



Victory Aquatics About Swim Meets

Prologue

Periodically I get asked questions about swim meets so I thought I'd write this article 'About Swim Meets'. This article discusses how Southern California Swimming (SCS) and the Eastern Geo-Committee (EC) plan, sanction, and promote swim meets. Other LSC's may plan and sanction meets differently. USA Swimming sets many of the rules that govern the execution of meets.

Be sure to check out the Parents Guide to Swim Meets and About USA Swimming on our web page under the Parents tab.

For those who are only interested in a bit of information this article is written in sections:

- Meet Mobile
- Planning Swim Meets
- Sanctioning Meets
- Team Swim Meet Processing
- At the Meet
- After the Meet

Meet Mobile

Be sure to download Meet Mobile. Meet Mobile is a phone AP that gives real time information for swim meets in process. It shows each event for each swimmer for each team with the entry time and seeded position. Finish time is usually available almost immediately after the swimmer touches the touch pad. At the end of the event, it will show the final place and the amount of time dropped or added. If the host admin uploads Heat and Lane assignments they will show also.

A couple of notes:

Sometimes the host meet admin has a problem trying to connect to Meet Mobile, so no information is available. When the internet connection is resolved all data is immediately available. In the rare cases where they can't connect during the meet, the results are usually downloaded as soon as the admin is able to get an internet connection.

If the swimmer doesn't touch the pad, or a pickle doesn't work, or there is a discrepancy problem that needs to be resolved, all times will be held up until the problem is resolved. As soon as the time gets posted all times that were being held up get downloaded.

If a non-conforming time is used for the entry time (see article It's About Time (Standards)) rather than the swimmer's actual time the drop or add time will not be accurate.

Warning, Meet Mobile can be addictive for die-hard swim parents.

Planning Swim Meets

Swim meets are planned for a calendar year in the year prior to the actual meets.

USA Swimming schedules the date of National level meets around January-February of the preceding year. Most of these meet dates are consistent from one year to the next.

Our **Western Zone** will schedule the Zone level meets, including Sectionals, around February-March so as not to conflict with the National Meets. These meet dates are also consistent from one year to the next.



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Our LSC (Local Swimming Committee) ***Southern California Swimming*** (SCS) then schedules the dates for the Senior level meets and the Age Group Championship meets during the first quarter of the year. Once planned they send the schedule out for bids.

Once the SCS meet schedule is published our ***Eastern Geo-Committee*** (EC) Planning committee plans the meet schedule for the coming year. Things they take into consideration are:

- Meet attendance for the prior year, which types of meets were heavily attended, and which were not;
- Facility availability, how difficult has it been to find appropriate facilities.
- Short Course Yard (SCY – 25 yard) meets; are planned for September thru March, and a few during April thru July
- Long Course Meter (LCM – 50 meters) meets are planned for April thru July. These meets need a 50 meter pool and there are only a few 50 meter pools available for the Eastern Geo-Committee swim teams.
- Scheduling of the Eastern Committee Festival meets (SCY and LCM). These meets are ‘championship like’ meets for the beginning swimmers. The team with top points usually gets an award plaque.
- Scheduling of the Eastern Committee Championship meets (SCY and LCM). These meets are for the intermediate/advanced Age Group swimmers. The team with top points usually get a trophy.
- Scheduling “C” level, A/BB/B level, and A/BB/B/C level meets given the available dates, also taking holidays into consideration.
- Determine if this is a ‘free weekend’ meet and which teams in other SCS Geo-Committees could attend. Note: some meets may be ‘Free Weekend’ meets, meaning it is open to teams outside the EC.

The EC Planning committee presents the proposed schedule to the EC Board of Directors and coaches around April – May. Changes may be suggested. Once approved:

- the schedule is sent to each team in the EC (around 24-26 teams);
- teams bid on the meets they would like to host and submit their bids to the EC Planning committee.
- any bid conflicts are resolved by the EC BOD and coaches.
- meets are formally awarded, and the schedule is finalized for the coming year. This usually happens around May-June.

Sanctioning Meets

Once a ‘Host’ team is awarded a meet the host team gets commitments for meet admin and officials. The host team and meet admin plan the meet events, taking into consideration the 4-hour session rule and potential entries.

The 4-hour session rule states that sessions with any 12 and under events cannot go longer than 4 hours. This does not apply to sessions with only 13 and over.

The host team, with the help of the meet admin, prepare a sanction request form and submits to SCS for approval.

SCS ensures the meet complies with USA Swimming and SCS rules and guidelines. When the meet is approved it is formally ‘sanctioned’.



