

**Hamden Hall Aquatic Club**  
**Q & A**  
**Swim Meets and Parent Responsibilities**

**Swim Meets.** Swimming competitions are called meets. Meets are organized so that children are competing against other children of similar ages and abilities. Questions you should ask are:

**Q. Do I chose the meets my child competes in?**

A. Yes. Swimmers and parents are encouraged to talk to their coach about attending meets.

**Q. How do I enter my child in a meet?**

A. Information on Team Meets is located on our website. You can accept or decline attendance at the meets using the website. Reminder emails with deadlines will go out prior to the Team meet entry being sent to the host team.

**Q. How often will my child compete in meets?**

A. A Team Meet schedule is posted on the website the beginning of each season. Generally, one or two Team Meets are scheduled each month of the season. A coach will attend all Team Meets.

**Q. Will a coach be available to travel to a non team meet to be with my swimmer?**

A. Coaches are people too, and have other responsibilities on off weekends. Usually if you choose to go to a meet that is not scheduled as a Team Meet, you are on your own.

**Q. Where are the meets held?**

A. HHAC competes in meets held in surrounding cities/towns in CT.

**Q. What are the differences between short course and long course seasons?**

A. Short course (SC) simply means swimming in a pool that is 25 yards. Long course (LC) means swimming in a pool that is 50 meters (like the Olympics). There are seasons for each. SC season is September thru March, and LC season is April thru August. The events are roughly the same. For example, there is a 50 meter (LC) freestyle as well as a 50 yard freestyle, but a meter is slightly longer than a yard (1 meter = 3.3 yards).

**Q. Who prepares and sends the meet entries to the host team?**

A. Meet entries are prepared by the Coaches and entries are sent by the Head Coach.

**Q. Who is responsible for providing transportation to meets?**

A. Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their swimmer.

**Q. What do parents do at the meets?**

- A. At Home Meets, parents are asked to perform required functions such as timing, marshals, computer operators, officials, working with meet management, helping with hospitality, etc. At Away Meets, parents are often asked to help with timing.

**Q. What do we need to do to prepare for the swim meet?**

- A. Make sure you bring all of your swim gear; team suit, team cap, goggles, and more than one towel. Usually it is not a good idea to use new goggles for the first time at a meet. Make sure you prepare for the weather by bringing proper clothing; parkas, sweaters, extra pants if cold. Don't forget sunscreen for summer outdoor meets. Also, bring water, Gatorade, and nutritious food so your child will eat properly and stay hydrated. Make sure your swimmer gets a good night's sleep before each day of the meet.

**Q. What do we do when we arrive at the meet?**

- A. Make sure you arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the beginning of warm-ups or when the coaches tell you to be there. Check in with your coach to see when the swimmer should get ready for warm-ups. Purchase a program to determine which events, heats and lanes your swimmer is in. Or if the meet host is using the MeetMobile App you can access their events, heat, lanes and results on the App. Coach will also have a program and can supply this information to you. Many swimmers use a Sharpie to write event information on their hands, feet or legs to help them remember. Encourage the swimmer to conserve energy and to not use all of their energy playing around at the meet. Save it for the race. Sit with the team and cheer for the HHAC swimmers.

**Q. What is an Event?**

- A. An event is a specific type of race such as "11-12 year old Girls, 100 yard butterfly". There may be many "heats" per event.

**Q. What is a Heat?**

- A. When there are more swimmers for an event than there are lanes in the pool (for example, 16 swimmers in an eight lane pool), the first heat includes eight swimmers. The second heat includes the next eight swimmers. The best times from all the heats for an event determine the first, second, and third place finishers for the event. A swimmer can win his or her heat and still not place overall in the event.

**Q. Why do I have to be there for warm up when my child does not swim until two hours later?**

- A. Warm-up is essential because it helps the swimmers get focused on their events and accustomed to the pool that they are racing in (starts, turns, backstroke count, etc.). Swimmers are accustomed to doing a good warm up everyday at practice and need to create the same experience on meet day. Not warming up can lead to injuries in the future. Swimmers should show up to warm-up on time and be ready to get in at the START of warm-up.

