



Your First Swim Meet!

A guide for beginning Swimmers and Parents



Congratulations! You've practiced hard and now you're going to go to your first swim meet with your team. First of all, RELAX!!! Swim meets are a fun learning experience. Getting nervous is normal, but don't let it be the only thing you think about. Most swimmers are nervous because it is a new environment to be in. There are people and swimmers everywhere and if it is your first meet you probably don't know what to expect. Each time you swim in a swim meet the experience gets easier and easier. Swim meets are great for swimmers because it allows you to show off all the hard work you have done in practice!

Entering A Swim Meet

All meets require that you register to compete. To do that, you will need to log into the WWSC web page and look for the meet you are going to in Upcoming Events. When you click on it you will be taken to the registration page. Click on the swimmer's name and under Declaration select "yes" to register for the meet. You will then be prompted to select events. You can select the events you want to swim in, or the coach and do that later. For your first few meets, we suggest you have coach select your events.

Parents:

There are (2) types of fees charged at meets. Typically, there is a IES entry fee for each swimmer plus an additional charge for each event they swim in. This allows the meet to be sanctioned by USA helps the hosting team cover the expenses associated with the meet. These charges will appear in your monthly club statement.

Meet Forms

There are several types of forms you will run into when trying to navigate what your swimmer is swimming and when. All swim meets have a **Meet Information Sheet**; you will see it when you register. It includes all the details of the swim meet, its location, starting time, host information, and the rules for the swim meet. It also has a list of all the events offered for each age group. Once the registration for the meet closes (Typically a few days before the meet is scheduled to start) the organizers sort the swimmers into individual heats and lanes. This form is called a **Heat Sheet** and it is available the day of the meet at the hosting pool or online through the Meet Mobile App. A **Psych Sheet** is also available at some meets. This is a list of all swimmers registered for a particular event by their entry time. It gives you a sense of how fast you are swimming compared to the all the swimmers entered into a particular race. Swimmers without an official time for that event are listed as NT.

If you ever have any questions on how to enter a swim meet or what events you think you should swim, just talk to your coach.

What To Wear

We swim year-round inside and outside in the Pacific Northwest... the weather conditions can vary a lot! During the Fall and Winter (Short Course Season) we swim indoors and while it may be cold outside, it can be sweltering and humid sitting around the pool. Dress in comfortable layers. In the Spring and Summer (Long Course Season). We swim at outdoor venues. Again... layers are the key to staying warm and cool. Don't forget the sun screen!

Team Gear: If you have team apparel.... wear it!! Show your team spirit!! If you don't have any, you can purchase it online through our [Swim Outlet Gear Store](#)

Team Suit/Cap: If you have a team cap and swimsuit then you should wear them to the swim meet. Our team suit is available through our Swim Outlet Gear Store. Although wearing team suits and caps are not mandatory, we highly encourage it because it makes everyone look more like a team.

What To Bring/Pack

Because we are a traveling team, we often leave early in the morning to get to meets. It's always a good idea to pack your swim bag the night before your swim meet. You don't want to be frantically rushing around looking for your suit, goggles, shoes, etc. Of course, what you bring depends on the weather, but like we stated earlier...you always want to stay warm. There is a swim meet check list at the end of this document.

Tip #1: Write your name on everything...backpacks, caps, goggles, swimsuits...they all look the same, labeling is a good way to keep track of your belongings.

Tip #2: Pack some of your stuff (extra towels, extra clothes, etc.) in a Ziplock bag. If all your other stuff gets wet, at least you will have some dry back-ups available.

Tip #3: Remember that you have to carry everything you pack from your car to the pool, so don't go overboard on packing. You don't want to make 10 trips from the car to the pool just to get all your stuff. Bring the necessities and keep all the non-essential items in your car...if you need them then you can go out and get them.

When Do I Need To Be At The Pool?

One of the most asked questions on meet days! Usually, your coach will tell you when to be at the pool. Prior to the start of the meet there are many things you will need to do (put your stuff down, change clothes, check-in, and warm-up), so allow yourself enough time to do so. If in doubt, arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of warm-ups.

When You Arrive At The Meet

When you arrive at your first meet it can be overwhelming. Below is a list of things you should do when you arrive at a meet.

Find Our Team Area

Look for our team area often referred to as "Camp Walla Walla". We don't have assigned team areas, so you will just need to be on the lookout for other Walla Walla swimmers. Once you find our spot, put your stuff down and go check-in with Coach.

Report To Your Coach

Let coach know you have made it to the meet They will let you know when you will begin warm-up.

