

Parents & Competition

Everything you wanted to know about swim meets but were afraid to ask!

(Excerpt from USA Swimming's Sample Club Handbook) Check with your swimmer's coach for specifics that may be different from the examples given.

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 meets. It may seem a little overwhelming but we tried to be specific and as detailed as we possible 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 and also in the team newsletter.
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. Find the check in place. Usually parents are not allowed on deck so this may be the responsibility of your swimmer or your swimmer's coach. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach.
 - Check for special posted instructions in the check in area. Usually one will need to circle the swimmer's name or the number before the swimmer's name, in each event he or she is swimming, that day. Check in is required so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet. After check in, the meet administrators "seed" the swimmers into heats. Heat and lane assignments will be posted so be sure your swimmer knows where to look.
 - Sometimes the meet is "pre-seeded" and no check in is required. You and your swimmer can find heat and lane assignments by purchasing a programme.
4. Once checked in, write or have the swimmer write each event number on his or her hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event numbers to listen or watch for.

5. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool or coach for warm up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.

6. After warm-up your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her team is sitting and wait there until his first race is called. This is a good time to make sure he goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

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

8. Due to insurance regulations, 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 will in turn, pursue the matter through the proper channels.

9. Psyche sheets or heat sheets are usually available for sale at the admissions desk. It lists all the swimmers in each event in order of seed time. When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his previous best time in that event are listed. If the swimmer is swimming in 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 lists the actual heat and lane a swimmer will be competing in.

Meet Starts

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he is swimming. He may swim right after warm-up or may have to wait awhile.

2. Generally, girls events are odd numbered and boys events are even numbered.

3. Most meets are computerised. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to their lane:
 - the swimmer reports directly to their 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 they will be asked to report to the clerk of course or bull pen. Swimmers should report with their cap and goggles. The clerk of course or bull pen area is usually where the all swimmers checked in before the warm up.

 - The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in the correct order.

- You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event.

4. The swimmer swims their race.

5. After each swim: the swimmer is to ask the timers their time.

a. depending on the coaches instructions the swimmer may be asked to do some recovery swimming if a warm down pool or lanes are available.

b. the swimmer should then go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer. Some coaches may wish to talk with the swimmer before the recovery swim.

6. The coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims: Positive comments or praise.

- Suggestions for improvement

- Positive comments

7. Things parents can do after each swim: tell him how great he did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique. You need to tell him how proud you are and what a great job he did.

- take him back to the team area and relax.

- this is another good time to go to the bathroom, get a drink, or something light to eat.

- the swimmer now waits until her next event is called and starts the procedure again.

8. When a swimmer has completed all her events she and her parents can go home. Make sure you check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay team.

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.