction section lets you know that this is an official USAS swim meet.
- **Warm-up schedule:** This schedule varies by meet. Usually, teams are divided into groups so that everyone is not warming up in the pool at once. Sometimes these groups will be listed right in the meet information, but usually you will be directed to the host team's website to view which warm-up

group IS is in closer to the date of the meet. There are specific USAS and NT rules regarding safety guidelines during warm-ups and sometimes these will be listed here.

- **Unattached/Unaccompanied Athletes:** If your child is attending a meet in which his coach is not present, the coach will make arrangements to be sure he is able to swim.
- **Eligibility:** This section outlines who is eligible to swim at that meet. More on this later.
- **Entry deadline:** This is for our coach. The deadline for you to declare that your child will swim in the meet will be earlier. The deadline listed here is when our team must turn in ALL athlete entries to the host team.
- **Entry Fees and Limit:** This section will list how many events an athlete may compete in per session, per day and/or for the entire meet. The fee for each event will also be listed including a surcharge for each swimmer. These fees are automatically invoiced to you through our own system.
- **Late Entries:** This section outlines the cost and rules of entering events after the deadline has passed. More on this one later.
- **Seeding:** This section will tell you if the meet is pre-seeded or is conducted as “timed finals” to be deck seeded. More on this one later, too.
- **Check-In:** Gives the procedure for positive check-in meets. This is usually standard.
- **Meet Program:** This will let you know if psych sheets or meet programs will be sold at the meet.
- **Awards and Scoring:** Tells you if ribbons or medals will be awarded and how the meet will be scored.
- **Additional Information:** Whatever the host team wants participants and spectators to know.
- **Officials:** Listing of the major certified officials that will preside over the swim meet.
- **Meet Layout:** a listing of the days and sessions of the meet with all the events offered in the order that they will be swum.
- **Accommodations:** For larger meets, suggestions of area hotels, restaurants and activities will be offered.



## TIME STANDARDS or Swim Rank

USA Swimming establishes time standards, or “cuts” for athletes. Swimmers are always striving to make their next cut. Athletes age 18 and under use USA Swimming’s “Age Group Motivational Time Standards” available on their website. There are other times standards for other types of meets like Sectionals (for ages 15 and over), TAGS (Texas swimmers age 14 and under) and Nationals. These time standards guide athletes from just starting out in his age group to reaching his highest potential. Start with your first goal at level B and work your way up to level AAAA times.

Swim meets are offered for athletes in three levels that are based on the Age Group Motivational Time Standards. In our LSC, all C and B levels are combined in a “B/C” meet. There are also BB meets and A meets. There are times when a meet is considered “Open” whereas athletes of all levels are invited to compete.

ALL B/C meets are swum in the Short Course (25 yard or meter length pool) format. BB and A meets may be swum Short Course or Long Course (50 meter) depending on the season. Long Course meets are held in the summer months.

### ***Establishing a base time in each event***

Each swimmer must swim in a meet to establish an official time in each event. In North Texas, each swimmer age 12 and under swims their first competition at a B/C meet and swimmers age 13 and over always begin at a BB meet. The first time they compete in an event, that sets their time in USA Swimming. Once a time is established in an event, you can then check the Time Standards chart to see what level for which your child’s time qualifies in that particular event.

As a swimmer competes in each event for the first time, they will all be recorded with USA Swimming. You can track your child's swim times in the SWIMS Database found at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org). You must establish an account to do so. Just click on "Sign In" on the top right of the webpage. You can also use USA Swimming's new "Deck Pass" to track your swimmer's times, meets and goals. Sign in and then click on "My Deck Pass" at the upper right hand corner for more information.

A child's swim level is based on achieving a minimum of three times of that level. Three or more events with B times means he is a B swimmer. If he has only one or two events with BB times, he is still a B swimmer until he achieves a BB time in a third event. This will dictate what type of meet he will swim next. Each meet will vary regarding eligibility for each events. Some kids will continue in B/C meets for quite awhile, while others may move up quite quickly. Be patient and have fun with it!

### The Time Standards Chart

Consult the Time Standards chart by first locating the correct course (long course meters, short course meters or short course yards). Locate your child's age group and gender (10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16) then find the event. The times listed for each level are the minimum time that must be achieved to qualify for that level.

For example: a 9 year old child swims the 50 yard freestyle event in his first B/C short course yard swim meet with a time of 38.45 seconds. According to the USA Time Standards Chart his time falls between the 39.79 B time and the 35.99 BB time. Therefore, his time qualifies as "B". To qualify as a BB time, he must swim that event in 35.99 seconds or less. Now he has a goal for the next meet! All times below the B time are considered C times.