Warm-Ups

Pre-Meet Warm-up is when the competition pool is open to all swimmers to get a warm-up swim in prior to the start of the meet. There are usually two warmup groups, one for younger swimmers (8 - 12) and one for the older swimmer (13 - 18). All swimmers must be under the direct supervision of their coach. Do not enter the water if one of the coaches is not there!

Warm-up time is limited, and the pool will be very crowded, so you need to make the best possible use of this pool time. It will be loud during warm-up (many swimmers, packed into one pool) so it is

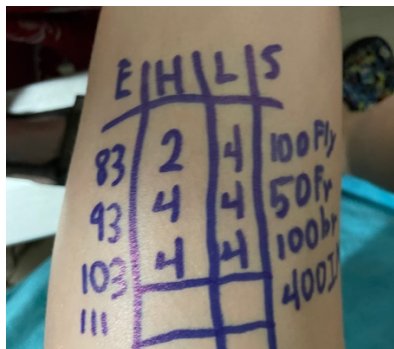
important to listen to your coach. Don't talk to other swimmers while you are warming-up or while your coach is telling you what to do. Don't let others interfere with your warm-up.

The competition pool will generally close at least 15 – 30 minutes prior to the start of the meet. After you finish warming-up, go to our team area, relax, stay warm, and wait for your event.

How To Find Out When You Are Swimming

All swim meets have a place where they post the Heat Sheets for that day. You can look at those to find your events. You can also purchase heat sheets at the venue or use the [Meet Mobile App](#). Now, swimmers, you can't very well carry a soggy piece of paper from one event to another. This is one of the few times that you get to write all over yourself with a sharpie marker! Most swimmers write their events either on their thigh or forearm to keep track of when they swim.

Events are written in a grid format labeled Event # / Heat / Lane / Event Type:



****Note about relays...** depending on the number of swimmers and their ages, there may be no relay teams or there may be several. If you are signed up for a relay team, the coach will communicate that to you when you check in; On the heat sheet, it will only list WWSC, not individual members.

Pre-Race

Check the scoreboard to keep track of the races currently in the water. They can go quickly! You will want to check in with your coach 2 - 3 events prior to your swim. They will tell you when you should go up to the starting blocks. Go to the lane that you are swimming in and get behind the blocks. While you are waiting behind the blocks for your event, it is important to stay warm. Bring a towel or parka to wear while you are waiting for your event to start.

Parents:

Help your swimmer keep track of their races and how fast (or slow) the meet is progressing. There can be long waits between races... Look ahead and make sure your swimmer is where they need to be. If a swimmer is missing, or coach needs them, we use [Telegram](#) to communicate during the meet. It's a team effort!

Race Time

This is the most exciting moment. This is where you get to show off all the hard work you have done in practice. Check with the timers in your lane to make sure you are in the correct lane, heat and event. Follow the official's commands. Some commands will be whistle commands and others will be verbal. Below is a description of the official's commands.

Series of Short Whistles: This is a call to the blocks. You should step up next to your starting block. The announcer will say the event/heat.

Long Whistle: This means to step up on the starting block. If you are starting on the deck, then step up to edge of the pool. For backstroke, this whistle means to enter the water (feet first). For backstroke, there will be an additional long whistle which will signal swimmers to place their feet on the wall.

“Take Your Mark”: The official will say “Take Your Mark.” At that point you will take your mark (your starting position).

BEEP: Once the starter has determined that the field is ready to start they will hit the start button. In most cases the sound will be a loud beep. At that point you dive into the water and Swim your race.

Post-Race

First off...NICE JOB!! Congratulations on finishing your race. Every swim is a learning experience, whether you had a personal best time, or if you completed a race you never swam before, or even if you got disqualified...each swimmer learns something after each race.

Check In With Your Coach: First thing after the race make sure to check in with coach to go over your swim. This is an excellent time to learn about areas that you need to work on to improve and also to get reinforced on things that you did well.

Warm Down: It's important that you warm down after a race and let your body re-adjust. If you do not warm down enough it will have an effect on your races later in the day. A good rule of thumb is warm down until your heart rate returns to normal and you are not breathing hard. Ask your coach how much warm down you should do...make sure you do this during your post-race routine.

Get Dressed & Stay Warm: After warm down, it is important to dry off and stay warm. This will benefit you throughout the duration of the swim meet. Relax and wait for your next race: This is a good time to eat something and drink some water or Gatorade...staying hydrated and keeping your body fueled is important!!! Many small snacks are better than larger ones to keep your energy level up for the day.

Missing Your Event

If you miss an event, immediately check in with the officials on deck and see if you can be added to the next heat. If this isn't possible, talk to your coach and see if they can help get you scheduled for later in the meet. This is often not possible, so keep track of what is going on and don't miss your event.

