

At the Meet

What You'll Need to Know as a Swim Parent

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.

Before the Meet Starts:

- Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins.
- 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.
- Once checked in with your coach, have the swimmers write each event-number on his or her hand in ink. This helps him or her remember what events they are swimming and what event number to listen and out watch for.
- Your swimmer now gets his or her cap and goggles and reports to the pool for warm-up instructions.
- After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his or her team is sitting and wait there until his or her first event is call. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
- 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.
- A psych sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of seed time. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. A heat sheet may be available close to the start of the meet that list the actual heat and lane a swimmer will be competing in.

Meet Starts:

- A swimmer usually reports directly to his lane for competition a number of heats before he 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 will be asked to report to the "clerk of course" or "bullpen". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle. The clerk usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order.
- You can expect at least 4-8 heats or each event.

- The swimmer swims his or her race.
- After each swim: He or she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each line) his/her time.
- The swimmer should then go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.
- Depending on the coach instructions, the swimmer may be asked to do some recovery swimming if a “warm down” pool or lanes are available.

Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

1. Tell him how great he did. The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with him. You need to tell him how proud you are and what great job he did.
2. Take him or her back to the team area and relax.
3. When a swimmer has completed all of his events, he should check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay.
4. Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility. Awards are often gathered for the 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.

What to take to the Meet

- Most important: Swim Suit, Team Cap, and Goggles.
- Talcum powder to dust the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.
- Towels. Your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
- Something to sit on. The swimmer area may be located in a gym or cafeteria. Example: Sleeping bag or blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
- Sweat suits. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
- Team T-shirts. Two or three. Same reason as above.
- Games. Travel Games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
- Food. Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but the lines are long and most of the time they only sell junk food.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Do not hesitate to ask any other parent for help or information.

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers. He or she gets to visit with his friends, play games and meet kids from other teams. He or she also gets to race and see how much he has improved from all the hard work he has put in at practice.