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Sanctioned meets are then posted on the SCS web site under the 'Meets' tab. **Every sanctioned meet has a "Meet Sheet" that gives ALL the information about the meet.** These meet sheets are always attached to the event when posted.

Because meets are planned so far in advance, circumstances may require a change of host team and/or facilities. There should be no changes once a meet is sanctioned.

Types of Meets

Most meets consist of Timed Finals events. Some meets consist of Preliminary Heats and Final Heats (H/F). Some meets consist of Timed Finals events for 12 and under and Preliminary Heats and Finals for 13 and over.

Timed Finals. These events are entered and swam only once during the meet. Awards and points apply to the results of the event. All age group meets except the invite and championships are Timed Finals meets.

Preliminary Heats and Finals (H/F): These events have both preliminary and final heats. The fastest times in the preliminary heats qualify for the finals, regardless of entered time standard. Typically, the fastest 8 times qualify for the "A" finals. The next fastest 8 times qualify for the "B" finals. The number of lanes of Finals heats may vary depending on the facility and the meet. The meet sheets will specify how the finals are organized.

SCS Age Group Invite Meets: Invite meets are WAG (Winter Age Group) and JAG (June Age Group). Ages 13-18 swim prelim in the morning and finals in the evening. 12 and under swim Timed Finals after the preliminary heats.

SCS Age Group Championship Meets: Championship meets are SprAG (Spring Age Group) Championships, SumAG (Summer Age Group) Championships, and SCS Elite Championships. Everyone swims Preliminary Heats and Finals.

EC Festival Meets: These meets are BB/B/C 'championships'. All events are Timed Finals.

EC Championships Meets: These meets are A/BB/B. Ages 13-18 swim prelim in the morning and finals in the evening. 12 and under swim Timed Finals after the preliminary heats. The meet host may choose to do preliminary and finals for all events. The meet sheet will define how the meet is conducted.

Senior Meets: All senior meets are Preliminary Heats & Finals (H/F). There are no age groups. Anyone who meets the qualifying times may enter the event. The 8 fastest times qualify for the "A" finals, the next 8 qualify for the "B" finals, and the next 8 qualify for the "C" consolation finals.

Meet Fees

Hosting a swim meet is expensive. The meet host charges fees to help cover the cost of swim meets. The costs include but are not limited to:

- Renting a pool. These costs have risen substantially since the COVID shutdown. Many facilities have become reluctant to rent their pool or are refurbishing their pools.
- Hiring the meet admin and officials. This usually includes the computers and pickles.
- Purchasing awards
- Obtaining touch pads and (optionally) backstroke wedges.
- Obtaining stop watches, chairs, clipboards, pencils, etc.
- Providing E-Z ups for the meet admin, coaches, and timers.



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- Providing audio equipment for the announcer.
- Providing meals and snacks for the officials and coaches. (I heard that some coaches decide to attend a meet because the food is very good.)
- Water and refreshments for the timers and volunteer helpers.
- Sanction fees
- A small % of the meet fees goes to SCS.

Individual meet event fees and a swimmer surcharge is determined and included in the sanctioning document. USA Swimming and SCS impose max limits on these fees. The Meet Sheet contains the host fees for the meet. Our team charges a \$10 per account surcharge to help cover sending a coach(es) to the meet.

Team Swim Meet Processing

Meet Entry

Teams decide which meets they will attend. When the meet is sanctioned and posted on the SCS web site the team downloads the meet information and creates a Meet Event. **The Meet Sheet is attached to the meet event.**

Upcoming meet event emails are sent to the team about a month prior to the meet and again about a week prior to the registration deadline. **The deadline for the team to submit meet entries is 10 days prior to the meet. The team registration deadline is usually 2-3 days before the entries must be submitted.**

Parents commit swimmer(s) to attend the meet and may pick events or let the coach pick the events. (See the Parents Guide to Swim Meets for how to sign up.)

Submitting Entries

Once the registration deadline is closed the coach(es) will verify the entries.

- Verifies the swimmer is registered with USA Swimming.
- Verifies the swimmer meets the qualifying time standard.
- May decide to sign the swimmer up for different, more challenging, event(s).
- Determines if the swimmer may qualify for an event using a non-conforming time rule.
- Approves the entry.

After all entries have been approved, the team meet manager or coach:

- May send a meet entry report to the entered accounts. If the account notices a problem they need to contact the coach immediately.
- Generates the meet entry file and documents.
- Verifies the generated entry fees are correct.
- Sends the meet entry file and documents to the host team meet admin. Once submitted, the fees are non-refundable.
- Invoices the accounts for the meet fees.
- Writes and mails a check to the host team for the total meet fees.
- Invoices each account for a team meet surcharge to help cover the cost and expenses of sending a coach or coaches to the meet.