Scratching Your Event

Sometimes things come up, you may have to leave early or you don't feel well and are unable to compete in the rest of the events you are entered in. If this is the case, don't just leave. First, come and talk to your coach. Your coach will inform the meet director that you had to “scratch” the upcoming event(s).

Cheering For Your Teammates

If you are not swimming in a race you should be cheering on your other Walla Wall Warriors teammates!

Swimmers Attitude

It is important that swimmers have a good attitude at the meet. Your attitude affects your swimming and your teammates' swimming. It is alright to get upset after a poor race, it's natural, but you need to get over it quickly and move on. Put your energy into thinking about and preparing for your next races. If you need help dealing with a race, talk to your coach. Good swims are contagious. If a swimmer has a good swim and gets excited, then other swimmers see that and get excited and they swim fast and pretty soon the whole team is swimming fast.

Coaches

The coaches are usually very busy during a swim meet. They are there to watch every swim, so our first priority is to the swimmers in the water. If you come over to talk to your coach, be patient. If they can talk to you right away, they will, otherwise just a little bit. As coaches, they juggle watching swimmers in the water, talking to swimmers before and after their races, and making sure swimmers are prepared to race.

After The Meet

You may leave the meet after your events are completed for the day. Or you can stay to the end to cheer on your fellow swimmers. Please check in with your coach before you leave the venue and make sure you know when you need to be there for warmups the next day (if it is a multi-day meet). After the meet, it is important to make sure you take all your stuff home. Please remember to clean the area around you and check the area for any lost and found items that may be yours or your teammates.

Jobs for Swim Parents

At any swim meet, parent support is very important. At away meets, the swim club will be responsible for assisting with lane timing. We will usually have to supply 4-8 parents to help with timing. These are usually broken down into 2-hour shifts. If it is your first swim meet, we won't necessarily expect you to help with timing since you are still figuring out how everything works. But after you have a meet or two under your belt, assisting with timing will be very much appreciated... and it is the best seat in the house for watching the swims!

Tips for Swim Parents

- It is helpful if the parent is familiar with the meet procedures and have their swimmers understand the procedures. For new swimmers, the most important role you will play will be getting your swimmers where they need to be...check-in, warm-up, to the blocks, etc.
- Please stay out of the way of the officials. They are there doing their job watching the swimmers in the water. Don't walk in front of them, or cross boundaries they have set up on deck. Don't argue with an official.
- If your child is disqualified, the official will let the coach know they will discuss how to improve next time. If anyone should talk to the official it will be the coach only.
- The coach will discuss strategy and technique with your swimmer...this is not your job.
- Make sure your swimmers are staying hydrated, eating, and resting.
- Cheer on your swimmers, congratulate them, and console if necessary.
- Support and cheer on all swimmers on the team.
- Monitor your swimmer's behavior. Remind your swimmer that their behavior reflects on their team; they must behave like a champion at all times, with grace and humility and a smile on their face no matter the outcome of any one race.

Swim meets are meant to be a fun learning experience!! Good Luck!! Have Fun!! Enjoy the Experience!!

Swim Meet Check List

Below is a list of things a **SWIMMER** should bring:

- ☐ Swimsuit – Competition suit plus an extra
- ☐ Swim Cap – Competition swim cap plus an extra.
- ☐ Goggles – Bring goggles that you know work properly and fit you plus an extra pair.
- ☐ Sunscreen (for outdoor meets.)
- ☐ Parka – If you have a parka bring it. It is an easy way to stay warm.
- ☐ Extra Clothes – A spare set of clothes to change into after the meet.
- ☐ Shoes / Crocs – It is important to keep your feet warm and dry.
- ☐ Water Bottle – It is very important to stay hydrated during a swim meet.
- ☐ Healthy Snacks – Bring plenty of food. It is important to keep your body nourished during a swim meet. Most swim meets offer food at a concession stand, but they aren't always the best options, so bring things like granola bars, fruit, bagels, peanut butter sandwiches, Gatorade, etc.
- ☐ Chair, cushion... something to sit on.
- ☐ Activities – Games, books, music, homework, etc. for between races.
- ☐ Miscellaneous – Any medications you may need (Ibuprofen, Inhalers, etc.), toiletries, etc.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Below is a list of things a **PARENT** should bring:

- ☐ Chairs or bleacher cushions – Seating is usually limited and not very comfortable.
- ☐ Sharpie, Pen, & Highlighter – To mark races on the heat sheet and on your swimmer
- ☐ Clothing Layers – Depending on the venue it may be hot and humid or frigid.
- ☐ Snacks – It's good to bring a cooler for snacks not only for your swimmer... but also for you.
- ☐ Activities – Bring something to do in-between your swimmer's events.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____