2009-2012 National Age Group Motivational Times												9/12/2008		
Short Course Yards														
B Min	BB Min	A Min	AA Min	AAA Min	AAAA Min		AAAA Min	AAA Min	AA Min	A Min	BB Min	B Min		
<b>10 &amp; Under Girls</b>						<b>10 &amp; Under Boys</b>								
39.79*	35.99*	32.19*	30.89*	29.59*	28.29*	50 Y Free	27.99*	29.19*	30.39*	31.59*	35.19*	38.89*		
1:31.29*	1:21.59*	1:11.89*	1:08.69*	1:05.39*	1:02.19*	100 Y Free	1:01.49	1:04.59	1:07.69	1:10.79	1:19.99	1:29.19		
3:20.19	2:58.29	2:36.39	2:29.09	2:21.79	2:14.39	200 Y Free	2:12.89	2:19.29	2:25.59	2:31.89	2:50.89	3:09.89		
8:30.49	7:39.49	6:48.39	6:31.39	6:14.39	5:57.39	500 Y Free	5:54.09	6:10.89	6:27.79	6:44.59	7:35.19	8:25.79		
48.79*	43.49	38.09*	36.39	34.59	32.79	50 Y Back	32.79*	34.59*	36.49*	38.29*	43.69*	49.19*		
1:45.69	1:33.99	1:22.19	1:18.29	1:14.39	1:10.49	100 Y Back	1:10.49*	1:14.09*	1:17.69*	1:21.29*	1:32.09*	1:42.89*		
53.59	47.79	41.99	40.09	38.19	36.29	50 Y Breast	36.49*	38.39*	40.29*	42.19*	47.89*	53.59*		
1:59.99	1:46.69	1:33.39	1:28.89	1:24.49	1:19.99	100 Y Breast	1:19.79*	1:23.79*	1:27.79*	1:31.79*	1:43.69*	1:55.69*		
48.79	42.99	37.29	35.29	33.39	31.49	50 Y Fly	31.29	33.09	34.89	36.69	41.99	47.29		
1:57.49	1:42.09	1:26.69	1:21.59	1:16.49	1:11.29	100 Y Fly	1:10.79*	1:15.69*	1:20.59*	1:25.59*	1:40.39*	1:55.19*		
1:44.99*	1:33.79*	1:22.59*	1:18.89*	1:15.19*	1:11.49*	100 Y IM	1:10.89*	1:14.29*	1:17.69*	1:21.09*	1:31.19*	1:41.29*		
3:42.69	3:19.39	2:55.99	2:48.19	2:40.39	2:32.69	200 Y IM	2:32.49	2:40.09	2:47.69	2:55.29	3:18.09	3:40.89		

Achievement of a particular rank is valid across all courses. For example, if an athlete achieves a BB time in the 100 freestyle event at a Short Course Yards meet, that means she has a BB time in that event whether she swims it next at a Short Course Yards meet or a Long Course Meters meet. She does not have to achieve a BB time separately in a Long Course meet.

### How do I know what meet to attend and what events can be entered?

This can get rather confusing. Figuring out what meet to attend is based on the times your swimmer has achieved in each event. Normally, if your child has a majority of B or C times, she will attend a B/C meet. (All swimmers age 13 and over attend BB meets or higher). If she has 3 or more BB times, then she will attend a BB meet, and so on. A swimmer is considered a BB swimmer if she has achieved three or more BB times, she is an A swimmer if she has achieved three or more A times. If a swimmer has at least three times in a particular rank, she can usually swim any event at that rank of swim meet. However, there are sometimes exceptions.

Generally, at a BB meet (for example), an athlete may swim any event in which he has achieved a BB time but may not swim any event in which he has achieved an A time or has only a B or C time. At a B/C meet, he will not be allowed to swim any events in which he has a BB or A time. In other words, he may not swim an event where his time is better than the rank of the meet.

Sometimes these rules force a swimmer to attend more than one meet each month in order to swim a variety of events. Many times, though, meet rules will allow a swimmer to compete in “bonus” events in which he has not achieved the time standard for that meet. For example, your swimmer has 2 BB times but the rest are B or C times. She may attend a BB meet to swim at least one of those BB time events and may also be offered two bonus events. Once she has achieved three BB times, she may be able to swim any event in the meet. All this depends on the decision of the host team. A swimmer will never be able to swim an event in which she has achieved a rank higher than the swim meet.

Specific rules will always be set forth in that meet’s Meet Information document found on ntsww.org. Since it may change with each meet, read that section carefully before deciding to attend a meet.

Here are a couple of examples:

Ashley is 11 years old and has 2 BB times, 1 A time and the rest are B or C times.

At a BB meet she can **always** swim her two BB times, but **never** the event in which she has the A time.

At a BB meet, she **may** be allowed to swim two “bonus” events with a B or C time (but not A).

At a B/C meet, she can **always** swim her B or C time events, but **never** her BB or A time events.

At an A meet, she can **always** swim her A event and **may** be allowed one or two bonus swims.

When Ashley turns 13, she will no longer swim B/C meets. She will swim all her B or C times at a BB meet.

Brad is 13 years old and has 4 BB times, 2 A times and the rest are B or C times.

Brad does not attend B/C meets at all anymore since the maximum age for a B/C meet is 12.

At a BB meet, he can **always** swim any event in which he has a C, B or BB time. He can **never** swim his A times at a BB meet.

At an A meet, he can **always** swim his 2 A times but **may** be allowed bonus swims.

When he achieves three A times, he **may** be allowed to swim any event at an A meet or **may** be restricted to only his A time events and a set number of bonus swims.

