

Going to A Swim Meet

THE WEEK OF THE MEET your coach will let you know each event/stroke you will swim and let you practice that event.



WHAT TO WEAR — Most swimmers wear their team suits to the meet with sweats or parkas over the suits. After swimming an event, you can put your parkas or sweats on between events. Parents should wear layers or a short sleeve shirt, as the pool area is always very warm.

WHAT TO TAKE/PACK — Bring several towels for drying off after each event. Also, bring a book, deck of cards, or other items to help pass the time between events. A small cooler with fruit, drinks, and snacks is also nice. Food -- including snacks, sometimes breakfast, and usually lunch is available for purchase at most meets.

WRITE ON YOUR HAND — The best way to keep up with your event numbers and strokes is to write them on the back of your hand with a ball point pen. It might look like this:

#72 100 back

#76 50 fly

#80 100 free

WHEN YOU ARRIVE — Plan to arrive at the meet at least 10 minutes before your warm-up time to allow time for changing and getting a seat. Most meets charge an admission fee for adults to watch the meet. You also have the option to buy a heat sheet (see below).

REPORT TO THE COACH — After you've deposited your belongings, report to the coach on the pool deck for warm-ups. Warm-up time is limited and the pool will be very crowded, so you will need to make the best possible use of this pool time. After warm-ups, return to your "camp area" or sit on the bleachers and watch until it is time for your event. Put on sweats or parka to stay warm.

HEAT SHEETS — Heat sheets which list the order of events (program) are available for purchase at each meet. Parents may want to bring a highlighter to note your swimmer's events and the order of events. The heat sheet also shows seedings of swimmers. Fastest times are usually listed first. However, slower times usually make up the first heats of the events with faster swimmers swimming next. The faster swimmers are usually put in the middle lanes. Remember that meets do not always begin with Event 1. If distance swimmers compete on Friday night, the Saturday meet might begin with event 11 or higher. Sunday's meet will be a continuation in event numbers.

GETTING READY FOR YOUR EVENT — You will usually stand or sit behind the area of your lane until it is your turn to swim. Wait for the starter to say 'swimmers on the block'. Next the starter will say "take your mark". You then wait for the sound of the gun or the electronic beep and you're off and swimming! After completing the race, it is extremely important that you report to the coach on the pool deck for a

brief "chat" about your swim. Then return to the team's area to dry off and rest or sit in the bleachers to cheer for your teammates. This procedure is repeated for each event.

RESULTS — Results of each event are computerized and posted on a wall as soon as they are printed out. You can check the results to get your official time and place. Awards for each meet vary. Some meets give medals for the top six swimmers and ribbons for 7—12. Some give ribbons for more places. Some give ribbons to each heat winner. Competition is stiff at a U.S. Swimming meet, but new swimmers take incredible amounts of time off from meet to meet. Focus on your progress in terms of the amount of time improved, not necessarily on what your place was.

ELECTRONIC TIMING — Most pools have electronic touch pads in each lane to record times. Each swimmer should make a good, solid touch. Other "people" timers are used for back-up. A gun with blanks or an electronic beep with a strobe light is used for starting each race.

OFFICIALS — Many officials are present on the pool deck in a sanctioned U.S. Swimming meet. They usually wear white. Most meets have a referee, starter, recall starter, a stroke judge for each 3 (or 4) lanes of the pool, and two turn judges on the end of the pool. Each lane also has two (or more) timers present as a back up to the electronic system. This organization and structure ensures that each U.S. meet is run consistently throughout the national organization and that all times are "official." Times made at U.S. Swimming meets can be used to qualify for the state and higher level meets.

DISQUALIFICATIONS — A swimmer may be disqualified by the judges or other qualified officials for not swimming a stroke correctly, making an improper turn, etc. For example, a swimmer could be disqualified for doing a flutter kick with the butterfly stroke or failure to touch the wall in a turn. Most swimmers get disqualified at some point in their swimming careers! Swimmers will be told by an official if they were disqualified and for what reason. The swimmer must see the coach after this occurs for suggestions to see that it doesn't happen again. After the swimmer understands what the mistake was, he or she should "shake it off" and focus on his next event. Parents should be supportive, rather than critical, treating the disqualification as a learning experience.

PARENTS AT A SWIM MEET — It is a parent's responsibility to be familiar with meet procedures and have their swimmers understand the procedures. The most important roles parents play are getting swimmers to warm-ups on time. Then a parent can sit back, cheer for the swimmers, and enjoy the meet. Parents are asked not to be on deck unless they are timing. In fact, U.S. Swimming rules state that only swimmers, coaches, timers, and officials are allowed on deck. If you are asked to leave the deck, please don't take it personally.

If you cannot go to the meet as planned? Please email your coach as soon as possible you may have been entered in a relay. You can see if your child has been entered in a relay by logging into your account and looking at the meet entries. If you need assistance please let one of the coaches know and we will be glad to help.