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When the host meet admin receives the meet entry file they will verify USA Swimming registration. Some meets are ‘**proof of time**’ meets. The event entry times for proof of time meets are verified against the USA Swimming SWIMS database. (The SWIMS database keeps a record of every time for every event for every swimmer for every USA Swimming sanctioned meet forever.) Any problems are sent to the coach and must be resolved immediately, or the swimmer will not be included in the meet.

Meet Parent Info

3-5 days before the meet the host meet admin sends meet documents to each team. These documents include:

- Estimated Timeline
- Timing Assignments
- Entry List by Team
- Warm up time and assignments
- Psych Sheets – Swimmers are seeded by entry time only.

The team meet manager or coach summarizes this information for the team and sends an email to each entered account. This email is very important as it summarizes the times parents need to show up, warm up, and the warmup lanes.

The Service Hour Admin updates the meet JOBS including timing chair jobs and sends job signup emails to the entered accounts.

At the Meet

Refer to the Parents Guide to Swim Meets for a lot of useful information about what the parents and swimmers should be doing before, during, and after a swim meet.

Check-In

Most Age Group meets are “**positive check-in**” which means the swimmer **MUST** check in at least 45 minutes prior to their first event. Swimmers who do not check in will not be assigned a heat and lane, they will not be able to compete.

At check-in the swimmer has an opportunity to ‘scratch’ an event if their entries exceeded the max number of events or are unable to swim that event for whatever reason. Events cannot be added. Meet fees will NOT be refunded for scratched or missed events.

Event information is posted on fences or walls, boys on one side and girls on the other.

Senior meets use ‘**automatic check-in**’ meaning there is no check-in. The events are pre-seeded, and heats and lanes are assigned prior to the meet start.

Timed Final & Preliminary Heat and Lane Assignments

30 minutes prior to the event the host meet admin will assign heats and lanes to the swimmers who checked in for the event (positive check-in).

Heats are the division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at one time. The number of heats depends on the total number of swimmers checked-in divided by the number of lanes being used for the meet. Some events may have only a few swimmers entered and only have one heat while other events may have many swimmers entered and will have lots of heats.



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As soon as the heat and lanes are assigned the heat sheets for the event will be posted. Usually at least 20-25 minutes prior to the start of the event.

Heat and lane assignments depend on whether the event is a 'Timed Final' or 'Preliminary Heats and Final'. Timed Final heats and lanes are assigned from fastest to slowest. The fastest swimmers in the heat are in the middle lanes while the slower in the heat will be in the outer lanes. A 'Preliminary Heat' may be 'circle seeded' meaning the fastest swimmers will be assigned to the middle lanes in the first 4 heats and slower swimmers will be moved into the outer lanes in the first four heats. Heats 5 and up will be assigned fastest to slowest. Sometimes preliminary heats will be assigned slowest to fastest.

Finals Heat and Lane Assignments

Within minutes after the preliminary event is completed, the Finals will be pre-seeded based on time, fastest to slowest. The announcer will announce the swimmers who qualified for the finals plus 2 alternates. Then the announcer will declare, **"you have 30 minutes to scratch or declare your intent"**. If the swimmer wants to scratch the finals event they must notify the admin within 30 minutes. If they do nothing the swimmer will automatically be entered into the final.

Declaration of Intent: A swimmer qualifying for the finals or a named alternate may want to scratch depending on the results of a future event. In this case they must notify Admin within 30 minutes after the reading of an event's results that he/she may wish to scratch and will declare his/her final decision within 30 minutes following his/her subsequent event identified in the intent. In this case the Heat and Lane assignments for the event will not be marked as FINAL until the swimmer competes in the declared event.

Once all scratches have been declared the meet admin will assign heats and lanes to the top fastest swimmers and the Event Heat and Lane assignments will be marked as 'FINAL'. It is possible for swimmers who were close to the finals but didn't qualify at first to 'scratch up' into the finals. **Swimmers who are within 5 places of the finals should always check the FINAL heat and lane assignments to see if they may have 'scratched up' before they leave.** Note: Meet Mobile does NOT indicate that a swimmer who 'scratched up' qualified for the finals. Always check the posted event.

Rule: Any swimmer who qualifies for the finals and does not show up will be disqualified from the rest of the meet. This rule does not apply to swimmers who have 'scratched up' into the finals. If it's the last final of the meet the swimmer will be fined.

Awards & Points

Timed Final events. Although heats and lanes are seeded based on entry time, places are given based on the time standard level of the entry time. Currently the EC age group meets will place the swimmer according to: "C", "B/BB", and "A and above". The top 6 places in each of these categories are awarded prizes, usually ribbons. The top 16 places in each category will score points based on a points scale.