## HOW TO ENTER A SWIM MEET

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### ***The Meet Calendar***

North Texas Swim publishes a calendar of swim events on its website, [www.ntswim.org](http://www.ntswim.org). Irving Swimmers’ coaches choose meets from this calendar and posts on our website our own list of the those meets in which we will officially participate as a team. Occasionally, IS will participate in a swim meet from another area such as South Texas.

Coaches are present only at the events listed by Irving Swimmers.

Your child may participate in other meets, but possibly without the benefit of a coach on deck. If this is the case, please let the head coach know so he can make arrangements to have a USA coach watch your child during the meet.

### ***The RSVP***

About a week or so before the swim meet, you will receive an email notifying you of an upcoming meet and gives specific instructions. You may receive emails on meets that your swimmer may not be eligible for so check the meet specifics before responding. If you are not sure your child should enter that meet, ask your coach. Log on to the Irving Swimmers website and find the meet that you would like to RSVP for.

There will be a link to the meet information there as well. You can also find the specific information for the swim meet at [www.ntswim.org](http://www.ntswim.org) by clicking on “Meet Information”. It is suggested that you print this out along with a copy of your child’s events and bring it with you to the swim meet.



You must RSVP by the date listed in the email or your swimmer will not be entered in the meet. If your child can swim only one or two days of a three-day meet, please specify that. Some meets have multiple sessions in one day, usually a morning session and an afternoon session. Determine which sessions your child is available to attend. You may also request to be entered in specific events, but the final decision is made by the coach. Once you RSVP, you have authorized Irving Swimmers to invoice you for any events in which your child is entered. Once entries are sent to the host team of a meet, there are no refunds.

If you miss the RSVP deadline, your child **may** still swim. Some host teams allow a swimmer to “deck enter” a meet in which she has not been entered at all. Others will only allow a swimmer to add events to the meet if she is already entered in at least one event. In either case, you will pay a late fee as assessed by the swim meet’s host team, usually two to three times the original cost of the event. Your swimmer must also arrive with a hard-copy proof of previous event times printed from the SWIMS database **AND** must have his USA Swimming ID card.

### **Entries**

Your coach will email a list of entries for all swimmers entered in the meet within a few days of the meet and you will be able to also view them on our website when logged in. Check these entries carefully to determine which sessions your swimmer will need to attend and which warmup times she will need to arrive for.

## **PREPARING FOR THE SWIM MEET**

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### ***The Night Before***

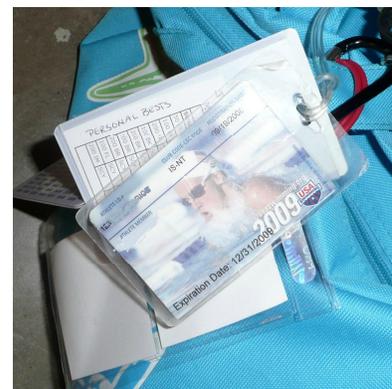
Rest is imperative. A well rested mind is as important as a well rested body. Swim meets usually start very early in the morning so adequate rest the night before is invaluable. Treat the night before a swim meet as if it were a regular school night. The evening meal should not be anything particularly special, just some favorite dish. Breakfast in the morning of the meet should be on the light side, but don’t let your swimmer go to the meet hungry. The morning meal should be high in starches — yes, starches — and extremely low in **processed** sugars. Fresh fruit is ideal. Have your swimmer look over his goals for each event he will be swimming. Pack your swim bag the night before with a pre-prepared list. To learn more about nutrition for swimmers, visit [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org) and click on Tips and Training, then Nutrition Center.

Transportation to and from a swim meet is the responsibility of each family. Carpools can be arranged among families if desired. If transportation is a problem, discuss it with your Coach and arrangements can be made. For out of town and long distance meets, the team may charter a bus or vans. You can find the address of the meet facility at the beginning of that meet’s Meet Information found at [ntswim.org](http://ntswim.org).

### ***Swimmers: What to Bring to a Meet***

There’s nothing like being prepared. Here’s a list for your child:

- Team swim suit—arrive wearing the suit
- Backup swim suit—“wardrobe malfunctions” have been known to happen
- Team t-shirt (if your swimmer has one)
- Warm cover-ups—especially in winter. Sweats, jacket. Bring extras!
- Closed toed shoes—keeps the feet warm between races
- Hat—mainly in winter, to keep the head warm between races
- Team swim cap—(see below) Have a backup in case it tears.
- Goggles—racing pair and backup pair.
- Towels—at least one per every two events. Smaller shammy-type towels are ideal.
- Bleacher cushion or folding chair—be aware that some facilities don’t have room for chairs



- Light snacks in a small personal cooler. Always have a water bottle handy.
- USA Swimming ID card—attach to your swim bag, having this with the swimmer is mandatory
- List of current times and goal times—this is handy if attached to the swim bag as well
- A printout of the swim meet event schedule and your child’s events to swim that day.
- Sharpie pen in a dark color, preferable fine-point or ultra-fine-point
- Extra dose of determination and Team Spirit!

What NOT to bring:

CD players, handheld games and other electronics are major distractions and will not fare well around the water and humidity so they are best left at home. They can tend to “walk away” as well.



