



What to Expect at Your First Swim Meet: A Guide for Parents and Swimmers

What to Bring To a Swim Meet:

1. Swimsuit, cap, and goggles. Packing an extra suit, cap, and pair of goggles is always a good idea. These items seem to rip and break at the most inopportune times!
2. Towels – wet bodies everywhere, or get a deck coat.
3. Something comfy for your swimmer to sit on such as a camping chair.
4. Something comfy for you to sit on, meets are long and you want to be comfortable. Most parents bring lawn or camping chairs or stadium seats.
5. Entertainment for your swimmer and their team mates, such as travel games, cards, coloring books, books, iPods, Gameboys, etc. - especially important if you are bringing youngsters who are not swimming! Parents often bring newspapers, books, laptops, and sewing, anything to pass the time! Larger meets can be very long. There is usually a 4 hour time limit on the meet but that doesn't include the hour before the meet for warm ups.
6. Small bag of healthy snacks and drinks. Suggestions for items to bring: water, fruit juice, Gatorade, granola bars, fruit, yogurt, cereal, trail mix, sandwiches, bagels.
7. Sharpie marker. Most swimmers like to write their events on their arms or legs. Swimmers will write **E H L** and then corresponding numbers underneath. This is **Event** (the stroke, distance, age group, and male/female), **Heat** (You can only have 6-8 swimmers swimming at one time so there are multiple races in each event), **Lane** (this is the lane in which they will swim for that event.)
8. Sunscreen for summer meets. Most summer meets are held at outdoor pools. Pack plenty of sunscreen, hats and even a beach umbrella or shade screen for protection.

Before the Meet Starts:

1. All swimmers must confirm their participation in a swim meet before the deadline date. This is posted under the event page for each meet. **DUE TO MEET ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS, SIGNUPS AFTER THE DEADLINE WILL NOT BE HONORED.**
2. All Meets require the help of parent volunteers. The more swimmers we enter into meets the more often we will have to time or help on the deck. Timing is easy and it's actually the best seat in the house. Most meets a back up timer will time for you during your swimmers event. After they swim you can then go back to timing.
3. Arrive at the pool at the designated time, typically one hour before the meet begins. This will allow time for coaches to take attendance, have a team meeting and swim warm ups. Warm up times are pre-determined by the hosting team and will be listed in the meet info, posted on the website and at the team bulletin board at the pool. Regardless of what time you are warming up you should arrive at the beginning of the warm up time. **PLEASE ARRIVE AT THE POOL AT THE REQUESTED TIME.** There is a lot to do before a meet begins. Having all swimmers there and ready will cut down on any pre-meet stress.
4. Find a place to put your swimmer's "stuff." The team usually sits together so look for familiar faces then set up camp.



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5. Help your swimmer find the Eagles coaches. Look for coaches on the deck area to let them know you are at the meet.
6. Help your swimmer find their coach and send them on their way. If they are very young you can walk them to their coach but you cannot stay on the deck.
7. There will be a parent or coach who will have event info for your swimmer. Most often each swimmer will get a small slip of paper (heat sheet) that lists each event, heat and lane they are assigned too. These are also posted for parents on a door or wall near the spectators area. Note your swimmers, event, heat and time. Meet Mobile App is also a great resource. Most meets are posted on there. Its \$6.99 for a whole year. Totally worth the money so you aren't fighting to look at the heat sheets with 100 other parents.
8. Write on your swimmer. Use the heat sheet your swimmer was given to write each event number, heat, and lane on your swimmer's arm in "permanent" (i.e. waterproof) marker, like a Sharpie. This helps your swimmer remember what events he or she is swimming, what event number to listen for, and what lane to get lined up behind. This step is sometimes saved until after the swimmers are done with warm-ups. This also allows you to keep the heat sheet with you, therefore being able to keep track of what your swimmer is doing next. You can remove it by using rubbing alcohol after the meet.
9. Swimmers report to the pool and/or coach for warm-ups. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmers' bodies are just like cars on a cold day; they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before being able to go all out.
10. Swimmers return to team area after warm-ups. Time to dry off, put on warm clothes, go to the bathroom, and write events on the arm if this wasn't done earlier.
11. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

The Meet Starts:

1. Know what events your swimmer is competing in. It is important for swimmers to know what event numbers they are swimming. Again, a heat sheet and sharpie are a swim parent's best friends! Keep several in their swim bag. There will also be an event board that will have what event # is swimming or "in the water" and what event is "on deck" or next to swim. That board is updated in real time during the meet. Show your swimmer where that board is so they may keep track of what event # is swimming at all times.
2. Listen for event announcements. Upcoming events are usually announced over the loud speaker, asking swimmers to report to the starting blocks or to the "bullpen", a staging area used at some meets. Swimmers should report with cap and goggles. Example: "Next event #26, 10&Under Boys, 50 freestyle".



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3. Coaches will let swimmers know when they need to be waiting behind the blocks. Usually 2 heats before the one they are going to swim. The timers behind the starting blocks often check to make sure that swimmers are lined up in the right order. However, it is always a good idea to have your swimmer check in with the lane timers to make sure they are in the right lane and heat.
4. Parents, find a seat. According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity, such as timers or stroke and turn official. Parents must sit in the spectator area, usually bleachers on the side of the pool.
5. Swimmers, swim your race. Check in with the coaches...again!
6. Check in with parents. Take your swimmer back to the team area and relax, find something to eat, and wait for next event to be called. Be sure your swimmer is well hydrated and has a few small snacks throughout the meet.
7. When a swimmer has completed all of his events for the day, he/she is able to go home. Be sure however, to check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. Sometimes a last minute change will be made on who will swim a relay. Coaches will do their best to inform the swimmer as soon as they know if a last- minute fill in is needed.
8. Ask for help!! If during any of this you feel lost or confused, be sure to ask other parents or swimmers for help! We have all had our "first meets" and know it can be overwhelming. Once you have attended one or two meets, it will all become very routine and enjoyable.
9. HAVE FUN!!! While we do compete at meets and strive to do our best, having fun, cheering our teammates on and being proud Eagles swimmers is the goal!!