



First time at a meet

If you are reading this document, you are looking for some information on swim meets and are likely new to swimming as a club sport. Welcome!

Swim meets are an opportunity to grow as an athlete. Listed here are some guidelines geared to help you through your first swim meet. Once you have attended a couple of meets, this will all become routine. The JPD teamunify website <https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=iljpd> is your resource for everything related to the team. Do not hesitate to ask any fellow Blue Tides team parents or coaches for help or information as well. We were all new swim parents ourselves at one point.

We hope this document helps answer your questions. Should you have additional questions, check the team website first, but please do not hesitate to email a coach.

Before the Meet

What to take to the meet

Most important: Blue Tides official team suit, team cap, and goggles. Swimmers should also pack an extra cap and goggles in case anything should happen to their primary ones.

Towels: Your swimmer will be there a while, so pack at least two towels.

Something to sit on: The swimmer area may be located in a gym or cafeteria. Examples include sleeping bag, blanket, foldable chairs, or anything the swimmer finds comfortable.

Warm clothes: Swimmers will want warm clothes to wear between races, maybe more than one pair as they will get wet.

Team Shirts: Two or Three

Games/Activities: Travel games, coloring books, books, cards, something to do to pass the time.

Food and drinks: Each swimmer usually brings a small bag. It is best to bring healthy snacks and plenty of water. They usually have concession stands at meets, but they often only have junk food.

Sharpie marker: Bring a sharpie pen for writing events on your hands.

Cash: Parents will need cash for admission fees and to purchase a heat sheet if they want. This admission fee is usually per day. Children are usually free.

What to Eat?

Healthy! Healthy! Healthy! Swimmers should enjoy a carb filled (usually pasta) dinner the night before the meet and drink plenty of liquids to ensure they are well hydrated. Swimmers should have a good healthy breakfast to get geared up for the swim meet. Snacks, drinks and other food may be sold at swim meets, but swimmers are encouraged to bring their own healthy snacks and drinks.

The Day of The Meet

What to Wear?

Blue Tides swimmers are encouraged to wear team shirts, sweatshirts, warm-ups and spirit wear each day of the meet. Team colors (blue, white and gray) are also encouraged at swim meets for Blue Tides fans in the stands.

When to Arrive?

Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins to check in. Swimmers must complete Positive Check-in, which involves locating a table with a list of all the swimmers competing in the meet. The age group of your swimmer will determine what session they will be in. The sessions are broken down by age groups, and they vary from meet to meet. Sometimes your swimmers might be in the morning session, other times they might compete in the afternoon session. Please use the link to the meet packet attached to the event on the team website.

What and where is “Positive Check In”?

Positive meet check-in is critical. It serves as an attendance record the day of the meet. There is a final deadline for swimmers to check themselves in, usually shortly after the first warm-ups begin. You can find the positive check-in deadline in the meet packet.

NOTE: THE DEADLINE FOR FINAL CHECK-IN IS FINAL. IF YOUR SWIMMER HAS NOT CHECKED IN BY THE APPOINTED TIME, THEY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO SWIM. YOU MUST CHECK-IN EACH DAY OF THE MEET.

The swimmer, upon arrival at the meet, will find a table just inside the doors. On the table will be a list of names of the swimmers participating in that session. Swimmers will need to find their name (listed alphabetically by age and gender) and highlight their names and the numbers next to their names to positively check in for that day's events. Note that swimmers are expected to check-in for all events each day; if there is an event that a swimmer does not want to swim, they need to discuss that and receive the “OK” from a Coach beforehand to scratch an event.

Where to stay during the meet?

After checking in, swimmers should put their things down and stay in the swimmer area with their Blue Tides teammates, so coaches are able to find them when needed. Swimmers should not be in the stands; parents are able to visit the team area, unless swimmers are on deck.

Write Your events on your hand

Once checked in with your coach, have the swimmers write each event, heat and lane number on the back of their hand or arm in Sharpie marker. This helps swimmers remember what events they are swimming and what event numbers to listen for while waiting in the team area.

Warm-ups

Shortly after arrival, swimmers should put on caps and goggles and wait for coaches' directions. A coach will come get swimmers for warm-ups if they are 10 or younger (11 and older swimmers are expected to get to warm-ups on time by themselves). After warm-ups, your swimmer will go back to the area where their team is sitting and wait for their first event. The meet usually starts about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups have ended.

Parents on Deck?

According to USA Swimming rules, parents are NOT allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or conduct of the meet, should be referred to a coach. They will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

Psych sheets, timelines (session reports), and heat sheets

A psych sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order or seed time. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, they 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 sheets for meets will be posted on the meet page following the entry deadline. These are often useful for families to ensure their swimmers entries are correct.

Timelines, also called session reports, are a detailed timeline of how long the meet is anticipated to take and when heats and events are anticipated to start. These will usually be posted on the meet page following the entry deadline and can be useful for planning purposes (i.e. – whether a swimmer will be able to make a last event or not if they have another activity after the meet).

Heat sheets are lists of the actual heat and lane each swimmer will be competing in. These are extremely important at the meet and is what is followed. Heat sheets typically only come out about 10 minutes prior to the start of the meet as the administrative officials take the positive check-in and remove all swimmers not checked in from the meet. This is to reduce the number of empty lanes in the meet and also to shorten the timeline. Heat sheets are usually available at a front table in the facility, but more nowadays are mostly available on an app called "Meet Mobile".

Once the Meet Starts

How Long Do Meets Usually Last?

Meets run in sessions: a morning session and an afternoon session. (Sometimes there is a midday session for the very long events, like the 1,000 yard freestyle. The older athletes swim these long events). No session typically lasts more than 4 hours for the younger swimmers. Families can typically expect 4-8 heats of each event, sometimes more for more popular events such as the 50 freestyle.

What is the “bullpen” and how does it work?

Parents can sit with their swimmers in between events in the team waiting area but we ask that parents be mindful of the bullpen announcements. The bullpen is located in the team ready area. It is an area of chairs run by meet workers who will usher kids into the order of their heat and lane for their events and will then walk them onto the pool deck so that a swimmer does not miss an event and is in the right position when getting to the block. As long as a swimmer knows their event numbers, they can listen to be called in the bullpen. Swimmers should report to the bullpen with cap and goggles.

Bullpens are normally used only for swimmers ages 10 and under and are not used at every meet. In the case that there is no bullpen, coaches will help get the swimmers to their events.

After Each Race

After each swim, the swimmer should ask the timer (people behind the starting blocks in each lane holding stopwatches) for their time. The swimmer should then go immediately to their coaches. The coach will discuss the race with each swimmer. Depending on the coaches' instructions, the swimmer may be asked to do some recovery swimming in a “warm down” pool. It is imperative that the swimmer visit the coaching staff. The swimmer will not receive feedback on how to improve if they don't talk to the coaching staff after their races.

Relays

When swimmers have completed all of their events, they should check with their coach before leaving to make sure they are not entered to swim a relay. If a swimmer knows that they can't stay at the meet for a relay, they should let their coach know at the beginning of the meet session.

The Coaches will generally make up the relays the day of the meets. The relays are made onsite as some swimmers will not be able to make the meet and there would be a ton of open spaces if the relays were pre-planned. The only meets when the relays will be made up ahead of time are at the State Championship meet and beyond.

Please respect the coaching staff's decision on relays. The coaching staff will do its best to put the right swimmers in the right position for individual and team success.

Meet Results

Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility (often taped to a wall). 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. Final meet results will be posted on the Teamunify website within a day or two of the meet's end. To see meet results, log in and locate the Results/Standards tab and click Meet Results.

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