



COHO SWIM TEAM: Swim Meets 101!

Meets

USA Swimming meets are divided by age and gender. Occasionally, there will be a “mixed” relay, or the host team may decide to combine heats due to the number of swimmers registered to participate.

Common Age Groups

- 8&under
- 10&under
- 9-10
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 15&over
- OPEN (any age, but usually older athletes)

Short Course V. Long Course

- Short Course (SCY) - Pools are 25 yards - Regular season runs September through February
- Long Course (LCM) - Pools are usually 50 meters - Regular season runs April through July

Types of Meets

- Dual/Double Dual Meets – Between COHO and one (1) or two (2) other teams. Usually takes place as a one (1) day single or multi-session format.
- USA Swim Meets - These are large meets with many teams participating and are open to all swimmers who are registered as USA swimmers. This is most of our meets.
- Timed Final Meets - Competition in which only heats are swum, and final placings are determined by those times.
- Prelim / Final Meets -Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session for older swimmers. The fastest six (6), eight (8), or ten (10) (*Championship Heat-A Final*) swimmers, and the next fastest six (6), eight (8), or ten (10) swimmers (*Consolation Heat-B-Final*) return in the evening to compete in the Finals. Sometimes, a third (C-Final) or fourth (*D-Final, usually reserved for 18&under only*) heats may occur during these meets if a larger format is offered. There is usually an afternoon timed final session for younger swimmers or for time trials at these meets, but not always.
- Post-Season Meets - These meets have qualifying times for every event and usually take place after our regular season has ended.
- Illinois Swimming Regional Championship - The coach will notify you if your swimmer qualifies. The meet is held once a season at a location within our region.
- Illinois Swimming Age Group State Championship – These meets are for Age Group swimmers (14 and under) with qualifying times. The meets are held three 2 times a year at various locations throughout the state. Age Group State (March-SCY and July-LCM). In almost all cases overnight stay is required. Travel and hotel reservations will be needed.
- Illinois Swimming Senior Championship – This meet has qualifying times and is usually for swimmers 15+; however, any swimmer making the time can attend. The meet is held two (2) times a year at various locations throughout the state (March-SCY, July-LCM). In almost all cases, overnight travel and hotel reservations will be needed.



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Important Resources

- Team Website- The COHO Swim Team website www.teamcoho.org offers team schedules, meet announcements, billing information, account management, and resources for parents and swimmers. It also posts our team records and time standards when using the GoMotion app.
- GoMotion is an app- It is available for iOS and Android. The login and password used to access our team website will allow you access to the app. You can check your swimmer's attendance, declare for meets, and monitor times here.
- www.USAswimming.org- is a terrific website that contains a lot of resources for both parents and swimmers to explore.
- www.ilswim.org- is the home of our LSC, Illinois Swimming, and a good resource for the Regional and State Championship swimming qualifications, seasonal meet locations, and time standards.
- Meet Mobile is a mobile device app that most swimming clubs use to post real-time meet results. Meet Mobile is available for iOS and Android.

Meet Procedure

- The Meet schedule is typically announced at the beginning of the season. Plan what swim meets you will attend. If assistance is needed, please reach out to your swimmer's group coach and other parents on the team for guidance.
- Individual Meets will be opened for registration as we receive all the information from the host team. You will receive an email announcing each meet.
- Registering for a meet- must be done before the meet deadline. This will be listed in the announcement email as well as on the website under the Event. Instructions are available on our website.
- If you miss the deadline and still wish to register, please reach out to your swimmers group coach to see if a late add can be accommodated. Please note that a late fee per family may be billed to your account if it is possible to make changes and requested by the host team. This depends on whether we have sent the entries to the host team, if the host team is allowing changes, or if the swim meet is full. Please note that once entries are sent into USA Swimming to run what is called a Meet Recon, we are typically no longer able to do anything.
- Entry reports will be posted on the team website in the UPCOMING EVENTS area [HERE](#) after the meet deadline. Please review the posted entries and make sure they say what you expect.
- Entries and Relays- Coaches and meet management will review entries and make any changes needed. Coaches will also create tentative relays, if available.
- Entries are sent to the host team. Families will be notified if we are not accepted into the meet due to event limitations.



