

Some very basic information for those families new to competitive swimming

SWIM MEETS

Swim meets are competitions between two or more teams.

Swimmers compete within their age group. Swimmers change age groups on their actual birthday. (Swimmers can “swim up” in an older age group, but may not swim in a lower age group.)

Coaches will decide which swimmers swim which events.

There are four strokes in competitive swimming: Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly. Meets include competitions in each of these strokes, plus an Individual Medley (IM) where each swimmer swims all strokes, a freestyle relay where 4 swimmers on a relay team swim freestyle, and a medley relay where each swimmer on a 4 person team swims a different stroke.

DUAL MEETS are between RASC and one other team and are generally held on weekday evenings. They usually start with warm-ups at 5:45 p.m., 6:30 start time, and usually end about 9:00. We host meets and we attend meets at other pools. Teams earn points based on swimmers' finishing places in each event. Each group of swimmers competing in the pool at one time is called a heat. In a dual meet, only the first heat in each event counts toward the team's points in that meet. Other heats (i.e., a second heat of 7 and 8 year old 25 yard freestyle) are called “exhibition.”

Events in a Dual swim meet follow the same order as they are listed on RASC's Record Board on the West wall over the pool.

Swimmers are generally awarded ribbons for each event they compete in at a swim meet; the ribbons are not actually given to the swimmers at the meet, but will be put in each family's mail folder usually within a few days after a meet. Mail folders are on the table between the stands and the pool during most swim practices.

ISI (Illinois Swimming Inc.) MEETS are held on weekends and usually include events on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Several teams compete at an ISI meet. The meet is divided into sessions based on age group and event. Swimmers may sign up to compete on one, two, or all three days of the event. Swimmers in ISI meets are placed in specific heats based on their previous times in each event. All heats count in the team competition; there are no exhibition heats.

Throughout the season, swimmers strive to lower their times (swim faster!) and to possibly reach regional or state qualifying times.

RASC keeps track of all of their swimmer's times at meets and posts a list of “most best times.” Swimmers need not be the fastest swimmers to be on this prestigious list, they just need to attend meets and continue to improve.

The Conference Meet is held at the end of the season, in February. Not all swimmers will qualify to compete in this meet. Non-conference swimmers compete against each other in our own RASC pentathlon. Regional and State Meets follow Conference for those swimmers with qualifying times.