

"New" GCY Parent Tip Sheet

Q & A - Common questions families have when starting swim team.

GCY website: www.teamunity.com/wigcyg

Who decides what events my child will swim at a meet?

Beginning the 2013-2014 swim season, the swimmers and their parents will choose the individual events on our website. The coaches have the unwritten permission to change any individual events they see necessary. The coaches will arrange relays.

How do I know when to sign up for meets?

Deadlines for meet sign up is listed under that particular meet on our website.

Coaches will e-mail families when it is time to sign up for an upcoming meet.

How do I sign up for a meet on the website?

On Team Unify (our website) you'll be able to see how many individual events a swimmer is allowed to swim at that meet, when the meet and warm ups are scheduled to begin, the pool address, the order of events and any other information related to that meet. Read the information thoroughly.

- Go to the sign up link and click on it.
- Find your swimmer(s) and click on the events you want them to swim for that meet.

What does 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18/Senior mean?

- All swimmers 8 and under will compete against each other at that meet. This means a 5 or 6 year old will be competing against an 8 year old. We do try to get into some meets where they have 6 & under and 8 & under age groups. Most meets 8 & unders swim 25 yds/meters except for the individual medley (IM), which is a 100 yds/meters.
- 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18/senior compete against each other within their age group. Starting at age 9, events are at least 50 yds/meters with a variety of longer races available depending on the meet.

What are "Open" events?

Open events are open to any age swimmer. Most often you will see open events in place of the 15-18 or senior events, so usually the swimmers in the open events are the oldest competitors. However, if a meet has open events, anyone in any age group can sign up to swim in them. That's why you will see them as options when you register your swimmer(s) on Team Unify.

Parent tip: if you have two young swimmers in different age groups, there will be meets when one of your swimmers has events during the morning session and the other swimmer has events in the afternoon. If you can't be at the meet all day, look to see if there any open events during one of the sessions and sign your swimmer up for those events, so that both swimmers compete during the same session. However, only do this if your swimmer is confident, because they will be swimming against much older swimmers. Another reason to consider open events is if you have a young swimmer that loves longer races.

Is it OK to attend just one day of a meet?

Absolutely, many meets run Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday. Again, all meet information is on our website.

How do relays work?

Freestyle relays are made up of 4 swimmers each swimming freestyle. Medley relays are made up of 4 swimmers and each does a different stroke beginning with backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle. For 8 & under relays each swimmer swims 25 yds/meters. Beginning at 9 years old each swimmer swims at least 50 yds/meters, it could be more depending on the distance of the relay.

- It is assumed that swimmers at a meet will be available to swim relays. Swim team is a team sport and relays are a big part of the team. The coaches will include your child on a relay if possible. If your swimmer(s) is not listed to swim in a relay, it is because there are not enough swimmers in that age group for that particular meet. If you are not able to stay until the end of the meet to be on a relay, please let the coaches know by entering in the comment section if you can't stay for relays.
- Coaches chose who will be on the relay and the order they will swim. This is not up for negotiation at a meet. If there is any changes the coaches will make them not the swimmers. We never want to hear or see swimmers treating other swimmers

badly, because they do not want to be on a relay with them. If this happens the offending swimmer will not be allowed to swim relays with their team mates.

- For state relays, the swimmers will be chosen mainly by best times, but attendance could be taken into account.
- At the meets, the 8 & under relay swimmers should find their team mates in their relay and their coach at least 3 events before they swim or right after warm-ups if the relay is at the beginning of the meet or session.

How do I find out if my child is on a relay?

Sign in on our website a day or two before the meet and check your child's meets entries or ask your coach. If they are in relays it will show up under their events.

Does the team ride together to out-of-town meets?

Families are responsible for getting their swimmer(s) to the meets.

Where do we go when we get to a meet?

- Swimmers usually need to cut through the locker room to get to the pool. Swimmers need to find their coach when they enter the pool deck so the coach knows they have arrived. There is usually an admission and heat sheet fee. Family members should sit in the spectator section.
- Swimmers are supposed to be by their coaches 10 minutes before warm-ups begin.
- When seating is limited swimmers are supposed to leave the seats for spectators. Swimmers should go to the swimmer rest area between events. The gym or cafeteria is usually near the pool and is set up as the rest area. Many parents of younger swimmers tend to hang out in the room, because they are responsible for getting their swimmer(s) to the clerk of course.

What should we bring to the meet?

- Swim suit, cap and pair of goggles. A spare cap and goggles are always a good idea to have.
- It is useful to have 3 towels.
- The rest area is usually quite cool so an extra set of sweats and sweatshirt are helpful.
- Clothes to wear home.
- Books, games, blanket and snacks for the rest area is nice to have.
- A sharpie marker to mark the swimmer(s) arm, hand, or thigh with their event information. A highlighter to highlight your swimmer(s) and team members events in the heat sheet.

How are meets run?