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Meet Day

Before The Meet Starts

- **ARRIVAL:** Arrive at the pool at least 30 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the Parent Need to Know information emailed out to all swimmers and also on the website under the event.
 - **TEAM AREA:** Upon arrival, find our team area, which is 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. Parents are not allowed on deck or in the locker rooms, so send them on deck with a friend.
 - **Athlete Check-In:** This lets the host team know your swimmer is there.
 - a. All swim meets require a check-in. This may be with your coach or on a piece of paper; you must highlight your name to prove you are on site. If it is not with the coach, there is typically a table near the entrance for the swimmer to check in. Parents are not allowed on deck; in some locations, this may be a responsibility of your swimmer or your swimmer's coach. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach as well.
 - b. **Positive Check-in:** This will close at a specific time. If you are running late, you need to let a coach know so that your swimmer can be checked in. If they are not checked in, they will be scratched from the day and may not be able to swim the rest of the meet.
 - **Be a READY Swimmer:** Your swimmer now gets changed and gets his/her cap and goggles, and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm up with the team. A swimmer's body is just like a car on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed up before he/she can go all out. It is also a chance to get used to a new pool and go off the blocks before a race.
 - **After warmup:** Write or have the swimmers write each event-number on his or her hand in ink (*Sharpies work best and survive the pool best.*) This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.
 - **When they swim, Event, Heat, and Lane:** You and your swimmer can find event, heat, and lane assignments on a heat sheet (*some teams put them on their website, have it available for purchase at the meet, or on Meet Mobile*). Coaches will also have information, or it will be in the Parent & Swimmer Need to Know. Older swimmers are expected to write their own events, heats, and lanes.
 - **After warm-up:** Your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her team is sitting and wait there until his first event is called. This could be on deck with the coaches, or occasionally in a common area with swimmers and parents. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom, if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
 - **The first event:** meet is sometimes an 8-and-under relay. It is important that these young swimmers are not "wandering around" or with their parents after warm-up.
- Warm-Up Sessions:** Sometimes there will be two warm-up sessions. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after all warm-ups are completed.



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Parent Expectations During a Meet

- **USA meets:** According to USA Swimming rules (*for insurance purposes*), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity (*i.e. officiating, timing, etc.*).
- **Questions about official calls:** All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a swim meet should be referred to a coach. He or she, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
- **Team Spirit:** Cheer for your swimmer and our team! We never cheer against our teammates.
- **Respect:** Treat all competitors, parents, meet officials, and volunteers with respect.
- **Timing:** Timing is going down on the deck and using stopwatches and the host team's timing system to help time the races of the meet. For our hosted meets, please sign up for a time on our website when the Job Sign up is available and report to the deck when you hear the Timers Meeting announced.

During The Meet

- Swimmers need to pay attention to the event numbers, so they don't miss their events!
(*Parents need to pay attention, too, or you'll miss your child's race.*)
- It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand/arm). He/she may swim right away after warm-up, or they may have to wait a while.
- Most meets are computerized, so you can see event and heat numbers on a scoreboard. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane:
 - a. **For swimmers 11&up:** A swimmer usually reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she swims. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions.
 - b. **For swimmers 10&Under:** In some meets, a swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "clerk of course" or "bullpen". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles.

Extra info!

- Generally, girls' events are odd-numbered, and boys' events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, report to the Bull Pen." The "Clerk of Course" or "bullpen" area is usually located in an open area on the pool deck, or in an outside hallway with numbered chairs and marks on the floor for lanes and heats. The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order.
- Swimmers must report to their lane with their cap and goggles when they go to swim their races.
- Swimmers after each swim should go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - a. Positive comments or praise
 - b. Suggestions for improvement
 - c. Send the swimmer to cool down if needed.



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Things you, as a parent, can and should do during and after each swim

- Tell your swimmer how much fun it was to watch them swim. The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell them how proud you are and what a great job they did. Parents Support, Coaches coach. Please refrain from having technical swimming conversations with your swimmer.
- Send the swimmer back to the team area to relax and prep for the next race. If swimmers are on deck with coaches, they need to return to the deck area as soon as possible.
- This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink, or something light to eat.
- The swimmer now waits until his next event is called and starts the procedure again.
- When a swimmer has completed all their events, you can go home. Make sure you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving, in case your swimmer is in a *relay (sometimes the last event of the meet)*. It is not fair to other swimmer teammates who have stayed to swim in a relay that includes your swimmer, and he/she is not there.

Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility during the meet and will be loaded to the team website after the meet. Many swim clubs are also posting events and results on the app "Meet Mobile".