If your child brings a phone, keep it dry. Let them know that using it to play games is distracting for themselves and other swimmers. They must be alert to upcoming events.

As for snacks, keep it light. A small cooler can be brought into most swim meets. Parents’ snacks should be separate from the swimmers’ so that they can be taken on deck and eaten when the swimmer is ready. Don’t include sodas or candy. Juice, water, fruits, raw veggies, cold pasta and light sandwiches are all good choices. Sport drinks are most useful at practices, not swim meets.

If your child opts to use a swim cap for competition, it must be an official Irving Swimmers cap. No other cap will be allowed and should be worn during warm-up and while swimming all events. Swimmers have a choice of royal blue or pink cap in either silicone or latex. (Boys on the team generally wear the pink caps because they are so recognizable from the spectator area. However, pink is NOT required for boys OR for girls.)

**Parents: What to Bring to a Meet**

- Camera/Video camera (with batteries, extra SD cards, etc)
- Bleacher cushion or folding chair—depending on space available at the facility
- Personal snacks—swimmers should have their own on deck
- Something to read or do to pass the time
- Your swimmer’s personal best times and goal times
- Copy of the USA Swimming Times Standards
- Printout of the Meet Information which includes facility address, schedule of events and more
- Pen
- Layers of clothing—facilities vary in temperature but are generally quite warm
- Team t-shirt—if you don’t have one, get one and show your team spirit! One for each day is great!

Most meets feature a concession stand, but not always a wide variety of food. Occasionally, you may even want to volunteer as a timer down on the pool deck. You get a great seat to watch all the kids and time passes much more quickly.

**Swimmers, Write on Your Hand**

Yes, we all did it when we were young, and it probably drove our parents nuts. Now, the best way for your swimmer to keep up with his events and strokes is to write them on his arm with a sharpie pen before leaving home. Using the list of events sent to you by the coach, use the following format.

For example:

#35 50Fr H\_\_\_ L\_\_\_  
 #43 100Br H\_\_\_ L\_\_\_



meaning event number 35 is the 50 yard freestyle and event #43 is the 100 Breaststroke. Blanks are left to fill in the heat and lane assignment later. The swimmer can refer to this when checking in at the meet as well. Be careful to always use “Heat” first and “Lane” second in discussions with your children. Otherwise, either you or your child could miss watching/swimming an event. More information later in this document on how to find heat/lane for each event.



### ***What to Expect At the Facility***

Swim meet facilities vary in seating arrangement, space and amenities. Generally, the swimmer will stay on deck (the area immediately around the competition and warm-up pools) with the team and coach. Larger venues will separate spectators from swimmers on deck by railings. Spectators sit in bleachers and are not allowed on deck. Smaller facilities will have bleachers directly on deck but non-USA participants are not allowed alongside the pool or around the starting blocks. **As a rule, only swimmers, coaches and officials are allowed on deck.** Occasionally, there may be space for swimmers to set up

chairs, so having them ready in the car may come in handy.

Meets are generally indoors and temperature controlled. Some long-course summer meets may be held outdoors. As a spectator, you may find indoor meets to be rather humid and warm though. One thing you can count on—there will be limited space for all your “stuff”. Bleacher aisles can be cramped for spectators and deck space is at a premium for swimmers. Meet officials are relatively strict about where you can and cannot sit or stand. Please be respectful of those rules.

Swimmers will usually have access to locker rooms with showers, but not the lockers themselves. Extra “swimmer’s towels” are very helpful for drying off between races (shammy-type small towels). Large towels take up a lot of space in the swim bag.

### ***Expected Behavior at Swim Meets***

**As a matter of USA Swimming policy, only registered athletes, coaches and officials are permitted on the pool deck (walking area immediately around water, and sometimes the pool-level floor of a facility with bleachers).**

**All questions concerning a meet result, officiating call, or conduct of the meet, should be asked of the Irving Swimmers coaching staff. They will pursue the matter through proper channels. No parent is allowed to challenge meet officials directly, unless an emergency situation is imminent.**



If your swimmer brings a phone, it’s use is NOT allowed in the locker rooms or bathrooms. Swimmers should be respectful and courteous to officials, other swimmers and spectators at all times. A swimmer’s behavior reflects directly on the team and the Coach. No inappropriate physical contact between swimmers or between swimmers and coaches will be tolerated. Swimmers are expected to support each other. Swimming is not an individual sport, each child is a part of the Irving Swimmers team. People are always watching.

After each session of a meet, the team area should be left neat and clean, especially at another team’s pool.

Guardians should keep an eye on non-athlete siblings at swim meets. Be sure they follow facility rules and do not distract the swimmers of any team at the meet. Parents are fully responsible for the safety of their non-athlete children. Other adults and swim meet officials will not be monitoring younger kids around a pool at a meet and, if they observe the child creating distractions with the swim events, could ask that they be removed from the pool environment. NO non-athlete siblings are allowed on the pool deck during swim events.

## **ATTENDING THE SWIM MEET**

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Swim meets are generally within an hour's drive or less from Irving. **Arrive at least 15 minutes before warm-up time** for our team as found in the "Meet Information" document on [www.ntswim.org](http://www.ntswim.org). Don't plan to arrive at the exact warm-up time. Your athlete needs to have time to check in to her events, find the team and coach, set up her area and stretch - all before getting into the pool at warm-up time.

