## Piranha Swimming General Information about Swim Meets

Your swimmer is ready for his/her first meet as soon as they can swim the distance required and feel confident enough to compete. The sooner your swimmer begins to compete, the sooner they will see improving times. A meet is a great teaching media and everyone is encouraged to improve their skills in preparation for the next meet. The weeks of practice before a meet and between meets are very important ones. It is during these practices that a swimmer perfects new skills and techniques and prepares for the next competition.

**How to enter your child into a swim meet**

1. Make sure that the swim meet is an approved swim meet that the Piranha coaches plan to attend. You can check the team website. You should also be sure to ask the coach which events your child should enter for any particular meet. Go to [www.piranhaswimming](http://www.piranhaswimming) .com under the events tab to make sure the meet is on our schedule.
2. Go to <http://ome.swimconnection.com/meets>
3. Create an account and add your child/children. Please be sure you enter your child’s USA Swimming number and that it is entered correctly. The number usually is: the child’s 6-digit birthdate, first 3 letters of the first name, middle initial, first 4 letters of the last name. If there are not enough letters in a name, an \* is used. An example would be Suzy Ann Smith July 4, 2006

070406SUZASMIT. If Suzy did not have a middle name: 070406SUZ\*SMIT. Our LSC is Pacific – abbreviated to PC. Our Club Code is PRNA.

1. Once you have an account you do not need to enter this information again.
2. Click on “Enter Meets” tab and click on the meet you want to enter.
3. Click on the child that is entering the meet, and choose the events to be entered. If the child has not swum this event before, a time of NT appears.
4. Save events, if there is another child to enter, then choose that child, enter events and then save events. When events are entered and saved, go to the payment page to complete transaction and pay.
5. Print the meet summary page and ring to the meet with you so you and your child know the events entered.
6. It is recommended to print the meet sheet itself to have important information regarding address, directions, start times, etc.

The next time you need to sign up for a met, you will just sign into your account, choose the child, enter events, pay and print.

If you have any problems be sure to ask your coach or any Piranha board member for assistance.

**At the meet**

Each meet has a warm-up time and a starting time. The swimmers should be on deck and ready to get in the water when warm-ups begin. The quality of each warm-up decides the quality of the performances in the meet. Arriving late for warm-ups starts your child off on the wrong foot before the meet even begins.

You will want to bring drinks and snacks to the meet. Suggested items are Gatorade, fruit juices, fruits, muffins and vegetables. Be aware that concessions are not available at all meets. Food and drinks can make a real difference in your swimmer’s performance. Always have your swimmer bring plenty of towels, *warm clothes* and some sort of deck shoes or flip flops. A sleeping bag seems to be a favorite of competitive swimmers.

When a swimmer arrives at the meet, the first thing that they need to do is find the Clerk of Course table and check in. After checking in, the swimmer should locate their team and their coach.

The heat and lane that the swimmers will swim in are typically posted throughout the meet approximately 20 minutes before the event is to be swum. Swimmers need to regularly check and see if their event has been posted. As soon as a swimmer’s event is posted, they need to write down what heat and lane they are in. They then need to go straight to their coach and let them know as well. The coach will instruct your swimmer what to do next. They will tell them when to get into the water to warm up before the event, when to get out of the water and go to the starting blocks, as well as any advice.

Every swimmer needs to report to their coach immediately after finishing a race. After speaking with the coach, the swimmer may then talk to parents and teammates. Coaches attend meets for this purpose; let them do their jobs – coach! Parents should be there for love and support.

The events included in each meet are varying distances of the four competition strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle as well as the Individual Medley, which is a combination of these four strokes.

# Explanations of Terms and Times

**Age Group**: Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Some LSC’s have divided swimmers into more convenient divisions specifics to their situation: 8-under, 13-over, 15-over, Junior, Senior.

**Alternate**: In a Prelims/Final meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalist are designated as alternates. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often at a moment’s notice.

**ASCA**: The America Swim Coach Association, the professional organization for swim coaches throughout the nation.

**Blocks**: The starting platform located behind each lane.

**Breaststroke**: One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swum as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and third in the Individual Medley.

**Butterfly**: One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed fly) is swum as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first in the Individual Medley.

**Cap**: The latex, silicone covering worn on the head of swimmers.

**Check-In**: The procedure required before a swimmer swims a meet.

**Colorado**: An automatic timing system used at swim meets.

**Course**: Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. Long Course = 50 meters and Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.

**Deck**: The area around the swimming pool.

**Distance**: How far a swimmer swims.

**Disqualified**: A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with an open hand above their head.

**Dive**: Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warm-ups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimming coach.

**Dryland**: The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

**False Start**: When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun.

**Flags**: Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.

**Freestyle**: One of the 4 competition racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam fourth in both the Medley Relay and the Individual Medley.

**Goggles**: Glasses type devices worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by chlorine in the water.

**Heats**: A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swam, after all heats of the event are complete.

**IM**: This refers to a race in swimming called the Individual Medley. In the IM race, swimmers swim either one, two, or four laps in each of the four competitive strokes. An IM race is always swum in the same order – Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.

**Interval**: A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.

**JO**: Junior Olympics. An age group championship meet.

**Kick**: The leg movements of a swimmer.

**Lane**: The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim.

**Lane Lines**: Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting waves caused by racing swimmers.

**Lap**: One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.

**Lap Counter**: The large- numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer.

**Leg**: The part of a relay event swam by a single team member; or a single stroke in the IM.

**Malfunction**: A mechanical or electronic failure – not a human failure by the swimmer.

**Mark**: The command to take your starting position.

**Marshall**: The adults who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a meet.

**Meet**: A series of events held in one program.

**Meet Director**: The official in charge of the administration of a meet.

**Non-Conforming Time**: A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet or vice versa.

**Novice**: A beginner or someone who does not have experience.

**NT**: No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.

**Officials**: The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition.

**Pace Clock**: The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so that the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.