- Awards are gathered for a team and given to the coach at the end of the meet.
- Occasionally, a meet will have High Points awards for swimmers who score the most points in their age group. The coach will let you know if your swimmer should stay for that award.
- Awards (*ribbons or medals*) will be given to swimmers at practice once they are all sorted and accounted for.

What to Bring to a Swim Meet

SWIMMERS - Team areas are not under direct supervision, so we advise against bringing anything valuable.

- COHO Arena Brand team suit (*Solid Swimsuit allowed if COHO suit is unavailable. No other team suits are allowed.*)
- Extra Arena Brand swimsuit (*in case of emergency*)
- 2 Arena or COHO team caps
- 2 Arena goggles
- Water bottle (*no soda or juice and NO GLASS ITEMS*)
- 2 towels (*some swimmers like a towel for each event*)
- Blanket or sleeping bag if the venue is chilly
- A light, healthy snack (Refer to the [Nutrition Information tab](#) found on the [SwimStrong Dryland Website](#).)
- Warm-up clothes to wear over your suit between events
- Dry clothes to wear home
- Underwear (*if you wear your suit to the meet, this is forgotten more than you would think*)
- Something to do between events (*book, non-electronic game, toy, deck of cards, etc.*)
- Sharpie – to write event/heat/lane on your arm.



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PARENTS/FAMILIES

- Chairs! Some venues have bleachers or folding chairs, but they fill up quickly (*and they are not always comfortable!*). Please note that at some venues, chairs are not allowed on the pool deck.
- Wear Layers. It is usually warm, if not HOT, inside. Dress for it.
- Water & Snacks. There is always food to be found during meets. Purchasing snacks generally helps support the team that is hosting. That said, you should always feel free to bring your own snacks and drinks.
- Bring something to do. Book/magazine/knitting/sudoku/crosswords. All meets have downtime – even short ones.
- Something for the siblings to do. Very few venues have room or space for children to be active. Bring something to keep them occupied.
- Money, pen, highlighter, Sharpie. Heat sheets may be available for purchase (*anywhere for \$2 - \$10*) or on the host team's website, or on Meet Mobile, and it's helpful to highlight your swimmers' events. Sharpies are useful to write event/heat/lane information on your swimmers' hands or arms.

Meet Terminology

- **Session:** Meets are divided into sessions. Usually Friday, Saturday AM, Saturday PM, Sunday AM, Sunday PM
- **Event:** A specific Gender, Distance, and Stroke. For example: Men's 200 Freestyle
- **Heat:** each event is divided into heats based on the number of lanes used, the number of swimmers, and is based on entry time of the individual swimmer. Usually from slowest to fastest.
- **Lane:** The lane a swimmer is competing in.
- **Seed Time / Entry Time:** The team entry is sent in with each swimmer's best time (*up to the date that the entry was submitted*) in that event. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she 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.
- **Psych sheet:** This is usually sent out before the meet and is posted on our website. It lists all swimmers from all teams in each event in order of "seed time" or entry time.
- **Timeline:** This is occasionally provided by the host team and sent out before the meet. It is the estimated time that events will start, as well as the estimated time a session will finish. Your swimmer needs to be there at the arrival time, not when they are scheduled to swim.
- **Parent & Swimmer Need to Know:** A document created by COHO that has all the critical information for the swim meet, including address, arrival times, venue information, etc.
- **Heat Sheet:** A heat sheet is the printed listing displayed before and during a meet that tells swimmers what events they will compete in. It also defines the swimmer's lane assignment per event. Lanes are typically assigned based on seed times, with the fastest swimmers in the center of the pool. Events are listed in order, usually alternating girls (*odd events*) and boys (*Even events*). They are sometimes available for purchase close to the start of the meet.
- **Bull Pen:** An area for younger swimmers to report to for their events. Swimmers will be walked from the bull pen to the blocks by meet workers.
- **Relays:** An event swam by 4 swimmers. Each swimmer swims a part or a stroke. Some relays are freestyle only; some are Medley relays and have all 4 strokes.



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Time Standards

- **Illinois Time Standards** can be found on the Illinois Swimming website under the EVENTS tab [HERE](#) or at www.ilswim.org
- **National Motivational Times** can be found on the USA Swimming website under the TIMES tab [HERE](#) or at www.usaswimming.org. These are age group time standards designed to encourage age group swimmers to step their swimming up to the next level. These time standards also serve as a guide to help your swimmer set proper goals and understand proper progression in their specific age group to help them reach their highest potential. Start at Level B and work your way up to Level AAAA times.