

Welcome to your first home swim meet.....a Parent's Perspective!

I just wanted to share a few things with the new families that may be experiencing their first swim meet this weekend. There are a few things that, as a parent, I wish I had known (or been reminded of).

**First of all...what to pack for the meet:**

1. A chair for each child with his/her name written on the back. In fact, write their name on everything.
2. At least 2 towels in their swim bag. I promise one will be soaked before they swim their first race.
3. Something to stay warm in after each race. My kids wear black hoodies to stay warm. You will see kids with anything from towels to parkas, so whatever works for them, but they will be cold!
4. Several snacks in their bag. You will probably be working the meet, so you want to pack enough snacks in their bags (NO CANDY). I personally pack two waters in each of my swimmers bags (just in case it's a long day). If you forget snacks, then bring money; the concession stands have plenty as long as you purchase healthy snacks, no candy or pizza.
5. Make sure they wear their team shirt to the meet (and remember to wear yours, also)!
6. Make sure they wear their team suit and pack a spare suit in their bag.
7. Make sure they pack their team cap and at least 1 pair of goggles.

**Second, things to do before the swim meet actually starts:**

1. The first thing that I do when I get to the swim meet is buy a heat sheet. Find out what your swimmer will be swimming and write their events either on their forearm or thigh (whatever they prefer) with a Sharpie to help them remember what they are swimming. Write it as Event/Heat/Lane . For example, if your child is swimming Event 12, Heat 2, Lane 5, then write: E12/H2/L5.
2. The coaches usually want the swimmers ready to go 15 minutes before warm-ups start. Assume that you will have parking issues. If you have younger swimmers you may want to have one parent drive around to the doors and get out and unload the swimmer and his/her bag and chair. I am always the parent that gets to get out. ☺
3. Once your swimmer arrives on deck, you are not allowed to go on deck to speak with them. They will be okay! They will probably be warming up or swimming in a race, so make sure all info is relayed before the meet check-in. This is a swim meet rule, not a CA rule.

**Last, things that I wish I had been reminded of or things that I have to remind myself constantly:**

1. Make sure that you have your swimmer check to see if they are in a relay. Names of swimmers on relays are not put in the heat sheets because these are often last minute decisions. Even if you think that your swimmer is done with their events, make sure that they are NOT in a relay. If you don't check before you

leave, then you might be leaving 3 little swimmers on the side of the pool unable to race, and I promise it happens every meet.

2. If you have a young swimmer, they may get nervous and get up on the blocks and start crying. It is okay!!! It is only one race in many to come. You want them to enjoy it.
3. Your younger swimmer may miss a race because they are in the restroom, etc. I would be rich if I had a dollar for each time that has happened. The coaches will deal with them and teach them how to “time out” these unexpected trips.
4. Let the coaches “coach” and the parents encourage. I am still working on this one, but getting better. I have learned that my kids will have a great meet with all personal bests, and then a tragic meet the next time. I have been told that this is normal, too. It is easy to remind yourself of how you don’t want to be when you see a little one getting in trouble with their parents for not swimming well. It makes me try to not be like that.
5. Swimmers are to report to their coach before and after every race. That will be where the “this is what you need to do” and the “way to go” and the “what you could have done better” will take place.
6. Please, please don’t pick other swimmers on your team as “kids to beat” at the meets!!! We want our swimmers to swim well together, compete against each other, and then win a relay together. It makes it hard when kids are upset because they didn’t “beat” another swimmer on our team. If they have to use a goal to swim well, encourage them to beat their own times!
7. Parents, do not overdress!!! It will be HOT in the USC pool area. You will burn up if you are wearing long pants and a long shirt....even in the winter!

I hope this helps. If there is something you’re concerned about before the meet, just ask a veteran swim meet parent.

Good luck to all of the swimmers this weekend, and go CA!!!!