

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS... BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK (or didn't know what to ask)

NST Note: This is from the USA Swimming website, from their sample club handbook, and is only a guideline – if you have any specific questions, talk with your child's coach.

Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as possible.

Before the Meet Starts

- Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all NST swimmers.
- Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
- Write each event-number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.
- Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.
- After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

Heat Sheets.

A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for \$5 or \$6 dollars. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

Before each swim:

- Swimmer should check in with his/her coach at few events before they are scheduled to swim. The coach will give pointers and encouragement.
- A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle to the area behind the blocks. It is encouraged to have your swimmer behind the blocks a few events ahead of time so they don't miss their race.

After each swim:

- He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will ask him/her their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.

Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

- Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.
 - The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again.

After a Meet

- When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay, if relays are at the end of the meet. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there. (The coaches speak from experience on this issue).

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

What To Take To The Meet

- Most important: Swim Suit, goggles, and NST cap
 - Towels - Your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
 - Something to sit on. Eg., Sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
 - Sweat suit and/or extra t-shirts: Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and chilled.
 - Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
 - Food: Swimmers are usually allowed to bring a small cooler with snacks.

Special Parent's Note: The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! At some of the meets, the parents are allowed to sit with the swimmers at the blanket area (those are most of the meets). If you don't think that a cement floor is comfortable, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.