

SWIM MEET 101

The first few swim meets can be overwhelming for swimmers and parents. As a parent, your job is to get your swimmer to the meet on time with everything they will need. Once they are on the pool deck our coaches will take over. Remind your swimmers to ask questions if they aren't sure about something. An older swimmer can usually answer most questions and guide them where they need to be.

WHAT TO BRING

- Swim suit – a back up suit is always a good idea.
- Goggles
- 2 towels – they get soaked pretty quickly
- Light jacket or hoodie to wear on deck. Sometimes it's chilly and it's important to stay warm.
- Water bottle or sports drink
- Flip flops or shoes for on pool deck
- Something to keep busy – a book, cards, puzzle book. Electronics are fine but keep in mind they will be on the pool deck and things do get lost, stolen or broken.
- Snacks – granola or protein bars, fruit, fruit snacks, raisins, trail mix, peanut butter crackers, pretzels are all good choices and easy to transport. They will need to replenish their energy after warm ups and in between events.
- Parents will want to bring a sharpie and highlighter for marking events on your swimmer and highlighting your heat sheet. A book or something to pass the time and a seat cushion are great to have as well.

BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

- Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. Warm up times are normally emailed to the families a day or two before the meet. They are also updated under the Meet Event page on our website.
- Upon arrival, swimmers should go to the locker room to change and then find the team on deck. The team will sit together on deck during the meet. If you are not sure where they should go just ask another parent or swimmer. Swim families are generally very helpful.
- Parents will pay their admission fee, buy a heat sheet and find a seat in the stands. Look for FAST shirts so you can sit with other FAST parents. We will help walk you through the meet and answer questions. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself. Since our groups have different practice times our seasoned parents aren't always familiar with the new faces. We definitely want to meet you!
- Some events (longer distance events) require positive check in upon arrival at the meet. This usually involves marking their name on the positive check in list. This may be located on deck or somewhere at the entrance of the pool. Coaches will help your swimmer with this if it is required for their events.

- Swimmers should be prepared to warm up with suit, goggles and cap a few minutes before their schedule warm up time. The team will proceed together to the assigned warm up lane. Warming up is very important to a swimmer's performance.
- After warm-up, your swimmer may have time to join you in the stands for a few minutes. This is a good time to write their events, heat, lane on their arm.

Event #	Heat	Lane	Event
124	6	4	50 free

If they don't have time, don't worry, the coaches will make sure they get what they need. Swimmers should stay on deck so they don't miss an event. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

- A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time" and the heat and lane the swimmer will swim that event. When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time (up to the date that the entry was submitted) in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.
- Events alternate between girls and boys and are numbered.
- According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a coach. He or she, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

MEET STARTS

- Some venues have great scoreboards that show what event # and heat they are currently on. This is very helpful to the swimmers especially if it is hard to hear the speaker announcing what events are coming up. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane.
 - A swimmer usually reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she actually swims. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions.
 - In some novice meets, a swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "clerk of course" or "bullpen". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle.
 - The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event.

AFTER EACH SWIM:

- The swimmer should go to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer. Some coaches may wish to talk with the swimmer before her recovery swim. Tell them to be patient. If the coach is speaking to another swimmer they should just wait next to them for their turn.
 - Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - Positive comments or praise
 - Suggestions for improvement
 - Positive comments
 - The swimmer now waits until his next event is called and starts the procedure again. When a swimmer has completed all of her events she and her parents get to go home. Make sure, however you check with the coach to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and she is not there.
- Swimmers, new and experienced, will be disqualified. There are many reasons for a DQ and the officials are trained and certified to watch for these infractions. If your swimmer is disqualified, an official will typically speak to him/her afterward they get out of the pool to explain. If they do not understand the reason for the DQ they should ask their coach to explain. A DQ is a great learning experience, especially for a new swimmer. Remember, even the most experienced swimmers get disqualified.
- Parents, tell him how great he did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with him. You need to tell him how proud you are of him/her.