



What to Expect at Your First Swim Meet: A Guide for ACE Parents



Swim meets are a great opportunity for the whole family to spend time together as well as with all the other families on the team. Below are some guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets.

What To Take To A Swim Meet

1. Swimsuit, ACE cap, goggles and flip flops or non-slip shoes. Having an extra suit, cap, and pair of goggles packed is always a very good idea. These items seem to rip and break at the most inopportune times!
2. Towels – wet bodies everywhere so pack at least two.
3. Something comfy for your swimmer to sit on in the crash area, such as a sleeping bag, old blanket, or camping chair.
4. Something comfy to sit on in the crash area or the stands. Most parents bring camping chairs for the crash area, stadium chairs or blankets for the stands.
5. Several changes of clothes such as sweatpants, sweatshirts, and t-shirts. Swimmers need to stay warm between events and there is nothing worse than pulling on cold, soggy sweatpants.
6. Entertainment for the whole family such as travel games, cards, coloring books, books, iPods, Gameboys, etc. Especially important if you are bringing youngsters who are not swimming! Parents often bring newspapers, books, laptops, anything to pass the time!
7. Small cooler of healthy snacks and drinks. Suggestions for items to bring: Water, Gatorade, granola bars, fruit, yogurt, dry cereal, trail mix, sandwiches.
8. Sharpie marker, pen, highlighter.



***Special Parents' Note**

The pool area is usually very warm. Make sure you dress in appropriate layers.

Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly!

Before the Meet Starts

1. **Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins.** Warm-up times are listed in the meet flyer posted on the website. Often coaches announce or post exact warm-up times a couple of days before a meet as well.

2. **Find a place to put your swimmer's "stuff."**
The team usually sits together in a gym or commons area called the "crash area" so look for some familiar faces and then set up camp.

3. **Help your swimmer find the ACE coaches.**
Look for coaches on deck or sometimes in the crash area to let them know you are at the meet.

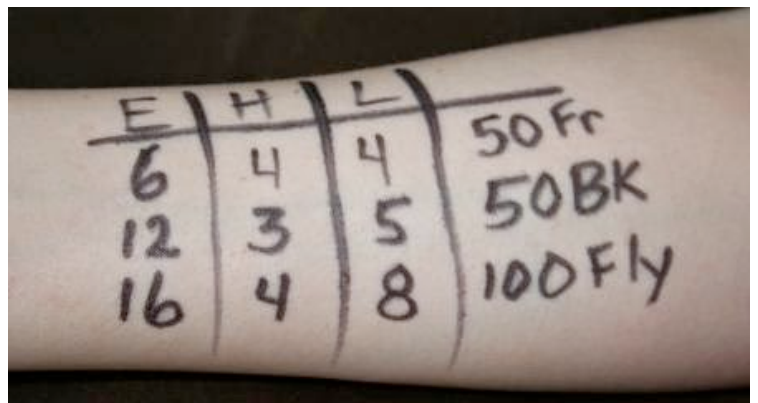


4. **Find a meet program to purchase.**

Meet programs are available for sale in the spectator seating entrance or concession area. and generally sell between \$5 - \$12. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". This is where you will find what heat and lane your swimmer is in for each event. **BRING CASH** - most meets only accept cash - no Venmo / credit cards.

5. **Write on your swimmer.**

Mark their arm before warm ups with their event information. Write each event number, heat, and lane on your swimmer's arm in "permanent" (i.e., waterproof) marker, like a Sharpie. This helps your swimmer remember what events he or she is swimming, what event number to listen for, and what lane to get lined up behind.



TEMPLATE FOR MARKING MEET INFORMATION

E	H	L	S
10	4	8	50 FR
26	3	2	100 BK
34	2	5	50 FLY

E=EVENT
 H=HEAT
 L=LANE
 S=STROKE
 FR=FREESTYLE
 BK=BACKSTROKE
 FLY=BUTTERFLY
 BR=BREASTSTROKE
 IM=INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

6. Swimmers report to the pool and/or coach for warm-ups.

It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmers' bodies are just like cars on a cold day; they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before being able to go all out. This is a good time for parents to get a cup of coffee and a donut while the kids are busy!



