

**BARRACUDAS SWIM MEET CHEAT SHEET**

**FAQs ABOUT SWIM MEETS 2016-17:**

***What should* we *pack for the kids?***

TEAM SUIT, TEAM CAP, GOGGLES (and a spare pair if possible), AB TEAM SHIRT, TOWELS, SWEATS, FLANNEL PANTS, COOLER WITH DRINKS & SNACKS, CARDS, GAMES, BOOKS (Some coaches request no digital devices at meets, to encourage interactions with teammates)

***What should Parents pack?***

CASH FOR HEAT SHEETS & CONCESSIONS, CAMP CHAIRS OR BLEACHER CHAIRS, CAMERAS, BLANKETS, SHARPIE MARKER, HIGHLIGHTER, DRINKS & SNACKS, E-READERS, NEWSPAPER, ECT.

***Why do we have 3 team AB T-shirts?***

Team shirts are to be worn at the meets. Each day of the meet is assigned a different color for the team T-shirt. **Friday**-**GRAY**, **Saturday**-**BLUE**, and **Sunday**-**BLACK**. The coaches also wear **GRAY/BLUE/BLACK** AB coaching shirts so that the swimmers can easily spot them in the coaches’ alley (*in front of the timers table in the Dome at Lyon’s YMCA*) on the pool deck.

***Where do we park?***

At M.E. Lyons, in addition to the YMCA parking lot, AB Parents can park on the tennis courts behind the dome. At away meets, occasionally we must park in a designated area, but it will be marked.

***What time do we arrive?***

**Plan on arriving 15 minutes before the team warm-ups.** Seating at away meets and championship meets can be very crowded. The earlier you arrive, the better the seats.

***What time are team warm ups?***

Parents are notified by team email with information regarding warm-up times and lane assignments for ABLY (M.E. Lyons/Anderson Barracudas).

**Information about every meet can be found on the team website: *www.ablyswim.org***

After logging in to the team website, go to the events page, click on the name of the meet and info will appear with links for the meet information packet. Normally 3-7 days before the meet, more specific information such as the warm-up times and lane assignments, psyche sheet, and the daily time line for events will be posted online.

***How do we know where to sit?***

At M.E. Lyons YMCA, **“Camp Cuda”** is on the north side of the deep end of the pool. When you arrive at away meets, team areas are marked. Parents and swimmers sit together at most Y meets. **Swimmers are strongly encouraged to meet and mingle with other teammates from all three (Campbell, Clermont, and Lyons) age group practice squads**. At large meets and championships, parents are not permitted on the pool deck. At such meets; there will be team volunteers to help with the younger swimmers.

**YOU FORGOT WHAT!?!?..... *What happens if your swimmer leaves their gear at home?***

**Always do one last double check before you start the car** to make sure your swimmer has packed their team suit, team T-shirt, swim cap and goggles. At some away swim meets, a swim vendor will sell goggles, swim caps, and swim suits (but not AB team suits or apparel). Not every vendor is able to accept personal checks, so it is always a good idea to bring cash and debit/credit cards to the meet. It is a good idea to keep extra goggles and caps in the vehicle you drive to meets.

**What is Cuda Café? Can I get a Grande Skinny Double Mocha with Cinnamon at the meet?**

No…….but you will find many reasonably priced food items and drink choices at our team hosted concession stand: The Cuda Café. The Café is located on the south side of the warm up pool.

Before the meet, you will receive an email from team unify that includes a link to **sign up for donated items needed for the Cuda Café**. The more items we donate, the more profit we have to spend on team needs such as timing equipment and dry land gear. At most YMCA meets; there will be a team hosted concession stand that is reasonably priced like the Cuda Café. At *USA SWIMMING* meets and meets hosted at large venues, such as Miami University, the concessions are run by the facility and can get quite pricey, so it is always good to pack some snacks for travel meets.

***What is a heat sheet and do all of us need to buy one?***

Heat Sheets are a schedule of the day’s events listing the name of each swimmer and which heat and lane they will be swimming in during their event. **Most swim meet sites will only accept cash for the heat sheets.** They normally cost $4-5 dollars. Heat sheets are usually sold at the front entrance of the pool and the proceeds stay at the host site. It is perfectly fine to share heat sheets with other families. Bring a highlighter or pen to mark your swimmers events and keep track of times for your swimmer.

There are Apps like On Deck Parent which can be found on our website and Meet Mobile that allow you to see live results at participating meets and/or purchase a digital heat sheets for a fee.

***What is the difference between a heat sheet and a psych sheet?***

Psych sheets are a coaching and motivational tool. Psych sheets are normally available online at the team website the week before a meet and list all the swimmers names and seed times. Psych sheets allow you to see where a swimmer is ranked in their event, but they do not indicate the heat or lane assignment for the swimmer’s race.

