**Swim Meet Tips For First-Timers**

Swim meets are a great way for your child to get to know other swimmers on the team. They are a great opportunity for your child to learn sportsmanship. They will have a chance to challenge themselves and encourage their teammates. No matter where they finish in a race, they always have an opportunity to race against their own best time. To get the most out of the meets, you will need to know a few things. Here are some tips to make the process a little easier for you.

**PRE MEET:**

* Prior to the swim meet, take the opportunity to review the online meet form. The form will indicate the pool address, some suggested travel instructions, the sequence of events, and possibly a projected timeline for the session.
* Each club that attends a swim meet is assigned the responsibility of providing a number of timers for the duration of the competition based on the number of swimmers the club brings to the meet. All SBSC parents are expected to support the club by fulfilling a timing slot at meets.  If this is your child’s first meet, you do not need to time. Use this as an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the meet procedures and to help your swimmer navigate through the meet.
* Be sure your child has a good breakfast. Bring plenty of snacks and fluids to maintain your child’s energy throughout the day.
* Arrive early. Your coach will tell you what time you need to be there. Plan to be there at least 15 minutes prior to that.  Trying to find access to the pool, a parking spot, the check in area and the team area all take time. Your child will also need to warm up before their first race. Arriving early gives you time to get where you are going without missing your first event.
* If your swimmer is disabled and needs special accommodations remind the coach to let the officials know at the beginning of the meet.
* If you are able, bring an extra cap, an extra suit and an extra pair of goggles. Wardrobe malfunctions are stressful for young swimmers.
* Always bring a minimum of two towels.
* Bring a jacket or sweatshirt with a hood, or a beanie style cap to keep your child warm between events.
* Good footwear is very important. Your child will stay warmer and perform better if they spend the day in shoes.
* Bring plenty of sunscreen. Most of our Southern California meets are outdoors in full sun.
* Many parents also bring a folding chair, a book, or a laptop. (Wi-Fi is not guaranteed). Find a spot in the team area and settle in for the day.
* If you are unsure of any procedures or terminology, please ask another parent. We have a team area where the parents sit and they will be happy to help you navigate the process.

**AT THE MEET:**

Check in with your coach when you arrive. There may be changes in the schedule of which you are unaware. The coach can usually be found under the SBSC canopy. Ask another parent if you are not sure where to find them.

* The coaches are **incredibly** busy during a meet and need to focus on all the athletes and many swims. The coach/athlete communication is a priority. Parents should not plan to have a conversation with the coach during a meet. If you have a question about a swim, e-mail the coach, or ask him at the next practice.
* It is important for your child to check in with the coach a few minutes before every race, and also immediately after the race. This is a very important coach-athlete conversation and you should not try to be a part of it.
* Your child will need to check in at a designated check in area or at the admin desk prior to the session. The coach can direct you to this location.
* Other than checking in, you should have no conversation with meet officials. If you are uncertain about anything they are saying or doing, check with the coach.
* The heat and lane assignments for each of the events will be posted within the pool area. They will be continually updated to maintain the status of the meet.
* It is important to know in which event and in what particular heat your child is racing. The event announcer will broadcast the event and heat on occasion. Additionally, many scoreboards will indicate event and heat number.
* Sometimes heats are combined. Be aware of this possibility and plan accordingly.
* If your child has questions, encourage them to ask an older teammate, or help them to do so. This is a good opportunity for the older swimmers to help the younger ones, and it will build confidence in your child.
* Cheer for your child’s teammates. It is easy to get carried away cheering for your own child. This will embarrass them. It is better to cheer for a teammate and let the other team parents cheer for your child.
* Photography is not always allowed at meets. Check the meet form. When photography is allowed, it is only allowed in certain areas. You may never stand behind the blocks unless you are timing.
* Scoreboard results are not final official results. The admin officials will post the results as they are finalized, and the official results may be found on the Southern California Swimming website within a few days of the meet.
* If this is your child’s first meet, make sure they have a fun and positive experience. They will be nervous. They do not need extra pressure from you. It does not matter if they place first or last at this meet. The important thing is that they are trying something new, and challenging themselves. Swimmers of all ages and levels can learn from every swim, whether or not they win the race.
* Resist the urge to tell them how to swim their races. Please let the coaches do their job. Your ideas may conflict with what the coach has told them. This is not helpful and it will be confusing for your child.

**AFTER THE MEET:**

* Your child should always **thank** the coach and let them know they are leaving.
* Check the area to be sure you have all your belongings. Help clean up the team area.
* Congratulate your child on a good effort.
* Do not critique their swims. This is the coach’s job.
* The best 5 words you can say to encourage your child are: “I love to watch you swim.”

**Abbreviations you may need to know:**

FR or FREE – Freestyle

BK or BACK – Backstroke

BR or BREAST – Breaststroke

FL or FLY – Butterfly

IM or Medley – Individual Medley (All four strokes in one race.)

FR-R – Free relay – all swimmers swim freestyle

Med-R – Medley relay. Each swimmer swims a different stroke.

SCY – Short Course Yards – (25 yard lengths)

SCM – Short course metes – (25 meter lengths)

LCM – Long course meters – (50 meter lengths)

Jos – Junior Olympics

JAG – June Age Group meet

WAG – Winter Age Group meet

MIN – Minimum time standard.  Swimmer must have gone at least this fast in a previous competition

MAX – Maximum time standard. Swimmer may not have gone faster than this in a previous competition

BRW – Blue/Red/White – Division within a meet based on time standards. Tool used to have swimmers swim against other swimmers at or near the same speeds.

DQ - The swimmer was disqualified

NS - The swimmer did not participate in the event

NT - The swimmer does not have an entry time