7. Swimmers return to crash area after warm-ups.

Time to dry off, put warm clothes on over swimsuit. Go to the bathroom if you have plenty of time before the start of the meet or first event. Do not wander around as the coaches need to know where you are during the meet.

8. The meet will usually start about 10 minutes after warm-ups are over.

The Meet Starts

1. Know what events your swimmer is competing in.

It is important for parents to read the coach email sent out a day or two prior to the meet so you know what event numbers your child is swimming. Again, a meet program and sharpie are a swim parent's best friends!

2. Listen for event announcements.

Swimmers must check programs and pay attention to the meet so that they will know when they swim. Events are usually announced over the loudspeaker or are visible on the timing board. Swimmers should report with cap and goggles.

3. Check in with the coaches.

ACE coaches ask their swimmers to check in with them before each race. This is when coaches give last minute reminders and encouragement to the swimmers about their upcoming race. Swimmers should allow enough time when reporting to the blocks for this important step! The coaches will not hunt for swimmer to tell them when to go to their event/ lane.



4. Report to your assigned lane.

The timers behind the starting blocks often check to make sure that swimmers are lined up in the right order. However, it is always a good idea to have your swimmer check in with the lane timers to make sure they are in the right lane and heat.

5. Parents, find a seat (or offer to be a timer).

According to USA Swimming rules, ***parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity.*** Parents must sit in the spectator area or the crash area. If you are not one for crowded stands, volunteer to time. All meets typically need lane timers, and it can be a good way to pass the time at a meet if your child doesn't need you. Plus, timing is a great way to see the meet, be able to watch your child poolside and most the time the air quality/ temperature is better at pool level than in the viewing area.



6. Swimmers, swim your race.

Time to see how all that hard work in practice is going to pay off!

7. Check in with the coaches...again!

After each race, your swimmer should go immediately to their coach. Generally, the coaches follow these guidelines after a race:

- a.) Positive comments or praise
- b.) Suggestions for improvement

8. Check in with parents.

Parents should follow these guidelines after your swimmer's race:

- a.) Tell your swimmer how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You just need to tell your swimmer how proud you are of their effort.
- b.) Send your swimmer back to the crash area and relax, find something to eat, and wait for next event to be called.

9. Repeat above steps until all events have been completed.

10. Final check in with the coaches before heading home.

When a swimmer has completed all of his events for the day, be sure to have your swimmer check with the coach before leaving to make sure he/ she is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he is not there.

11. Ask for help!

If during any of this you feel lost or confused, be sure to ask other ACE parents for help! We have all had our “first meets” and know it can be overwhelming. Once you have attended one or two meets, it will all become very routine and enjoyable.

Congratulations! You are now ready to be an ACE swim parent!

How to check your swimmer's meet results?

Before the meet: Download the MeetMobile app on your phone or tablet for instant updated results of the meet. Some meet hosts use MeetMobile as a means of providing live meet programs in addition to the meet results during the meet, but not all.



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to download the Meet Mobile app and start following your favorite swimmers now.



At the meet: Whether or not MeetMobile is being used, paper results are normally posted for each event, as the meet progresses. Ask a parent volunteer from the meet host team where the results are posted. You will find your swimmer's time and place.

After the meet: There are a few ways to find your swimmer's results:

1. Use your Android or iOS device to run the OnDeck mobile app or the SportsEngine Motion mobile app, selecting Menu > Sync to update the information on your device before going to Menu > Meet Results.
2. Login your team account and select My Account > My Meet Results. Be aware it may take a couple of days for the results to be finalized and uploaded
3. Log into your USA Swimming account at hub.usaswimming.org