**Swim Meet 101**

Are you new to swimming? This information will provide you with a crash course in swim team jargon and hopefully make you feel more knowledgeable and comfortable. Hope you find this helpful. 

**MEET OVERVIEW**

* Swim meets during the summer have the same events taking place in the same order each meet.
* The meets are generally 2 1/2 to 3 hours long and move along very quickly. There is rarely a lull in the action.
* We swim “dual meets” in the summer, which simply means it’s US against another team.
* The home team always swims in the even numbered lanes, generally lanes 2, 4 and 6.
* The visiting team swims in lanes 1, 3 and 5.
* Before the swim meet, the coaches make up the meet sheets that tell us who is swimming what events and in what lane. An index card is made up for each child with his/her name, event number, event name, and what lane the child is swimming.
* These cards are handed out during the meet, when it is time for the child to go “line up” behind the starting block to get ready to swim. The card is then handed to a timer who is at the swimmer’s block. The timers use this card to record the children’s times.

***Parents of 8 and under children are of crucial importance to our team. We rely on them to keep all the younger children together in the team area. When we’re handing out the event cards, we need to be able to find them quickly and easily, to avoid having a child miss a race.***

* It may seem that we’re handing out cards for events that seem a long way off. Races go very quickly, especially the older age groups, who are quite fast! So when a card is given to your child, it’s crucial to get your swimmer to the designated area as soon as possible.
* All children swim in their age groups. They are broken down as follows: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18.
* It’s summer. Meets can be hot!
* Make sure to put lots of sunscreen on both yourself and your child. Bring lots of water and a good hat.
* For away meets, families should bring their own chairs, since seating may be limited at some pools.

**MEET EVENTS**

* Boys and girls generally swim each event separately.
* The events for each stroke go from youngest to oldest. The girls in a given age group swim the event first, followed by the boys.

**100 Meter Individual Medley**

The first event of every meet is the 100 meter Individual Medley, aka the 100 IM. We use abbreviations for everything! It’s like learning a new language.

* Girls and boys ages 11 and up can swim this event.
* Ages 10 and under do not swim the 100 IM in competition in our league.
* In the 100 IM, one swimmer swims one lap, one length of the pool, of each stroke in a specific order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

**Medley Relay**

All age groups swim the Medley Relay, including 8 and under.

* The Medley Relay is a relay consisting of 4 swimmers.
* For 8 and under and 9-10 age groups only, each swimmer swims one lap of the pool, each swimmer a different stroke.
* Swimmers in the 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18 age groups each complete two laps of a particular stroke.
* The Medley Relay has a specific stroke order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.
* Since the younger children only swim one lap each, those swimmers swimming the breaststroke and freestyle portion of the relay must be at the opposite end of the pool, not the starting block end.
* Before the Medley Relay, we need the assistance of those crucial parents of the younger children! We need a parent stationed at each lane at the opposite end of the pool, making sure that the children are in the right place and lane.

**Freestyle**

After the Medley Relays come the freestyle events. These progress as the events above, from youngest to oldest, with the girls swimming before the boys in each age category.

* The children 8 and under swim a 25 meter freestyle. That’s simply one lap.
* Ages 9-10 and 11-12 swim a 50 meter freestyle, or 2 laps.
* Ages 13-14 and 15-18 swim a 100 meter freestyle, or 4 laps.

**Backstroke**

Backstroke events follow the freestyle events.

* Ages 8 and under and 9-10 swim a 25 meter backstroke.
* Ages 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18 (girls only) swim a 50 meter backstroke.
* Ages 15-18 boys swim a 100 meter backstroke

**Breaststroke**

Breaststroke follows backstroke events.

* Ages 8 and under and 9-10 swim a 25 meter breaststroke.
* Ages 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18 (girls only) swim a 50 meter backstroke.
* Ages 15-18 boys swim a 100 meter breaststroke.

**Butterfly**

Butterfly events follow the breaststroke.

* Ages 8 and under and 9-10 swim a 25 meter butterfly.
* Ages 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18 swim a 50 meter butterfly.

**Freestyle Relay**

The freestyle relays are the last events of the meet.

* Make sure to check with the coaches before you leave a meet. Your child may be scheduled to swim in this final relay. The children love relays and get a real sense of being part of a team by competing in them.
* Unforeseen circumstances may result in a child being placed in the relay at last minute!
* The relay team has 4 swimmers.
* Ages 8 and under swim a 100 meter relay, which means each swimmer swims one lap of freestyle.
* Ages 9-10 and up all swim a 200 meter relay, which means each swimmer swims two laps of freestyle.