### ***Arriving at the Meet***

There are two types of meet formats: positive check-in (or "deck seeded") and pre-seeded.

#### **Positive Check-In Meets**

Most meets are "Positive Check-In" meets in which the swimmer must physically check off their name for **each and every event** they will swim that day. There will be a new list for each day or session. If



their name is not checked off, they will not be placed in that event. In this kind of meet all events are "deck seeded", meaning the meet officials assign a heat and lane in each event only to those swimmers who checked in before the meet. It is the swimmer's responsibility to do this, not the parent's nor the coach's. Get your child in the habit of doing this first thing upon arriving at every meet. If you do not plan to swim the event, write "SCR" next to the name (for "scratch"). You will still be charged for the entry fee. Failure to place a check mark by an event means your swimmer will not be entered in that event but will still have to pay for the event on their Irving Swimmers invoice.

Although many meets allow swimmers to check in 30 minutes prior to the start of each event, if all IS swimmers will "check in upon arrival", we can avoid missing an event for failure to check in.

Positive check-in meets allow the host team to avoid empty lanes caused by swimmers not showing up to the meet or deciding not to swim an event. It facilitates moving the meet along faster.

**To reiterate, coaches will not be responsible for checking in any swimmer.**

#### **Pre-Seeded Meets**

Some swim meets are "pre-seeded" meaning that each swimmer has already been assigned a heat and lane assignment for each event in which they have entered for the entire meet. Swimmers are not required to "check in" upon arriving. In all cases, if a swimmer misses an event (even at a pre-seeded meet), you will still be charged for the event on your Irving Swimmers invoice.

Even in pre-seeded meets, the longer distance events may still require positive check-in since no-shows will cause empty lanes and make the meet run significantly longer than necessary.

### **What Swimmers Should Do Upon Arrival**

When you arrive and after checking in (if necessary), immediately proceed on deck. Look for familiar faces. It's important for you to sit together as a team. It promotes team spirit and swimmers support each other before and after races. Coaches and deck volunteers need to know where you are at all times. Let your coach know that you are there.



Set up your sitting area and prepare for the warm-up session. Keep all belongings in the team area. Since the entire team and coach may be away from the team area at times, do not leave anything of value in view. Your seats can be "saved" with a towel or folding chair. Be aware that, as a smaller team, sometimes our things can get pushed aside when larger teams stake out their spot for the meet, especially while you and the team are away during warm-ups. Do your stretching exercises just as you do before each practice.

### **What Parents Should Do Upon Arrival**

Remember, it is your swimmer's responsibility to check off his events at the check-in area. Feel free to go behind them to be sure it has been done, but it is ultimately his responsibility. Let him do it.

Psych sheets or Meet Programs will be sold somewhere in the lobby area of the meet. Purchase one or share with another parent. If it is a short course meet ask if the meet is split into two sections. Meets may have boys swimming their events at one end and the girls at another end (usually referred to as the deep end or shallow end) of the pool. If you have both a boy and a girl, you will probably want to sit near the center of the spectator area. Alternately, events may be split by odd or even event numbers which usually turns out to be girls/boys anyway.

Head into the spectator area and look for other Irving Swimmers parents to sit with if possible. Try not to save a large number of seats if the facility is filling up, it will annoy other spectators. There will usually be quite a bit of time between your child's events. Watching other Irving Swimmers in their events helps pass the time as well as reading, bringing your laptop or chatting with other parents.

## ***Psych Sheets and Meet Program***

### **Psych Sheets**

If the meet is a positive check-in meet, the host team will provide psych sheets for sale. This is simply a listing of events in each session and all the swimmers entered in each event ranked by their entry times (called "seed times"). Swimmers are usually listed for each event on the Psych Sheet from fastest to slowest. This compares your swimmer to other swimmers competing in that event. If your swimmer is listed next to number 18, she is the 18th fastest swimmer in that event. The seed time is listed on the far right of the column. The events will be listed in the order that they will occur in the meet. Occasionally, a host team will include the time standards for the next rank at the beginning of each event listing (for example, listing "A" times at a "BB" meet).

During the meet, the host team will take down an event's check-in sheet and enter into the computer all of the swimmers that checked in for that event. The computer places the swimmers in specific heats and lanes according to their "seed time" which is the time that was used to enter the swimmer in the meet. If a swimmer has not swum the event before, they are entered with an "NT" or "no time". Each event's heat and lane assignments are posted on deck for the swimmers and in the spectator area for spectators. Swimmers must check this sheet before each event they swim when it becomes available in order to record their heat and lane assignment on their arm.

## Meet Program

If the meet is pre-seeded (meaning that it is *not* a positive check-in meet) all swimmers will already be placed in their heats and lanes for each event. The Meet Program will be sold with all heat and lane information. Swimmers and spectators will know these assignments for all events before the meet begins and will not have to consult heat/lane postings to find out. Meet Programs are usually available for sale by the host team.

Generally, girls' events are odd-numbered and boys' events are even-numbered.