***How do you read a heat sheet?***

 Girls’ events are normally odd numbers. Boys’ are even numbers.

 Day 1 events are numbered 100’s, Day 2 are 200’s, and Day 3 are 300’s at most meets.

 You can find the event numbers for your swimmer on the ABLY event page each meet.

 Click on the “attend” button on the meet page and the events for that meet will appear.

 Information on the heat sheets is listed as: **EVENT: HEAT: LANE: NAME: AGE: SEED TIME**

***Why do we need a sharpie pen? How do we mark events on swimmers arms?***

Sharpies/permanent markers are used to help swimmers remember their event number, heat number, and lane assignments. If your child is swimming 3 events, mark a grid on the forearm like this:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **E** | **H** | **L** |
|  212 50 back | 5 | 6 |
|  224 50 fly | 8 | 2 |
|  238 100 IM | 10 | 3 |

***How are lanes and heats assigned?***

The size of the pool and number of swimmers determines the number of heats required for each event. Normally slower heats swim first and the fastest heats swim last. Swimmers always swim with others who have comparable times. Lanes are assigned by the fastest to slowest seed time in that heat. Faster times are in the middle, slower times are in the outside lanes.

Some swimmers will have NT for a seed time. This means the athlete does not have a documented time for the event. For the most part, NT times belong to first time swimmers, swimmers who have moved into a new age division, and/or swimmers who have not swum the distance (yards/meters) for this event. Occasionally, there will be an experienced NT swimmer who is much faster than others in the heat, and the race can be quite lopsided. Officials and coaches try to prevent this as much as possible, but it can happen.

***What do AA (Y Champs), ZN (ZONE), and NA (National) times mean on the heat sheet?***

Championship meets and select invitationals have time standards. Swimmers must make the qualifying time to qualify to swim at these meets. Many will make AA YMCA times, some will make Zone cuts, but only elite swimmers accomplish National times. Heat Sheets will list these time standards at the top of an event as information for parents and incentive for the swimmers.

***After months of driving to practice and learning to live with the permanent smell of chlorine in the car, what do I do at the meets?***

**As parents, we are responsible for making sure our swimmers are rested, fed, hydrated, have the proper team gear, and on time for their events.** For 10 & under swimmers, make sure they are ready 1 or 2 events before the start of their race and know their heat and lane assignment so that they can get ready to head to the starting blocks (or Clerk of Course at some meets). For older swimmers, make sure they know when to check in with their coaches to get warm up & race instructions.

***How do I know what event is in the pool?***

Listen to the announcer or look at the time board. The event and heat will normally appear at the top of the board. At meets where the team areas are not on the pool deck, there will normally be an event/heat clock or announcer letting swimmers know what event is on deck. Some heat sheets also have an estimated timeline included.

Each event is announced 3 times: first call event #, second call event #, final call event #.

Swimmers are to be behind their starting block and ready to swim before the final call.

**Make sure that you are listening with your swimmer for their events. It can get very loud and hard to hear at times, and if they aren’t paying attention, an event can easily be missed.** Swimmers generally should be getting ready to swim their race, 1 -2 events before their assigned event, depending upon the number of heats in each event.

***What is the Clerk of Course? Why are there benches with numbers lined up in rows?***

At some, but not all meets, there will be a Clerk of Course. A Clerk of Course is a volunteer who is responsible for lining up young swimmers (10 & under). There will be an area with numbered benches or chairs where swimmers report to before their event. Swimmers will be placed in order by heat and lane number here and walked to the blocks.

***Who is responsible for lining up the 10 & under swimmers at the starting blocks?***

Volunteer’s and timers will do all they possibly can to make sure your swimmer is in the correct event, heat, and lane. Having the **E/H/L** info written on the swimmer’s forearm is a tremendous help (and the kids love the swim tattoos ☺!)

**PLEASE DO NOT STAND WITH YOUR SWIMMER AT THE STARTING BLOCKS!!!**

**This area is very congested and not a place for parents or cameras!**

**REMEMBER: NO FLASH PHOTOGRAHPY AT THE START OF ANY EVENT!!**

THE STARTING SYSTEM USES A STROBE FLASH AND AUDIO START.

CAMERAS INTEFERE WITH THE STRARTING MECHANISM AND CAN DELAY THE MEET.

***What is the coach’s responsibility vs. what is the parent’s responsibility at a meet?***

**Coaches are very busy during the meet.** They monitor and evaluate every swimmer while they are in warm-ups and competing. They also help other coaches evaluate swimmers when ABLY has multiple swimmers in the same race. Coaches will meet with the swimmers before the warm-up period. (Always arrive 15 minutes before warm-ups start.) Most swimmers are also required to check in with their coach 1-2 events before they swim for warm-up instructions **and** immediately after they swim for evaluations of their event and instructions for cool-downs. The coaches will tell the swimmers before the meet when they are to check in with them before each of their events.

