

# Scratch Procedure for Championship Meets

By Coach Hans

There was some confusion this weekend concerning finals swims, so I'm sending this email out to parents of swimmers between nine and eleven to explain the process of scratching from finals in the hopes of helping swimmers and parents avoid the same issue in the future

Before I go into this explanation, I would like to make something clear about BBST's stance on scratching from finals – **we do not scratch from finals**, for multiple reasons:

-When you sign your swimmer up for a day of a prelims/finals meet, you sign them up for not only their prelims swim in the morning, but the opportunity to swim finals in the evening. The modus operandi of every swimmer who wants to succeed (and every parent who wants their swimmer to succeed) is, unless instructed otherwise by a coach, they should be hungry for every opportunity to race they can find

-Looking at these meets and thinking "how can we get home earlier" is a mindset not typically conducive to your swimmers success. I understand how long the days can be (believe me, coaches are still working between prelims and finals when everyone else has left to get lunch and rest), but when you sign your swimmer up for a prelims/finals meet, clear your day

-There may come a time in your swimmers career where their coach may say it's better for them to scratch from either one event in finals (to focus on another), or from an entire session of finals. I can assure you, no one who is receiving this email has a swimmer who is at that point - it comes a few years and a significant amount of dropped time later

With that out of the way – once your swimmer turns eleven, certain meets will no longer be just one session. Prelims/finals meets turn into two sessions per day events. They swim prelims in the morning in the hopes of being fast enough to swim finals at night (usually breaking into the top 16 in that event – it depends on how many lanes the pool has. This past weekend was top 12)

Should your swimmer reach the point where their coach is telling them they can scratch, or if there's absolutely no way you can be at finals that night, the procedure is as follows:

After each event is completed in prelims, about five minutes later they will post the results at the clerk of course. Swimmers who will not be swimming that event in finals will then have thirty minutes from that point to go over and cross their name off the list. If, at the end of thirty minutes, a swimmers name is still on the list, the officials assume they will be attending finals.

There are three reasons scratching is important:

- Most meets have penalties for not swimming in your finals heat. Some meets, swimmers miss their next prelims event the next day, other times they miss one prelims event the next day per finals swim they miss. At some meets, like PNS or Regionals, if they miss a finals swim without scratching, they're out for the rest of the meet. I've had a swimmer before miss a finals event on the first day of a championship meet and was disqualified from all of his events Saturday and Sunday. His mother informed me later he had to pay her back for all the events was disqualified from – that swimmer has since not missed an event

- The meet runs more efficiently when swimmers scratch. Any time someone no shows for finals, the officials have to take an extra minute or so to call for the first/second alternate, and give them time to get up on the block
- Think of it as proper meet etiquette. There's just about always some kid who is willing to take a scratch swimmers place, but they'll never know because that swimmer just left. If you know you can't be there for finals, scratch so the officials can give some other kid the opportunity

If you have any questions on this procedure and it's importance, please ask. If you just skimmed through this email, here's the best summation I can think of: **the fewer people involved with BBST who think scratching from finals is okay, the more successful this team will be**