## How Swimmers are Assigned Heats and Lanes

A "heat" is a group of 6 to 10 swimmers that will swim at the same time. Each event will have at least one heat. Within each heat, those 6 to 10 swimmers will be assigned a lane in which to report to and swim in. Swimmers within a heat will have similar seed times and will be closely matched in speed. If a swimmer has never swum an event before, he will be listed with an "NT" seed time ("no time") and will most likely be listed in the first heat of the event. The fastest swimmers of each heat will always be in the middle lanes.

Another way a host team may assign heats and lanes is by "circle seeding". This occurs usually when a meet has "preliminary" (prelim) sessions followed by "finals" sessions. In an eight-lane pool, the fastest 24 swimmers are placed in the last three heats, regular seeding is used for all other heats. In each of the three heats, the fastest of all 24 swimmers are seeded in the middle lanes throughout the heats. This way, the swimmers in the last three heats get a chance to swim against the top few swimmers.

Event 9 Girls 500 Yard Freestyle			
Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
1	Fitzpatrick, Ashley M	14 LAC-NT	5:58.36
2	Wheeler, Kamryn L	13 TRS-NT	5:59.11
3	De Weirth, Megan K	15 LAC-NT	6:11.92
4	Paolo, Sophia B	12 LAC-NT	6:18.09
5	Jergens, Julia K	11 LAC-NT	6:19.01
6	Pitney, Hannah N	13 MAC-NT	6:21.48
7	Lucviti, Rachel M	11 NTN-NT	6:21.76
8	Nuif, Kensi P	13 IS-NT	6:25.65
9	Binnig, Lauren K	13 NTN-NT	6:26.25
10	Clay, Lauren E	13 NTN-NT	6:27.98
11	Morris, Megan L	11 LAC-NT	6:36.18
12	Watkins, Anna E	12 LAC-NT	6:40.09
13	Dobson, Kirsten E	15 FAST-NT	6:40.96
14	Taylor, Zoe K	12 LAC-NT	6:48.63
15	Brookbank, Emma L	12 LAC-NT	6:52.21
16	Hoops, Madison A	13 CLAS-NT	6:54.56
17	Weese, Lauren M	10 MARS-NT	7:27.92
18	Mahry, Gretchen E	10 NTN-NT	7:28.64
19	Reed, Allison C	10 LAC-NT	7:32.61
20	Mixon, Ellie S	14 MARS-NT	8:27.12
21	Keith, Ashlyn O	12 MAC-NT	6:53.77YB
22	Augustyn, Alex N	12 IS-NT	NTLB
23	Bui, Rachel D	14 MARS-NT	NT
24	Gillespie, Amelia A	12 LAC-NT	NT
25	Guerra, Elise D	13 LAC-NT	NT
26	Wingard, Michelle M	14 LAC-NT	NT
27	Bui, Allison D	2 MARS-NT	NTYB



## Warm-Up Time

All swimmers should arrive in time for warm-up regardless of when their first event is. Warm-up is important for acclimating a swimmer to the specific pool, its starting blocks, lane width and walls. Every pool "feels" different. Coach's rules of warm-up should be followed regarding circle swimming, passing and other etiquette.

It is very important for you to warm up with your team. Your body is just like a car on a cold day, it needs to get the engine going and warmed up before it can go all-out. Most meets will have two warm-up sessions. Irving Swimmers will

be assigned to one of the sessions along with several other teams. At the beginning of the warm-up session, all swimmers must enter the water feet first. There are no exceptions. This rule is for the safety of your child and all meet participants. A swimmer who dives into the pool during general warm-up may be disqualified by the officials and be deemed ineligible to swim either their first event or all events. Diving from the blocks is only allowed during the "sprint" session of warm-ups which comes after the general warm-up session.

The meet will usually begin 15 to 30 minutes after warm-ups end.

## Swimming Your Events

### For ages 8 and Under

At most meets for the age 8 & under events, there is a "ready bench" or "Clerk of Course" area. Events are announced and swimmers report to this area about 4 or 5 events before the one they will swim.

Some pools use loud speakers to make first and last calls for events, but you are not always within ear-shot of the announcement. The ready bench will be an area set up with rows of benches or chairs. Each swimmer will be instructed where to sit (usually one heat per row). As each heat leaves the ready bench to go to the starting blocks, subsequent rows will move forward until it is your heat's turn to go. When you enter the starting block area, follow the instructions of the adults there. You will usually stand or sit behind the area of your lane until it's your turn to swim.

### **For swimmers age 9 and up**

There is no "ready bench". If the meet is a Positive Check-In meet, the swimmer will refer to a "Heat/Lane Assignment" posting before each race that they will swim. There will be at least one area on deck where these assignments will be posted. Spectators will also have assignments posted somewhere in their area. These postings will need to be referred to throughout the day for each event as they occur. This is referred to as "deck seeding". Your child should write the heat and lane assignment on his hand where he has written the event number before arriving.

Swimmers are expected to find their own heat and lane assignments and be behind the blocks in plenty of time for their race. Coaches and teammates are very helpful, however it is ultimately the child's responsibility. Distractions such as electronic games, cell phones, texting, books and socializing can hinder his ability to "keep his head in the game". Swimmers should head for the starting block area within 4 to 6 heats of their own heat, depending on the type of event. The Coach will help swimmers with any possible warm-up before a race. Swimmers should have goggles and IS swim cap ready and put them on in plenty of time to step up on the blocks when their time comes. At the blocks, swimmers should introduce themselves to their Timer person and verify their heat and lane assignment..