**The times immediately before and after the race are for the swimmer and coach only.** Parents are expected to stay in the team area and talk to swimmers when they have completed their events and coach’s instructions for cool-downs.

***Who are all the people in white polo shirts and shorts blocking my view of my swimmer?***

Meet officials are the people who make sure the rules are followed and that the meet runs smoothly. **They are trained and certified volunteers who give up their weekends so that your child can compete, so please be respectful.** If you have concerns or questions, approach a team coach and they will address it at the appropriate time. **Never approach the official or interfere with the progress of the meet.**

***What are DQs? Are we getting ice cream?***

Swimmers must perform all starts, strokes, turns, and finishes properly. If a swimmer does not follow the rules for each stroke as written by FINA, an official will raise his/her hand to notify the head official of a disqualification (DQ). Swimmers often do not know they have been disqualified unless told by the coach. At smaller meets and for younger swimmers, false starts are sometimes forgiven, and restarts are permitted. At large meets and championships, a false start results in an automatic DQ.

***WOOOHOOO………… LTB!!!!! Ummm…. What is a LTB?***

 ***LTB*** stands for “Life Time Best” swim and is the goal of every swimmer.

Please remember, not every race can be a LTB and your child is not swimming for Gold at the Olympics! Be encouraging and welcoming when your swimmer returns to you after each race. These are children swimming with other parents’ children. The only competitor our swimmers have is hanging on the wall, the clock! Our swimmers do not compete against teammates, **they compete to better their times and improve their abilities. The goal of all of our coaches is to have all of our swimmers still swimming at 18 and beyond, and not become like so many young athletes with overzealous parents who are burned out or discouraged out at a young age**.

***When do we get our ribbons?***

Ribbons and medals are distributed in the swimmers folders or at practices after the meet. Some meets have ribbons and prizes for heat winners in the 10 & under events. Heat winners are given their prizes on the pool deck immediately after each heat.

***What… there’s more to meets than medals and cheering? You need me to do what……?***

***Volunteer responsibilities:***

Families are expected to volunteer a pre-determined number of hours per season at our home meets, team hosted events, and Y Champs. You will be notified of these volunteer opportunities by email a few weeks before the meet or event. Each parent has their favorite job and you will find yours. When volunteer sign-ups are activated on the team website, be prepared to check for availability because job slots can fill quickly. A few jobs at meets do require training. **Please take the time to read the job descriptions listed so that you do not accidently sign up for a position requiring training prior to the meet.**

When you are volunteering, most jobs will prevent you from sitting with your child. Please be sure to have a backup plan (a spouse, another parent, family member, etc.) to insure that your child is on time for all of their events.

Time spent volunteering generally goes very quickly. You will learn a TON about the sport of swimming and have the opportunity to meet new families. It’s imperative that everyone does their part to make our swim meets run smoothly. A successful meet requires coaches, swimmers, and parents working together from start to finish. Your volunteer service enables us to have organized, well attended meets. Successful meets = $$$ = lower team fees, upgraded facilities, innovative training equipment, etc.

***If you are volunteering during a meet session, don’t forget to sign in at the volunteer table.***

At the M.E. Lyons Dome, the sign-in sheets are located at the heat sheet table near the double doors or the dome tunnel. If you do not sign in at the volunteer table, your family will not receive credit for your service time at meets!

***My swimmer is done for the day’s session, now what?***

Make sure the swimmer has checked in with the coach before leaving the pool deck. If you child is not swimming in relays or finals, you are free to leave. Please take a few minutes to make sure your swimmer has all of their gear and suits, and that all trash has been discarded. It never fails that a team suit does not make it home, so **make sure all of your child’s belonging and team gear is clearly labeled with their name.** You don’t want to know how many size 28 suits there are in this world!

If your child is swimming at a championship meet or invitational with finals and has qualified to swim in finals or is named an alternate, please make sure to confirm times for evening session warm-ups and finals. In the event that you cannot return for finals, you must scratch at the timer’s desk within 30 minutes of the end of the event so that alternates can be determined. League policy is that if you qualify and do not swim in finals, you do not swim in your next event and the team is fined. The team fines are passed on to your swimmer’s escrow account. **BOTTOM LINE: DON’T MISS FINALS!**

***Excuse me, but I still have questions…***

What? You still have questions? That’s OK, even veteran swim families make new discoveries about swimming throughout the season! Never hesitate to ask other parents or experienced swimmers for help, talk to the coaches (at appropriate times), and ask your kids! It will take about 3 meets, but after that you’ll be a pro!

Information about the South Western Ohio YMCA League can be found at: ***www.swyswim.org***

More information about competitive swimming can be found @ ***www.usaswimming.org***

USA Swimming Webpage: select Members Resources Tab/ Parents / Swimming 101

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