**1-  When will my child be ready to swim in a meet?**

When the coaches feel they are ready is the short answer.  Generally, if a child can swim a legal freestyle and backstroke, they're ready to at least swim those events at a meet, and possibly participate in a relay.  Meet readiness may also depend on the swimmer's maturity and the level of competition at a meet.

**2-  Who chooses the races my child swims?**

The coaches choose for the most part, trying to expose the swimmers to all of the events that they're capable of swimming, balanced with the team's need to score points.

**3-  What are the age groups?**

In the summer the age groups are 8-Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18

**4-  How do I make sure that my child doesn't miss their race?**

Arrive in plenty of time to get your child situated and “checked in” before the meet. The heat sheets will be available in the team area. Find your swimmer’s events and write these down on their arm with a Sharpie (see below).  During the summer, the younger swimmers are often organized in the "bullpen" to help make sure they get to the blocks when they are supposed to.  For older swimmers it's up to the swimmer and parents to keep up with the action and know when to report to the blocks.

**5-  Why was my child DQd?**

We are encouraged to DQ swimmers of all ages and abilities when they commit an infraction.  This helps them learn how to swim a stroke correctly.  It can take a few meets before a young swimmer can swim a legal breaststroke or butterfly, but we do them no favors by letting them pass through if they can't do it legally.  We see teams that do this in the summer, and then when their swimmer gets to District or State they get DQ'd, and they don't understand why.  You will notice that very few of our experienced swimmers ever get disqualified- this is one reason why.  If your swimmer is DQ'd, talk to the coach about it after the meet, and learn from it.

**6-  How long does a swim meet last?**

There's a reason for the saying "If I only had one day to live, I'd spend it at a swim meet- they last forever!"  Well, it's not really that bad.  Summer meets last 2 1/2- 4 hours.

**7-  How are relay teams chosen?**

Typically the "A" relay team is comprised of the 4 fastest swimmers in an age group.  This is easy to determine in the Freestyle Relay.  For the Medley Relay, it's more complicated.  What the coaches seek to do here is find the fastest combination of four swimmers, which they do with the help of computer software.  It doesn't always work out like you'd think it would!  If there are enough members in an age group, the next 4 fastest swimmers would make up the "B" team, and so on.  It's important to recognize that it's really pretty objective.  The numbers (times) are what they are.  Coaches do have leeway to remove a swimmer who is either injured or has demonstrated a poor attitude in practice or poor attendance, but this is rarely an issue. Remember it is the coach’s decision.

**8-  What does "swimming up" mean?**

Sometimes at a meet we will have a shortage of swimmers in an age group, and we will take a swimmer from the next age group down to "swim up" with that team.  The kids get a kick out of swimming with the big boys/girls, especially if they still manage to win the race.

**9-  What does my child "win" at a meet?**

Usually ribbons- summer meets award ribbons for individuals and for relay teams

**10-  What should I bring to a meet?**

Portable chairs to sit in, blankets or sleeping bags for the swimmers to lounge on or swim parkas for them to lounge IN, extra towels, and cool clothing (most summer meets are outdoors, and it IS summer).  Make sure that your swimmer's swim bag is packed with an extra cap and set of goggles, and an extra suit.  Just in case.  There are usually equipment vendors at the winter meets, but not at the dual meets during the summer.  Sunblock, sunglasses and hats can be useful in the summer.  Bring money for concessions, and to purchase a heat sheet and t-shirt at the bigger meets.  Healthy snacks for the swimmers are a plus.  Before the meet, make sure to review the team's warm-up time, and make sure that you're comfortable with directions to the pool if it's an away meet.  Bring a Sharpie marker or something similar to write your child's races on their arms in the E-H-L format (event, heat, lane).  Highlighters and pens come in handy to track results.  Games help occupy your swimmer during their downtime, and to occupy your younger non-swimmers too.

**11-  Do we have an official uniform?**

Yes, but wearing it usually isn't mandatory.  Prior to each season, the team puts in an order for team suits and caps.  You will be made aware when this occurs.  Some swimmers prefer to flash their individuality.

**12-  What exactly is a Heat Sheet?**

This is the meet program, which lists all the events in order and all of the heats comprising them.  We only use these at District and State during the summer, but all winter meets have them.  They usually cost $5-10 and are a way for the host team to raise money.

**13-  How does one become an official?**

By volunteering to learn and then going through an apprenticeship process.  Official positions include Referee, Starter and Stroke & Turn Judge. Becoming a registered official is a great way to learn more about the sport and give something back to the team, and it's also an unbeatable way to get the best seat in the house during a meet- on the pool deck!