It is ultimately the swimmer's responsibility to get to the blocks in plenty of time for a race, to keep up with events and take care of themselves between races. Every swimmer has, at one time, probably missed an event because he wasn't paying attention, misunderstood the heat and lane assignment or didn't check to see that his name was on the Timer person's sheet at the block. The swimmer should talk to their coach about it as soon as possible and he will help the swimmer figure out how it happened and how to avoid the problem in the future. It is very unlikely that the swimmer will be able to swim that event after having missed his heat. He may be distraught, but he should use it as a learning experience. It is a very powerful lesson that he will learn on his own, without being chided by a parent.

### ***Swimming the Event***

1. Arrive at the starting block of the lane you have been assigned.
2. Verify with the person timing in that lane that you are in the correct place and stand behind the person in the heat before you.
3. Listen to the referee to announce the heat number.
4. When you hear a series of short whistles the referee will announce the heat number. If it is your heat, stand at the left side of the block.
5. When you hear one long whistle, step up on the block (or jump in the pool for backstroke starts).
6. When the starter says "Take your mark", that's when you get into your starting position.
7. When you hear the starter tone, your race has begin. A strobe light will also flash for hearing-impaired swimmers.

Proper swim meet etiquette dictates that, when finishing a race, the swimmer should stay in the water until all other swimmers have finished unless he is instructed to exit the pool by an official. Irving Swimmers are well-known for their pool etiquette and good sportsmanship.



**False Starts:** A false start may occur when a swimmer fails to remain perfectly still, leaves the block early or there is a problem with the starter or equipment. If a swimmer starts immediately before the starting tone, the event will run as normal but the disqualification of that swimmer will be noted. If a

swimmer starts early and the tone hasn't sounded, the starter will ask all swimmers to "please stand" and the disqualified swimmer will be removed from the heat. Sometimes a recall signal will be sounded if there has been a false start. This will be a succession of starter beeps. If the swimmers do not hear the beeps, a rope may be dropped across all the lanes the pool to stop them. Although this is an unusual circumstance, the swimmer should be prepared and understand that a rope across his lane means that she needs to stop swimming immediately.

**Fly-Over Starts:** In some meets, officials make use of the "fly-over" start. In this case, a swimmer finishes his race and waits on the finish wall without getting out. The swimmer in the next race will "fly over" the previous swimmer when he starts. This is applicable for all events except backstroke. When you finish your race in a fly-over start meet, hug the wall and do not distract the swimmer over you. After they enter the pool, exit the pool quickly. Fly-over starts help to move the meet along faster.

**Chase Meets:** On occasion, you may experience a "chase meet". These occur only in Long Course Season in events of 100 meters or more. Starting blocks are located at each end of the pool (usually referred to as the shallow end blocks and the deep end blocks). Swimmers for the shallow end race start from the shallow end blocks, swim to the other side, turn and head back to finish on the shallow end. Swimmers of the next race at the deep end step up to the blocks after those swimmers make their turn. As the shallow end swimmers near the last quarter or so of their race, officials will start the swimmers at the deep end blocks. At this point, there are two swimmers in the lane, one "chasing" the other. The shallow end swimmers finish their race and *quickly* exit the pool. The deep end swimmer continues his race. Another shallow end set of swimmers will begin their race before the deep end swimmer is done.

**Officials:** Many officials are present on the pool deck in a sanctioned U.S. Swimming meet. They usually wear white shirts. Most meets have a referee, starter, a stroke judge for each 3 or 4 lanes of the pool and two turn judges on each end of the pool. Each lane also has two (or more) timers present in each lane as a back-up to the electronic system. This organization and structure ensures that each U.S. meet is run consistently throughout the national organization and that all times are "official." Times made at U.S. Swimming meets can be used to qualify for the state and higher level meets.

**Disqualifications:** A swimmer may be disqualified by the judges or other qualified officials for not swimming a stroke correctly, making an improper turn, false start, etc. For example, a swimmer could be disqualified for doing a flutter kick during the butterfly stroke or failure to touch the wall correctly in a turn. Most swimmers get disqualified at some point in their swimming careers! Officials will notify the coaches of a disqualification. The coaches will inform the swimmer and discuss the steps necessary to correct the infraction in future swims. After she understands what the mistake was, she should "shake it off" and focus on the next event. Parents should be supportive, rather than critical, treating the disqualification as a learning experience.

**Complaints:** According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. ***All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a coach. The coach will pursue the matter through the proper channels.***

### ***After the Event***

After leaving the water, the swimmer can ask the timer for his unofficial time if he didn't see it on the timer board. He should then find his coach on deck for a brief chat about the swim. The coach may be watching another swimmer, so be patient. Swimmers will get post-event discussion and their warm-down instructions at this time. Swimmers should not linger or play in the warm-down pool, especially if the water is very warm since warm water saps energy. Swimmers should return to the team's area to dry off, get warm and rest.