- Meets are run in event order and each event has a certain number of heats based on the number of swimmers in each event. Most pools have 6 or 8 lanes, so if there are 12 swimmers in a 6 lane pool there would be 2 heats in that event.
- Swimmers are grouped with other swimmers who have similar personal best times. The slowest group will be the first heat and the fastest group will be the last heat. Grouping children of similar abilities gives every child a chance to be a "heat winner". Remember, if your swimmer gets a heat winner prize it does not necessarily mean they won that event. They have to have the fastest time of all the heats in that particular event.
- Race results will be posted in the hall outside the pool area. Points are given to the top finishers. If you see a DQ next to your swimmers name, it means they were disqualified for some reason. Since your swimmer should talk to their coach after an event, they most likely know what they did.

As a "new" family what goals should we set for our swimmer(s)?

Strive for personal bests. Be a team player. Have fun!

What is a heat sheet and how do we read one?

- Heat sheets are available for purchase at every meet when you pay for admissions. It lists every swimmer who is competing in each event along with which heat and lane they will swim in.

An event listing will look something like this:

#11 Girls 8 & under 25 yd. freestyle

<u>Lane</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Seed Time</u>
1	Ben Jones	6	YDC	NT
2	Matt Homes	8	GCY	20:38
3	Gavin Asks	8	DFAC	18:39
4	Alex Anderson	7	DFAC	17:89
5	George Game	7	GCY	18:03
6	Tim Thompson	8	GBY	21:06

- This is the first of two heats for event #11.
- The seed times are the fastest times that they boys swam that particular event up to the time the coaches submitted the information for the meet. The fastest swimmers in each heat are usually in lanes 3, 4, or 5 depending on how many lanes there are.
- Writing on hands, arms or thighs: It is helpful especially for young swimmers, if parents (not coaches) write their Event, Heat, Lane on them with a sharpie. It should look something like this:

<u>E</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>L</u>
1	1	3-MR/Fly
11	3	2 FR
21	1	4 BA
41	2	5 BR

This swimmer is in:

Event 1 (Medley relay and is swimming fly), in Heat 1, Lane 3

Event 11 (Freestyle), Heat 3, Lane 2

Event 21 (Backstroke), Heat 1, Lane 4

Event 41 (Breaststroke), Heat 2 Lane 5

What is Clerk of Course or what is sometimes called "Bull Pen"?

- Clerk of Course or staging area is where 8 & under swimmers go prior to their events to get lined up. Volunteers from the host team get the kids in the correct heat and lane order, and then escort them to their starting block. **Please make sure your swimmer(s) get to the Clerk of Course at least 10 minutes before their events.**
- The pool announcer will tell you when swimmers should report to the Clerk of Course. If you can't hear the announcer, pay attention to what event is in the water and get your swimmer to Clerk of Course with at least 3 events to go before your swimmer's event.
- It is the parent's responsibility to get their swimmer(s) to the Clerk of Course for their individual events not the coaches. The coaches will help with relays.
- At the meets, the 8 & under relay swimmers should find their team mates in their relay and their coach at least 3 events before they swim or right after warm-ups if the relay is at the beginning of the meet or session.

Do swimmers have to participate in every meet?

- No, but again swim team is a team sport and we encourage all swimmers to swim in at least one meet.
- GCY offers lots of different kinds of meets, from large ones to small ones, swim your own age, YMCA meets, USA meets, etc...we hope each swimmer can find one meet they will enjoy.

What if we sign up for a meet, but on the day of the meet something happens (like a sick swimmer) and we can't make it?

- This happens and it is understandable. Please make sure you try to get ahold of your swimmer's coach or at least a parent of a swimmer who is going to the same session, so they can let the coach know.
- Unfortunately, you will still be charged your entry fees and possibly relay costs. You will not be charged for relays if the coaches can find a replacement.

How old is my swimmer?

GCY follows two sets of rules: USA Swimming and YMCA Swimming depending on what meet we are attending will determine what age your swimmer is.

- USA Swimming rules, a swimmer is considered to be whatever age the child actually is on the first day of the meet.
- YMCA Swimming rules, consider a swimmer to be whatever age he/she is on December 1 to be their age for the full season. So, say there's a swimmer who is 10 at the beginning of the season, but turns 11 in December, January, or February. That swimmer will swim as a 10 year old at YMCA meets.

Can we leave a meet when our swimmer(s) is done or should we stay for the entire meet?

It's great to stay and cheer on team mates, but most families leave once their swimmer(s) are done, unless, of course the adults are doing a volunteer shift in which case they must stay until the end of the meet.

Are there any fundraisers to help with the cost of team fees or meet fees?

- YMCA annual campaign
- We offer a candle fundraiser that is set up strictly for the team families to help offset their team fee for fall/winter sessions.

How involved do I have to be to have a swimmer on the team?

- All families are expected to have one adult in the family volunteer at all home meets or pay the volunteer buy out fee.
- Participate in all fundraisers the team offers for that season or pay the volunteer buy out fee.

How do I know what I owe for meet fees and how do I pay for them?

- You will receive a bill in your file folder for all meet fees. (Typically located on the window sill just past the gates in the Y lobby.)
- An e-mail will go out when meet fee bills are ready. If your meet fees bill is not paid by the due date your swimmer will not be allowed to sign up for the next meet.
- All payments get paid at the member service desk at the YMCA.