Preliminary Heats and Finals (H/F) events: Typically, the fastest 8 times qualify for the "A" finals regardless of time standard level. The next fastest 8 times qualify for the "B" finals. Medals are usually awarded for the top 8 places. Points are awarded for the finals places.

Senior Meets: Only the top 3 finishers in the "A" finals may be awarded medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze). Points are not awarded.

Bonus Events

Senior meets and meets that have very fast time standards may offer Bonus Events to make it feasible for a swimmer to commit to the meet.



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Most Senior level meets allow for bonus events. Some meets set time standards for the Bonus Events and some meets do not have time standards for Bonus Events. The meet sheet will define how Bonus Events can be qualified if Bonus Events are offered.

A few typical rules about Bonus Events are:

A swimmer qualified in one individual event may enter the qualifying event and up to a total of three events; a swimmer qualified in two, three or four events, may enter the qualifying events and a single bonus event; a swimmer qualified in five or more events must prove all events entered.

A swimmer qualified in one or two individual events may enter the event/s and up to three total events; a swimmer qualified in three or more events must prove all events.

A swimmer qualified in an individual event may enter the event and 2 bonus events; a swimmer qualified in 2 individual events may enter the events and 1 bonus event; a swimmer qualified in 3 individual events may enter the events and 1 bonus event. A swimmer qualified in 4 or more individual events must prove all events.

Time Trials

Time Trials are an opportunity for a swimmer to swim an event to get a time. They do not require a qualifying time and are not competitive. Times are official and can qualify an event for a future meet. Swimmers will usually do a time trial when they believe they can get a specific time.

Some H/F meets will offer 'Time Trials' in the afternoon between preliminary and final sessions. An announcement will be made in the morning when sign up for time trials is open and closed. Payment for the time trial events must be made at that time. After the sign-up closes, event, heat, and lane are assigned and posted. Swimmers must provide their own timers.

The Meet Sheet will indicate if and when time trials are offered.

Exhibition

Age Group swim meet competitions are limited to ages 5 to 18. Senior level meets require qualifying times for every event. If a swimmer over 18 needs to get a senior level qualifying time the only way to get that time is to swim at an age group meet because age group meets are the only meets that allow a no time or a slow time. So they can get a time Age Group swim meets will allow a swimmer over 18 to swim the event as "Exhibition", meaning they will be able to get a time but do not compete and do not get awards.

After the Meet

Meet Results

Within a couple of days after the meet, the results will be posted on the SCS website for the SCS Sanctioned meets. Each team needs to import the results file to update the times for the team's swimmers. The results file contains a lot of data for each swimmer about the event including:

- Swimmer name, age, gender
- Event
- Place
- Finish time



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- Base time (this is the swimmer's actual entry time for the event. It is not the entry time for a non-conforming time.)
- Improvement time: actual time dropped or added.
- P/F/T: indicator that shows if this time is a Preliminary time or a Final time
- Points – only valid if the meet actually awards points.

Note: DQ events are not included in the meet results. The host meet admin sends a DQ report to each coach for their DQ swimmer events. Coaches use this report to know where the swimmer may need help.

Meet Result Reports

Once imported the results can be used to generate a lot of different reports and statistics. The reports should be available on our website under the Performance tab within a week after the meet. Check out some of the reports:

- Team Records
 - ✓ SCY
 - ✓ LCM
 - ✓ SCY Relays
 - ✓ LCM Relays
- Team Performance
 - ✓ Best Times by roster group / swimmer
 - ✓ Best Times 5-8 by roster group / swimmer
 - ✓ Championship Qualifiers
 - ✓ Attendance per meet
 - ✓ Time Drops by roster group / swimmer / meet
 - ✓ Time Drops Total by Rank
 - ✓ Time Drops Total by Athlete
 - ✓ Time Drops Total by Group
 - ✓ Time Drops Summary
 - ✓ Total Points - by roster group / swimmer / meet
 - ✓ Total Points by Rank
 - ✓ Total Points by Athlete
 - ✓ Total Points by Group
 - ✓ Total Points Summary
- Top 10 Times – The 10 all-time personal best performances for an age group / event / swimmer
- Season Best Times – For each season, the personal best time for each age group / event / swimmer
- Meet Results – reports for each season for each meet
 - ✓ Meet Results
 - ✓ Relay Results (if applicable)
 - ✓ Meet Recap (when written)
 - ✓ Performance (for each swimmer based on event improvement)
 - ✓ Awards
 - ✓ Awards by Athlete
 - ✓ Top 10 Times
 - ✓ Points



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Addendum: