

Meet Survival Guide

What do we bring to a meet?

- TEAM SUIT AND CAP: Bring your swimmer's competition suit and cap. Caps are required for girls with long hair and recommended for all swimmers.
- GOGGLES: Bring two pairs! 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: It is cold in the morning; make sure you have layers for your swimmer.
- 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: 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. No NUTS please.
- 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 setup 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.

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?

- ARRIVE ON TIME: Plan on arriving at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled warm-up time. Please make every effort to contact the managers 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 check-in with a manager. Swimmers need to go directly to their Age Group Coordinators and get ready to warm up.
- **WARM-UP:** The coaches will inform the parents at the Friday Night meeting of warm up times for the meet, Age Group Coordinators will help make sure that the swimmers are on time for the warm up.
- **TEAM CHEER:** At the beginning of each meet the Coaches will gather the swimmers for any final instructions, last minute changes, words of encouragement, and the Team Cheer.

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 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. Pay attention to the announcer as he/she announces what event is in the water or what event is coming up. Age Group Coordinators will assign a designated meeting spot and a designated meeting time (e.g. 6&U Girls may choose to meet when the 13&14 girls are starting to race).

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

- **NOT COACHING:** Leave coaching to the coaches.
- **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). They are the experts. Find a time away from the pool deck to discuss any concerns you have directly with them.

For additional advice and articles on how to prepare your child for a meet and be your child's biggest fans 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

- **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 preswim warm-ups and encouraging pre-swim cheering.

- RELAX AND ENJOY!