

Meet Survival Guide

What do we bring to a meet?

- **TEAM SUIT AND CAP:** Bring your swimmer's competition suit and, if possible, a spare.
- **GOGGLES:** Bring two pairs! Have your child "break in" a new pair of goggles in the warm-up pool prior to an event to make sure they are adjusted properly! Prior to an event, make sure the goggles fit snugly or they will end up around your swimmer's neck!
- **TOWELS:** Bring one towel per event plus one towel for warm-ups.
- **COOL WEATHER CLOTHING:** Pack your swimmer's bags with at least a couple pairs of sweat pants/shirts, socks. Night meets will get chilly sometimes!
- **WARM WEATHER GEAR:** Several meets during the season can be extremely HOT!!! We suggest hats, sandals for the hot cement, shade umbrellas, misting machines, sunglasses etc.
- **SUNSCREEN:** Apply waterproof sunscreen BEFORE your child suits up. Sunscreen needs time to penetrate and get to work.
- **WATER:** Especially when the weather is hot, make sure your swimmer has plenty of water bottles and/or Gatorade. Even though they are immersed in water, swimmers dehydrate easily!
- **FOOD:** Bring plenty of nutritious snacks: Ritz bits w/ peanut butter, goldfish, fruit, jerky, power bars, cheese sticks, yogurt, dry cereal in Ziploc bags, etc. You may want to bring some money to the meet, as most meets have snacks, drinks, and meals available to purchase.
- **ENTERTAINMENT:** Books, cards, coloring supplies, whatever- there can be a lot of down time in between events. Bring stuff to keep busy!
- **YOUR VOICE AND POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** We really want the swimmers to feel supported by their team mates. Please take time to cheer for and encourage fellow team mates!
- **BLANKETS / TARPS** (especially if you're setting up camp on a damp lawn)
- **TENTS, CANOPIES, CHAIRS:** Even when the weather isn't wet, swimmers enjoy having a shaded place to rest and hang-out during races. Many families bring a portable tarp and/or tent to hang-out. Bring enough chairs for your family. Look for our team when you arrive at the swim meet. Usually teams set- up their tents in a group area to create a "home base". The kids can socialize and everyone can look after each others kids, especially when you are volunteering on deck.
- **MISCELLANEOUS:** A black sharpie (for marking events, heat and lane numbers on your swimmer's arm; Baby powder (for dusting swim caps); Swim shampoo/conditioner, hairbrush, comb, toiletries, etc.

What NOT to Bring to a Swim Meet:

Valuable and expensive devices such as ipod's, psp's, gameboys etc. Swimmers tend to leave their area unattended, whether it's to swim a race, hang out at someone else's spot, or to watch the meet. Things are not usually stolen, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

What to do when you arrive at the meet?

Other Important Reminders:

- **ARRIVE ON TIME:** Plan on arriving at least 20 minutes prior to your scheduled warm-up time. Please make every effort to contact a Board Member or a Coach if you are running late. We have many relays and entries that will be affected if you are not there. Be courteous to others; respect your teammates.
- **CHECK-IN:** Parent Volunteers should immediately sign-in at the Parent Volunteer Check-in Station. Swimmers need to go directly to their Age Group Parents, get their events written on their hands and prepare for warm-up.
- **WARM-UP:** Your Age Group Coach will call out to the swimmers when it is time to warm-up. instructions, last minute changes, words of encouragement, and the Team Cheer.
- **TEAM CHEER:** At the beginning of each meet the Coaches will gather the swimmers for any final instructions and the team cheer.

FAQ's:

How long do swim meets usually last?

You should plan to be at the meet for 4+ hours, but keep in mind that most of the time you won't be racing. Bring things to help you pass the time such as homework, cards, travel games, posters and markers , music etc.

How does a swimmer know when to race?

All events have an event number (e.g. Event #7, Girls 7/8 - 25 Yard Freestyle). Know what events you are competing in and what event numbers they are. Age Group Parents will assist you to write event numbers on your swimmers hand or arm with a Sharpie when checking-in. Pay attention to the announcer as he/she announces what event is in the water or what event is coming up. You can also check the timing system board

What is my role as the "Parent" at the meet?

- **NOT COACHING:** Leave coaching to the coaches. This includes pre-race psyching, motivation, after race critiquing, setting goals, etc.
- **SUPPORT:** Be your swimmer's best fan. Support your child unconditionally. Do not withdraw when your child performs poorly. Not every race will be a best time. Allow every race to be a learning experience. Work with your swimmers and coaches to positively reinforce any improvements during a race. Focus on praising good efforts, positive attitudes and demonstration of good sportsmanship skills. Support your swimmers' coach(es) as well. They

are the experts. Find a time away from the pool deck to discuss any concerns you have directly with them.

- **REST AND NUTRITION:** Make sure your swimmer gets enough rest and is eating properly throughout the meet. Swimming takes a lot of energy. Be aware that high sugar snacks can actually cause dips in energy later on during the 4+ hour event. The doughnut and hot chocolate in the morning can affect the performance in the Free Relay at the end of the meet. It's better to eat snacks that are lower in sugar and/or have natural sugar in them.
- **MONITOR BEHAVIOR:** Set geographic / territorial limits (know where they are) - you are responsible for your child. If parents must leave the pool area or do their two hour volunteer job, delegate the responsibility for the child to another adult. **NO ROUGH HOUSING!** Please make sure that swimmers are respectful of each other before, during, and after an event. This is particularly important when swimmers are lined up behind the blocks. Encourage appropriate pre- swim warm-ups and encouraging pre-swim cheering. Police your kids in the warm up pool. The Warm up pool is for warming up/down (e.g., swimming laps). Not hanging on the lane line or playing. You also don't want them spending too much time warming up/down as this can wear them out for their other events. Any more than 200 yards is probably too much and the yards should decrease as the age of the swimmer decreases. Again you just want to get and stay loose. This tends to be an issue on warmer days.
- **RELAX AND ENJOY!**

For additional advice and articles on how to prepare you child for a meet and be your child's biggest fan go to www.usaswimming.org.

Great Books for Young and New Swimmers:

Swimming in Action, by John Crossingham and Niki Walker
Swimming for Fun, by Andrew Willett