

News for Swim Parents

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Prelims and Finals Meets

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Every so often we are presented with the tremendous opportunity to swim in a meet that has prelims and finals sessions. These meets are structured so as to present the fastest 8, or 16, or 24 swimmers from the morning or afternoon prelims sessions with another chance to swim again at finals in the evening. The number of swimmers advancing to finals in this fashion depends on the meet, their age group, and sometimes the events themselves. Some meets offer finals for all age groups, except for the 10 and unders. Some meets offer one heat of finals for 11 and 12 swimmers, but two heats of finals for 13 and older swimmers. Distance events are usually swum just one time, and sometimes the 11-12 200 fly, 200 back, and 200 breast are Timed Finals also.

These types of meets provide a valuable learning experience for our swimmers and encourage them to swim at a high level of competition. These types of meets are valuable tools to prepare our swimmers for their end-of-season Championships. Either they get a taste of swimming finals, or get a better appreciation of what it takes to qualify for finals next time.

Swimming the same event twice in one day is quite a challenge; making finals in two events doubly so. And you can imagine qualifying for three. Yet we don't want to wait until our biggest meet to face this challenge. The more experience you can get trying to qualify for finals, and swimming finals, the more confidence you will have, the faster you will swim, the stronger you will be.

A swimmer should enter a prelim race with the goal of making finals. To expect anything less would be to sell yourself short. To expect not to make finals would be self-limiting.

As a swimmer develops and reaches this level of competition, we would like you to keep the following information in mind.

What is Involved? Be prepared! Clear your calendar for the entire weekend. When participating in prelims/finals meets, just expect to be there all day. Ideally, we would like our swimmers to go home to rest and refuel between prelims and finals. Swimmers need to be back in time for warm-ups in order to prepare for their final race(s). Please plan accordingly to assure a successful swimming experience for your athlete.

Atmosphere: The atmosphere at prelims is very different than during finals. The fastest swimmers have a hard time swimming best times during prelims especially knowing that finals will take place only a few hours after their initial, qualifying race. The goal is to swim fast enough to make finals. However, in the history of the FISH, we have had swimmers swim best times during prelims and they were totally surprised when they realized, they had just secured a spot in the A Final.

Pressure: After a long day of swimming the athletes return one more time to the pool for the final races, the fastest races. Who will touch the wall first? Though the pressure is tense, athletes handle it better when participating in these types of meets more frequently. Therefore, when a swimmer qualifies, participation is a must. In addition, the team spirit among the athletes can alleviate some of the pressure. Teammates cheer each other on and the FISH spirit takes on a life of its own.

Reaching Goal Times: Prelims/finals meets create an environment for our swimmers to reach their goal times in December. Representing your team in a final race, scoring points for your team, and getting that time you worked so hard for, is all part of the learning experience.

All FISH swimmers are capable of “breakout” swims. Be prepared for prelims AND finals!