## Between Races

Swimmers should be aware of when their next race is at all times. They can gauge when to drink/hydrate, eat snacks and when to take restroom breaks. They can check results postings as well, rest, stay warm and conserve energy for competition. The only exception to this is when IS teammates are swimming. Head to the deck to cheer them on whenever possible; however, if your child will be swimming soon, he should sit quietly and ready himself. Most importantly, swimmers should stay covered up to keep the muscles warm. By staying warm, energy is conserved for use during competition instead of used up trying to heat the body. Warm muscles are also better at converting energy into motion. Drink plenty of cool (not ice-cold) fluids to keep the body hydrated.

Swimmers should always be mindful of when your next event is coming up. It is up to the individual swimmer to be at the right place at the right time. The coach will be looking for her on the block when her heat is up, not making sure she actually gets there.



What happens if your child has a disappointing swim? Your child's coach will be the first to talk to him about the race. When it comes your turn, be sure to talk about the good things. Don't lie and say he did a wonderful job if he already knows that he didn't. Lying doesn't sit well with kids. Just don't talk about the negative things and don't dwell on the race. Drop it and get your child to focus on the next race or something enjoyable coming up after the meet. Bribing any swimmer to improve their performance is strongly discouraged by the coaches.

Irving Swimmers has a policy to celebrate wins, ribbons, medals, and successes for swimmers who win a heat or event at a swim meet, but the team's main goal is to teach swimmers and to improve their swimming skills. This is best achieved by encouraging swimmers to beat their previous swim times every time they swim an event (i.e. LTB or Life Time Best). Parents should encourage and praise their swimmers for this goal and let the wins and losses occur naturally. Under no circumstance should parents discipline or denigrate their children for not winning a heat or event. In fact, as a rule, the coaching staff does not discuss place finishes with their swimmers but rather their time with respect to their seed time. In all things, be positive. Kids should learn that meets are fun.

## Results

Periodically throughout the meet, the host officials will post computerized individual results for each event. There will usually be a special area for these postings somewhere in the spectator area. Swimmers can receive their official time and place. These results are not necessarily final until they are posted at [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org) or [www.ntswwim.org](http://www.ntswwim.org) within 7 to 10 days of the meet.

Awards for each meet vary. Some meets give medals for the top three swimmers in each age group for each event and ribbons for places 4 through 8. Others give only ribbons for places 1 through 8 and yet other meets may have no awards at all. If all age groups have been combined All awards are given directly to the coach to be distributed to the swimmers at a later date.

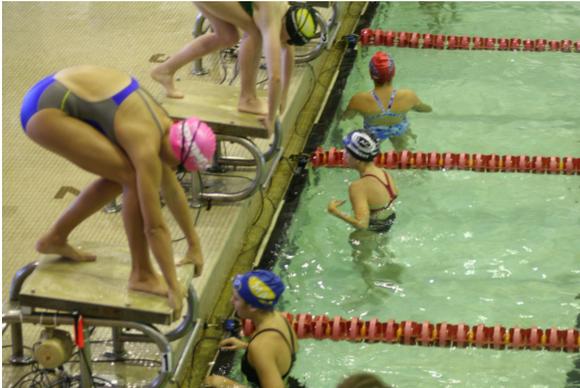
Most meets are "scored" after all results are in. Swimmers in first through 8th place are given points and those points are added up by team. Of course, larger teams receive the most points. However, historically, our smaller team scores significantly better than other teams

LANE	PLACE	TIME
1	3	2:50.44
2	6	2:57.44
3	2	2:48.45
4	1	2:39.42
5	4	2:54.60
6		2:57.8
7	5	2:55.55
8		:00.0

when considering “average points scored per participating swimmer.” That’s only one advantage of a smaller team!

Each child should remember to record his times in his log book so he can chart his improvement throughout the season. The focus should be on progress in terms of the amount of time improved, not necessarily on what place was achieved. She can also track her times and enter her goals in “Deck Pass” on [usaswimming.org](http://usaswimming.org) with an account.

### ***After the Swim Meet***



Your swimmer may leave the meet after his last event and after notifying the coaching staff. He may also stay and cheer on his teammates (especially those swimming the distance events). He must gather all his belongings and police the area for trash before leaving. Don’t leave items overnight for the next swim session, it may not be there when you return.

Be sure that, as a parent, you check with the coach before leaving to be sure your swimmer is not included in an upcoming relay or to get instructions for the following morning if the meet continues into the next day.

Any ribbons or medals that the swimmer has earned will be given to them by the coaches at a later date.

Once you have attended one or two meets, all this becomes very routine (believe it or not). Other parents are a great source of information whenever you have questions. Everyone had a first meet at one time in their lives! These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers. They get to visit with their friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. They also get to race and see how much they have improved from all the hard work they’ve put into practices. Swimming in meets gives your child an excellent opportunity to fulfill the guiding principles of Irving Swimmers:

1. Have fun!
2. Be a Good Teammate
3. Show Good Sportsmanship
4. Swim Fast

So there you have it, the Swim Meet. We always look forward to seeing that sea of Pink Caps that tell everyone...

***“Irving Swimmers are Here and We’re Serious!”***