**Q. What does it mean to be "DQ"ed?**

- A. It means there are aspects of the stroke that we still need to work on! When a swimmer is disqualified or "DQ"ed it means that there is something that they did that is illegal under the swimming rules. A DQ can be for something like a one handed touch in breaststroke, false starting, or a stroke violation like flutter kick on the fly. A DQ is no big deal and although it may cause some tears, it is best to keep it in perspective. Every swimmer has received or will receive a DQ at some point in his or her swimming career.

**Q. What is a False Start?**

A. When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the start horn sounds.

**Q. What strokes do the swimmers use in competition?**

A. Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

**Q. What is Freestyle?**

A. Freestyle is usually the front crawl with the flutter kick, but any stroke or combination of strokes is legal as long as the swimmer does not walk on the bottom of the pool or use the lane line to gain momentum, and touches the walls on turns.

**Q. What is Backstroke?**

A. Backstroke is done on the swimmer's back. A flutter kick is used while the arms alternate (one then the other). Swimmers cannot roll past 90 degrees from their back as they stroke and cannot roll onto their sides or stomach when approaching the finish wall. (Many younger swimmers have a tendency to do this to see how close they are to the wall; they will need to learn to count the number of strokes they need to take after they pass under the flags.)

**Q. What is Breaststroke?**

A. The breaststroke uses the whip kick (or frog kick is acceptable), while arms pull underwater simultaneously. The two hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turn and finish.

**Q. What is Butterfly?**

A. In the butterfly, the feet and knees are together on the kick (dolphin kick), while arms move simultaneously. The two hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turn and finish.

**Q. What is an Individual Medley?**

A. An event where the swimmer swims each stroke in a specific order: fly, back, breast, and free.

**Q. What are Relays?**

A. Relays are a combination of four swimmers. The freestyle relay consists of four individual freestyle swimmers and the medley relay consists of four individual strokes--backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle. The coaches will determine who swims on the relays.

**Q. How long is each race?**

A. Different age groups swim different race lengths. Short Course distances for 8 & Under swimmers are generally 25, 50 or 100 yards and their Long Course distances are 50, 100 or 200 meters. 9 – 12 year olds swim Short Course distances of 50, 100, 200 or 500 yards and 50, 100, 200 and 400 meters. Swimmers, age 13 and older, swim Short Course distances of 100, 200, 500, 1000 and 1650 yards and Long Course distances of 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 meters.

- 25 yards=1 lap
- 50 yards=2 laps
- 100 yards=4 laps etc.
- 50 meters=1 lap
- 100 meters=2 laps
- 200 meters=4 laps etc.

**Q. How should parents behave at meets?**

- A. Parent's behavior at swim meets is vital to the success of their swimmer. It is also important for the success of the team.
- 1) Don't Coach. Leave the coaching to the coaches. This includes pre-race strategy, "psyching up", and motivating. This also includes post-race critiquing and setting goals.
  - 2) Support the Coaches. They need your support for everyone to "win".
  - 3) Be Your Swimmer's Best Fan. Support your child unconditionally. Do not get upset or withdrawn if your child performs poorly. Your child should not have to perform well to win your approval and support.
  - 4) Support and cheer for all swimmers on the team.
  - 5) Take your concerns directly to the coach in an appropriate manner. Do not go to parents to discuss concerns.

**Volunteering** Most teams depend heavily on parent volunteers to perform a variety of tasks. Questions you should ask are:

**Q. How can I contribute to my child's team if I know very little about swimming?**

- A. You can contribute by helping with meets and team activities. Your biggest contribution will be your unconditional love and support for your swimmer.

**Q. Who can I ask when I have questions?**

- A. The coach is the best place to start if you have questions. A list of coach contact email addresses is posted on Hamden Hall Aquatic Club's website.

**Q. What is expected or required of parents?**

- A. Parents are expected to help at home and away meets and team activities and to participate in team fundraisers. Make sure to check the team website or team App to be in the know. PLEASE READ all correspondence and take action when deadlines are approaching.