**Before the Meet Starts**

**Before the meet, find your swimmers events at** [www.dublindolphins.com](http://www.dublindolphins.com) **under the meet tab.**

Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins.

Upon arrival, find a place to put your blankets, swim bags, etc. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.

Swimmers should write their events (event number, heat and lane) on their hand, arm or leg with a sharpie marker. This helps the swimmer remember what events they are swimming and what event number to listen for. The parents should write the name of younger children on their right shoulder. This will prevent confusion in the bull pen staging area.

Swimmers now get their cap and goggles and report to the coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. As with any sport, a proper warm-up is necessary for proper functioning of the muscles and to avoid injury.

After warm-up, gather with Coach as a team for opening cheer. After warm-up, the swimmer will go back to the area where their towels are and sit there until their next event is called. This is a good time to use the bathroom if necessary, get a drink, or have a snack.

The meet will usually start about 10 – 15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

**How to Read a Heat Sheet**

A heat sheet is your guide to know when and where to watch for your child in the pool. Heat sheets are good for the entire meet, so be sure to bring it with you every day if the meet is more than one day.

Whether you are a swimmer or parent of a swimmer, you need to know how to read a heat sheet. Heat sheets contain a listing of all swimmers by event number, heat, and lane assignment. This will allow the swimmer to keep up with where they need to be and when.

Parents, it is important to know what event, heat, and lane your child will be in so if necessary you can make sure your swimmer lines up behind the correct swim block in time for the event. Younger swimmers will also need to be reminded what stroke and distance they will be swimming. If a swimmer does not have this information, they may miss their event (there are no refunds for missed events).

**The Parts of a Heat Sheet:**

* Event Number and Event Name – tells what event number the swimmer is in.
* Heat Number and Lane Number – tells what heat (group of swimmers that swim at the same time) and what lane the swimmer will be in.
* Age (or year in school)
* Team Name (or school name)
* Seed Time – the time listed for a swimmer is their best time in that event – distance and stroke.

 Highlight your child’s name and events so they are easy to spot on the heat sheet. When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and their previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, they will be entered as a “no-time” or “NT”.

**During the Meet**

It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers they are swimming. The swimmer might swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

A swimmer’s event number will be called, usually over the loudspeakers, and they will be asked to report to the bull pen. The bull pen is the staging area where parent volunteers will get the kids lined up and report them to the blocks for their event. Swimmers should report with their cap and goggles. Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. We will do our best to announce what events should be headed to the bull pen, but please do not rely on this. Meets can be very loud and chaotic, be proactive to know where we are in the meet.

In the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the starting horn is sounded to start the race. If the starter feels that one of the swimmers has moved, left early, or gotten an unfair advantage, the guilty swimmer may be disqualified after the race for a false start.

The swimmer swims their race.

As a parent, after each swim, you can tell your swimmer what a great job they did. If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling badly, talk about the good things they did. Be positive and encourage your child. Talk about how they can do better next time. The coach will evaluate their effort. Your job is to be supportive and encouraging.

While a swimmer is waiting for their next event, they should use the restroom, get a drink, or have a snack. They can talk with their friends, or engage in whatever interesting activities they brought with them.

When a swimmer has completed all of their events, they and their parents may go home. However, you should check in with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. Relays are often modified once the meet is underway. PLEASE check with the coach before you leave the meet.

All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

At a swim meet, the Coach is in charge of all team members in matters pertaining to behavior and the execution of the meet. Parents should be supportive of the Coach and be ready to assist as needed. As for the swimmers, they are expected to conduct themselves with accepted standards of sportsmanship, behavior and fair play and to be supportive of their teammates in every way possible. Always be gracious and polite.

**What to Take to the Meet**

1. Swim suit, team cap and goggles. It is a good idea to take an extra of each of these.
2. Towels – your swimmer will be there for several hours, so pack at least two.
3. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, blanket, folding chairs. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
4. Sweat suits or extra clothing to keep warm. Bring at least one outfit. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
5. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
6. Food: Each swimmer should bring a small cooler. It is a good idea to bring snacks. There is usually a snack bar open at the meet, but the lines can be long and many times they only sell junk food. Some suggestions for snacks for swimmers would be granola bars, fresh fruits, yogurt, cereals, jello, vegetables, sandwiches, fruit juices, sports drinks, and water.
7. Highlighter for heat sheet, permanent marker for writing on swimmer’s arm, and pen or pencil for writing down swimmer’s times.
8. Spending money – to buy heat sheets, T-shirts and other merchandise, and to visit the snack bar if you want.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Do not hesitate to ask other swim team parents or the coach for advice in items to bring. The meets are usually 2-3 hours, so be prepared.

**What Do Parents Do At Swim Meets?**

Parents of Dublin swimmers are required to help at home meets. Most parents will be needed for timing events, but there are many other jobs available. The expectation is that each family will volunteer at 2 home meets plus the invitational/championship weekend. The sign up for volunteers will be on the website under the meet tab. Help out wherever you can, even if it isn’t your assigned duty. Many hands make like work.

Parents and swimmers should wear their Dublin spirit wear or team colors to support the team.

During your first meet, you may have noticed the Officials around the pool. For the most part the Officials are parents of swimmers, just like you. The Officials attend clinics, receive training and are certified by U.S.A. Swimming. They are present at meets to implement the technical rules of swimming and to make sure that the competition is fair and equitable for all the swimmers. After you have been to a few meets, consider joining in as an Official.

At away meets, parents should consider volunteering a portion of their time at the meet as a timer to help alleviate the burden on the home team and to help in the smooth running of the meet.

**After the Meet**

Parents and swimmers are responsible for cleaning up the area around where they were sitting, both at home and away meets. Please take all of your belongings and make sure trash gets thrown away or recycled.

Swimmers will report to practice the following morning after a meet, just like usual. The coaches will have the opportunity to talk to their swimmers about the meet.

Parents will be able to access their Dublin Dolphins account at [www.dublindolphins.com](http://www.dublindolphins.com) and under “my meet results” you can see what your swimmer’s times were for all events. If you do not see a time for your child or you see a DQ, it means a disqualification has occurred. A DQ is common in young swimmers, so do not get discouraged, it’s part of the learning process. Remind your swimmer that both butterfly and breaststroke require a 2 hand touch on the finish wall.

The great thing about swimming is that there are so many ways to be successful. Swimmers can have a personal goal broken, break a team record, or win their event. Each time a swimmer does any of these,a team ribbon will be placed in their mailbox at the pool’s front desk. Remember, ribbons are just one the ways we can celebrate our swimmer’s accomplishments. Good sportsmanship, attendance and a good attitude are critical to any sport.

If you believe that your child has broken a team record, please email our team secretary, Julie Swan, at rswan@columbus.rr.com for verification. The secretary and the booster board president will verify that it is a valid record and respond accordingly.

**Just FYI**

One the meets we swim is the Dublin Irish Relays. This is a fun meet versus the other Dublin swim teams (Muirfield, Muirfield CC, Tarton Fields CC). Each team takes turns hosting and it is organized a little bit different from other meets and is very large. Swimmers swim fun relays (i.e. innertube race, cannonball breaststroke etc.) rather than regular swim meet events.

On Fridays, the coach’s make the day a fun swim team day with activities and snacks. It’s the reward for a good week of practice and effort at meets. FUN FRIDAYS are the best…don’t miss it!

“We are what we repeatedly do, therefore

EXCELLENCE

is not an act, but a habit”.