

Information for Swim Parents



EQUIPMENT

Below is a list of common equipment used by competitive swimmers.

MUST HAVES FOR THE NEW SWIMMER

- Goggles: Swimmers use goggles to protect their eyes from the chlorine as well as to gain a clear view of their surroundings in the pool. There are a variety of colors and styles depending on the preference of *the swimmer*. Goggles range from \$6.50 – \$29.99.
- Caps: Caps are designed to keep the hair out of swimmers' faces and goggles straps into place. They can also help prevent over-chlorination of the hair. Caps range from \$3.99 - \$19.99 and come in different materials. Silicone caps pull on the hair the least.
- Women's Practice Suit: Practice suits are used during workouts. They are created with a stronger material for durability. Some may create extra drag to make the workout more challenging. Polyester suits lasts the longest as they resist chlorine damage. Women's practice suits range from \$33.00 - \$76.00.
- Men's Practice Suit: Practice suits are used during workouts. They are created with a stronger material for durability. Some may create extra drag to make the workout more challenging. There are several different styles, ranging from "Jammers," knee length & fitted suits, to briefs. Suits made of Polyester have a longer pool life. Men's practice suits range from \$22.00 - \$47.00.

ITEMS YOU MAY NEED

- Mesh Bag: A mesh bag is used by swimmers to hold their *training* equipment. *Mesh bags* range from \$6.00 - \$18.00.
- Water Bottle: To stay hydrated between sets.

FOR ADVANCED SWIMMERS

- Women's Competition Suit: Competition suits are used during meets. There are a number of brands and styles, depending on a swimmers preference. Women's competition suits range from \$84.00 – \$450.00.
- Men's Competition Suit: Competition suits are used during meets. There are a number of brands and styles, depending on a swimmers preference. Women's competition suits range from \$33.00 - \$450.00.

SWIM MEETS

Swim meets are a great family experience. They're a place where the whole family can spend time together.

Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first *couple* of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach.

BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all swimmers.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
3. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach! Check for special posted instructions in the check-in area.
4. Be sure to purchase the "Meet Program." This will list all events, including lane numbers & heats for those events. Find all of your swimmers' events in the program & highlight.
5. Once "checked in", write or have the swimmers write each event-number, heat, lane number, & stroke on his or her hand or leg in permanent marker. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.
6. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. A swimmer's body is just like a car on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.
7. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her team is sitting and wait there until his first event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
8. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
9. 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 a coach. He or she in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

SWIM MEETS

MEET STARTS

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. Most meets are computerized. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane:
 - A swimmer usually reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she actually swims. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions.
 - In some novice meets, a swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the pool deck. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle.
 - Generally, girls' events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, report to the Deck."
 - The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event.
3. The swimmer swims his or her race.
4. After each swim:
 - He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
5. The swimmer should then go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.
6. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - Positive comments or praise
 - Suggestions for improvement
 - Positive comments
7. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - Tell your swimmers how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with him. You need to tell them how proud you are and what a great job they did.
 - Take your swimmer back to the team area and relax.
 - This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
8. The swimmer now waits until his next event is called and starts the procedure again. When a swimmer has completed all of her events she and her parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and she is not there.
9. Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility. Awards are often gathered for a team and given to the coach at the end of the meet. The coach will give the awards to the swimmers at a later time.

RULES

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules that is observed by an official, a disqualification (DQ) will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. A disqualification may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

DQs are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

- **Freestyle:** Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.
- **Backstroke:** Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.
- **Breaststroke:** An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.
- **Butterfly:** Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

For specific language on any technical rules consult the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book. Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee. The rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for the disqualification. If your child is disqualified in an event, be supportive rather than critical. For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke need to be corrected. They should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in schoolwork-they point out areas that need further practice.

Disqualifications are necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, coach, and parent can make a positive situation out of the disqualification.