**PB’s:** PB stands for PERSONAL BEST (also known as BT or Best Time) and refers to a time that is the swimmer’s best time in a particular event. (e.g., a swimmer’s PB for the 50 free might be 30.45) Earning new PB times is the ultimate goal in swimming, as swimmers are always trying to improve (“shave time off of”) a previous time. A PB is the best indicator of a successful event. A swimmer should memorize all of his/her PB’s so they know what they need to beat. A PB is every swimmer’s short team goal – they want to earn a PB each time they swim.

**Practice**: The scheduled workouts a swimmer attends with their team.

**Psyche Sheet**: An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event, sometimes referred to as a Heat Sheet or a Meet Program.

**Pull Buoy**: A floatation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.

**Qualifying Times**: Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer.

**Race**: Any single swimming competition.

**Referee**: The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the “wet side” administration and decisions.

**Relays**: A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team with each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: Medley Relay and Freestyle Relay.

**Ribbons/Placing in Events:** While ribbons are great, and swimmers should be proud of their placement in an event, placing is not a significant determination of whether a swimmer had a successful meet or event. There are infinite factors that go into placing. For example, a swimmer could get 1st in their event, but be the only swimmer swimming in that age group and therefore earn first by default. Or, a swimmer could get 10th in an event filled with 30+ swimmers in their age group – quite an accomplishment. Also, competition changes from meet to meet. Therefore a 4th place against a group of highly competitive teams could mean more than a 1st place against a less competitive group. Most importantly, a swimmer could earn a 1st place ribbon, but add time to their PB – the opposite of a swimmer’s main goal: to get a new personal best time. It is important to be proud of ribbons and placement, but to remember that they are not the prime indicators of a successful event.

**Scratch**: To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmers can be disqualified from remaining events.

**Seed**: Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted times.

**Simultaneously**: A term used in the rules of butterfly and breaststroke, meaning at the same time.

**Split**: Splits refer to the time a swimmer uses to complete a certain leg of the race; therefore, in a 100 Freestyle race a swimmer could have two 50-yard splits (the amount of time it took them to do the first 50, and the amount of time it took them to do the second 50), or four 25-yard splits (the amount of time it took them to do each of the four laps). How a race is swum is just as important as a final time, and is evaluated by considering the splits for each race. For example, swimmers should have between 2-4 seconds difference between the first and second half of a race. If a swimmer has less than 2 seconds, it means they could have swum the first half faster, and if the swimmer has more than 4 seconds between the two halves, it means the swimmer swam the first half too fast.

**Start**: The beginning of a race.

**Starter**: The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

**Stand-up**: The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from, their starting position.

**Step-Down**: The command given by the Starter or the Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually the command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.

**Streamline**: The streamline position is the position a swimmer takes underwater after pushing off a [pool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swimming_pool) wall. To streamline, a swimmer must tuck the head into the [collar bone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collar_bone), pointing both arms straight ahead in a tight line. The underside of both arms should be pressing on the back of the head.

**Times**: Times are everything to a swimmer. At an early stage, many swimmers will “shave” or “drop” several seconds off previous times whenever they swim that event. This is relatively rare in swimming, and as each swimmer progresses into his/her swim career it will become harder to cut entire seconds off a PB. Some swimmers spend an entire season trying to lose half a second or less off their PB. Therefore, any time shaved off a previous time is a huge success, even if it is a fraction of a second.

**Time Standards C/B/A:** United States Swimming (USS) has set up categories of times for motivational purposes. When a swimmer swims an event, their time will fall into one of several time standard categories. For most swimmers at their first meet, most or all of their times will fall into the “C” time category – the slowest category established by (USS). In addition to PB’s, swimmers are also trying to move up in the time standards. For example, if a swimmer has a “C” time in the 50 free, she will try to then earn a time fast enough to be a “B” time, and then an “A” time, and so on.

There are time standards for each swimmer that are divided by event and age of swimmer. Therefore, there are C/B/A times for 11-12 girls in each event they will swim at the meet. There are different standards for C/B/A times for 11-12 boys in each event they will swim at the meet. These times can be found in the PACIFIC SWIMMING website at www.pacswim.org.

Swimmers should use the time standards as long term goals. Swimmers should want to earn PB’s each time they swim, and therefore move closer to the next time standard with each meet. Once they meet a new time standard (“I got my B time!”) they will set the next long term goal of earning an “A” time in that event. PB’s are always the most important gauge of a swimmer’s success.

**Timer**: The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.

**Touch Out**: To reach the touchpad and finish first in a close race.

**USA-ID Number**: A 16 part number assigned to a swimmer after they have filled out the proper forms and paid their annual dues. The first 6 parts are the numbers of the swimmers birth date: Day/Month/Year using zeros as place holders. The next three spaces are the first three letters of the athlete’s legal first name. The next latter is the middle initial, followed by the first four letters of the swimmers last name. For example: USA- ID# for swimmer Suzanne Eileen Nelson and born Aug 27, 1976 = 082776SUZENELS.

**Warm-down**: The recovery swimming a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.

**Warm-up**: The practice or “loosing” up session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.