

Swimming Competitively on CHAT

So now that your swimmer has moved up to the CHAT Team, what does that mean?

After years of practice, lessons, pre-comp, etc. your swimmer has proven they are capable and ready to move on to the competitive world of swimming. Here, they will build upon the basics they already know and learn how to compete and grow in the sport. This sport takes dedication, time, effort and above all else, a passion to strive to be better, faster, and stronger.

Our mission is to guide and direct our young people toward each individual's fullest use of their talent and abilities with the belief that realizing their potential in swimming will prove valuable in all areas of their lives as they grow and develop.

CHAT's Central Philosophy (reflected in our Mission Statement) has also evolved gradually, and with the addition of Todd Etherington (ASCA Level IV) as Head Age Group Coach/Team Administrator in 1992 - and now Head Coach in 2001, staff professionalism, consistency and stability is truly one of our more unique features of any USA Swimming program anywhere. Although CHAT has boasted it's fair share of Utah state champions, Top 16, Zone, Junior National, Senior National qualifiers and even three "home grown" Olympic Trials qualifiers, as a self-avowed development program we emphasize the importance of raising effective people first, and effective swimming will follow.

What is expected of a competitive CHAT swimmer?

In order to accomplish our mission, as stated above, and to reach swimmers goals, we require that each swimmer attend a minimum of 3 days per week and 1 meet per month. Coming to practice is key! At practice we continually work on correct stroke form and technique as well as provide a fun and safe environment in which your swimmer can grow physically, mentally, and socially. As the old proverb goes, "Practice makes Perfect." Attending swim meets are also very important. This is where swimmers are able to see that all their hard work in practice actually does something! Competing at meets is how we are able to track their successes and improvements throughout the season. While swimming is very much an individual sport, by attending swim meets, swimmers have the opportunity to score points for the team as a whole and contribute to something larger.

What are the Swim Seasons?

There are two main swim seasons in competitive age-group swimming. There is the Short Course Season (August-March) and the Long Course Season (April-July), usually with a 2-3 week break in between the two. Short Course Season is where swimmers will compete in 25 yard length pools, and qualifying times are a little faster. Long Course Season is where swimmers will compete in 50 meter length pools, and as you may have guessed, the qualifying times are a little slower. For each season, a swimmer will compete at various meets throughout in order to qualify for the state meets at the end of each season.

*While competition pool lengths may differ by season, training in practices may stay in what is available to us (25 yard pool).

What are Junior Olympics & B/C Championships?

These are the two state meets at the end of each season, in which your swimmer will try to qualify for at various meets throughout the season. Both state meets have time standards in which swimmers must be faster in order to compete. The difference between the two meets is that Junior Olympics have faster qualifying times and is much more difficult to get in. Though, not to take away from B/C Championships, the qualifying times for this meet are slower yet attainable for all swimmers who put in the effort.

How do I sign my swimmer up for Swim Meets?

We offer many meets for your swimmer to attend throughout each season, all of which can be found on the team website at www.chatswimming.com. Your coach will notify you when an upcoming meet entry forms are available to be printed from offline (on our website). Once printed, be sure to check with your swimmer's coach as to what events they would like him/her to swim. Meets cost money! It is important that you realize now, your swimmer is involved in an organized sport and putting on a meet is not free. On the entry forms, it is always clear how much it costs. Once entry form is filled out completely, it, along with the money will need to be turned into the main office at CHRC. Be sure to tell them to put the entry forms in Lois' box. There is always a deadline in which the entry form and money must be in by, so pay close attention to when you have to get them in.

What to expect/bring to the Swim Meet?

For every meet, there is what's called warm-ups. This usually begins about an hour before the meet. It is crucial that your swimmer comes about 10-15 minutes before warm-ups begin. We will always warm-up as a team, however, I only am able to do 1 warm-up, and so if your swimmer is late, they will not get warmed-up.

Once the meet begins, there are 3 things you and your swimmer need to know for each race.

1. The Event # - this is what event is your swimmer is competing in, for example, 50 Fly, 100 Back etc.
2. Heat # - This is a subgroup of the event in which your swimmer will compete.
3. Lane # - This is the lane in the heat your swimmer will swim in.

All 3 things can be found on what is called a "Heat Sheet" posted at various spots around the pool. Parents are not usually allowed to go behind the blocks with their swimmer, so the best thing you can do is help remind them of their Event, Heat and Lane #'s (many write it on their hands) and send them up. I will do my best to make sure they know where to go. If a swimmer misses their race, then they miss it. There is nothing we can do at that point and hopefully it is a learning experience for them.

Swimmers need to check in with their coach both before and after races.

What to bring?

- Swim suit
- Goggles, Extra Goggles
- Swim Cap
- 1-2 towels
- warm clothes, Sweats to wear in between races
- snacks, granola, trail mix, fruit
- Water, Water, Water
- Cards, crosswords, puzzle games... something to keep occupied in between races