



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...

Swim meets are a great family experience! Listed below are in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first few swim meets. Don't be afraid to ask more seasoned swimmers and their families questions that arise before, during and after meets. We've all been new to the sport of swimming at some point!

A few weeks before the meet:

Consider:

- Which meets do I choose for my swimmer? Many local meets have shorter courses for beginners.
- Which individual events does my child wish to swim? Coaches will be happy to discuss the events with you and your swimmer.
- Relays are put together by the Wave coaches; parents and swimmers do not have input in this. If your swimmer does not wish to swim relays, leave a note in the comment section stating that when you sign up for the meet.

Watch for emails from the team:

- Before the meet sign up deadline.
 - Once you receive this email you can accept or decline the invitation to the meet and pick the events your swimmer wishes to swim.
 - Some meets will offer an "Open" session. Generally this is for age 13 and over swimmers, however, anyone can swim "Open" rather than their age group.
- Once you're signed up.
 - You'll be able to see your swimmer's events, heat times and which Wave swimmers are swimming in the meet once registration closes and the information is posted.

A few days before the meet:

- **Review the meet information** (found on our website under the specific meet you are attending). These have all the basic info you will need, including the address of the pool, when warm ups start, how many awards will be given out, etc. Information on who is coaching and contact information for the coaches will also be available on the website page.
- **Print or write out the individual entry page that has your child's events on it.** This way, you will ensure you know which specific events your swimmer will swim at the meet. The coach may have put your swimmer in a relay, and that will be indicated on the individual entry page too.
- **Consider downloading "Meet Mobile: Swim" and "OnDeck".** Both apps can help track your swimmer's progress during and after the meet. OnDeck requires you to sign in using your Wave username and password.
- **Print out the heat sheet and highlight your child's events.** Typically a heat sheet is provided online that lists all the Events, Heats, Lanes and swimmer's names. We recommend you print it yourself, or have it open on your smartphone.**Some parents find attaching the heat sheet to a clip board is helpful for keeping things organized and dry at the meets.

**Once your child has swum more than once at a meet, he or she will have times listed on the heat sheet. A swimmer with NT means “no time” on the heat sheet and those swimmers typically swim together. A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

The day before the meet:

- **Pack a mini cooler for your swimmer or your family to snack on during the meet.** There will be concession stands at most meets, but it may be nice to bring your own water, beverages and healthy snacks.
- **Pack blankets and chairs if you know you will be hanging out all day.** There is usually space available in a gym, cafeteria or hallway to set up a “home base”.
- **Bring an extra blanket/towel or seat cushion to save your seat in the stands.**
- **Figure out what your swimmer will wear and lay it out the night before if you are leaving early in the morning.**
- **Pack a black sharpie and a highlighter**
- **View the heat sheets (if available online). Write your child’s events (heat, lane, event number) on a post-it note to use in the morning.**

The day of the meet:

Dress in Layers yourself. The pool area is usually very warm; make sure you dress appropriately.

Write your child’s events on his or her arm using a sharpie.

- This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.
- You should write them in numerical order.
- Here is an example:

| Event | Heat | Lane | Stroke |
|-------|------|------|----------|
| 5 | 1 | 6 | 25 free |
| 12 | 4 | 1 | 50 back |
| 22 | 6 | 3 | 100 free |

Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time for your child’s session begins. This time will be listed in the meet information, which will be available on the team website prior to the meet. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. If you are running late, please contact the coaches on deck for the meet. This is listed on the Wave’s webpage under the meet information.

Find a place for yourself in the bleachers. Look for other Wave parents who might be saving seats. It is fun to sit with other Wave families to cheer on our swimmers and get to know other families. It also is a great opportunity to ask any questions that may arise. Consider using blankets or jackets to “hold” your space. Often meets have sections for seating for single event viewing, so make sure to note where those are if you prefer to not sit in the pool area for the whole session.

Find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags in the hallway or commons. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.

Get your swimmer ready, wearing his or her Wave cap and goggles. Then, have him or her report to the pool and coach for warm-up instructions. Look for other Wave swimmers (black and red swim caps) and familiar coaches.

Instruct your swimmer to let the coaches know if it's his/her first meet.

After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the meet begins. Sometimes, they will have a team meeting to attend.

The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

Once the meet has begun

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

According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

8 and under seeding: At some meets, 8 and under swimmers will have an opportunity to be seated in the order of events in a separate area. If the meet offers 8 and under seeding, it is highly encouraged to have your 8 and under child participate. It takes the stress out of getting young children where they need to be for parents and helps the meet run more efficiently.

Swimmers must monitor event status be on time for their events. Swimmers need to be prepared (with his/her cap and goggles on) to get lined up in their lanes a few events prior to when they are scheduled to swim. They should watch the event numbers, pace of the meet and check in with coaches to determine when they should get in line to swim. Approximate timelines are issued prior to the meet's start, but those timelines are not always accurate. The race will not be delayed if a swimmer does not show up; it will proceed. The swimmer will be marked as a "no show" (NS) on the results and you will still be charged the fee for that race.

After your child swims, you may want to look up at the timing board and note your child's time. USA Swimming and the Wave will keep track of it, but sometimes your child may want to know. Some meets use On Deck or Meet Mobile Parent App to track times in "real time" as the meet progresses.

After each swim, the swimmer should go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.

Things a parent can do after each swim

Tell your child how well they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey, that is not like you. You're usually a top swimmer." Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. For older swimmers, you can talk with your child about what they learned from their race, no matter whether they had a "good" or "bad" race.

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things and help him/her learn from what happened.

What Happens If Your Child is Disqualified (DQ) During Their Race

Each meet has officials (typically dressed in white shirts and standing on the deck) who observe the swimmers during the races. Officials are making sure each swimmer is using the proper technique for the type of race that is being swum. If the official sees an infraction they, fill out a DQ slip that is passed on to the coach (this may not happen immediately at the meet). The coach will use the DQ to talk to your child about the problem they had with their stroke. Officials are not purposely looking to DQ your child, but rather ensuring that all swimmers are following the same rules for each race. DQ's happen more frequently in the younger age groups. A DQ does not mean your child has failed; rather, it is an opportunity for your child to learn to become a better swimmer. Your child should expect to have a DQ sometime (or many times) in his or her swim career, and should understand it is all part of the learning process.

Results:

Results are usually posted in a commons area on the wall. They usually take at least 20 minutes to process. If a meet uses Meet Mobile (app), the results are often updated in real time as well. Find the event your swimmer swam on the list and determine whether they have qualified for a ribbon or medal. Typically, those can be picked up at the awards table. Some meets hold all the awards until the end and give them to the coaches for distribution. If that is the case, your swimmer will receive their awards at a later swim practice.

Most meets hand out heat winners. A heat winner is the swimmer who finished the heat first. They are typically given an award when they get out of the pool or handed a card to turn in for an award at the awards table. This is a fun way to recognize the fastest swimmer in the heat.

Some meets have a format called "high point" which calculates points based on your swimmer's performance during the entire meet. These are given out at the end of the meet. If your child is in the running for one of these awards, you will need to stay until all swims are completed by your child's age group to pick up.

A few days after the meet you will be able to access your swimmer's times on the Wave website, USA swimming website, and the OnDeck Parent App. All swims are officially recorded, and those records will be maintained as long as your child is enrolled with USA Swimming. Part of the fees you pay to the Wave pay to enroll your swimmer in USA Swimming.