



Anderson Barracudas New Parent Swim Guide

While this is by no means the all-inclusive guide to swimming, it will most definitely help you to understand some of the basics that your fellow seasoned parents sitting next to you in the stands may already know. We have tried to compile as much information as possible within the guide to help answer any of your questions that may come up randomly during the day. However, you will undoubtedly have a question that can't be answered with this. Usually, it will happen at a time when the person you need to ask isn't around, at least that's the way it always happens for me. Please do not wait to ask a question. Even the smallest topic may be very important to your better understanding of what swimming is about. While many seasoned parents can be a good source of information about swimming, most of the technical questions should be posed to a coach to answer. Either way, please feel free to ask when a question pops up that you are not sure of. Hopefully, whomever you ask will have an accurate answer for you. If in your first few seasons as a new parent, there is information you feel isn't in here that should be, please let us know and we'll be sure to add it for future families to improve their understanding of our little "world".

THE FOUR STROKES

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. The combination of all four strokes is called individual medley.

In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the surface of the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick.

Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

The breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish.

The individual medley, commonly referred to as the I.M., features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

COMPETITION 101

RULES

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

COURSE

Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or 25 meters), or long course (50 meters). The international standard (as used in the Olympics) is 50 meters. World records are accomplished in 25 and 50 meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yard, 25 meter and 50 meter pools.

COMPETITION

Participants compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the first day of the meet. Traditionally recognized age groups are 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15 and over. Many local meets feature 8 and under, single age groups, or senior events.

OFFICIALS

Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

SWIM MEET BASICS

Swim meets are a great family experience. They're a place where the whole family can spend time together.

Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your coach or your group moms.

What should we pack for the kids?

- Most important: AB Swim Suit, AB Cap and goggles. Team T-shirt; each day of the meet will be a different color team shirt. This will be announced before the first day of the meet. Typically, **Friday-RED, Saturday-WHITE, and Sunday-BLUE**. The coaches also wear **GRAY/RED/BLUE** AB coaching shirts in the same color order so that the swimmers can easily spot them in the coaches' alley (*in front of the timers table in the Dome at Lyon's YMCA*) on the pool deck.
- Towels-Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
- Something to sit on. Oftentimes the swimmer area may be located in a gym or cafeteria.

Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.

- Sweat suits/warm clothes/parka! Each swimmer may want to bring two pieces of warm clothing because they can get wet and soggy.
- Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time. **NO ELECTRONICS!**
- Food and Snacks! Suggestion, Gatorade, Granola bars, bananas, fruit, yogurt, cereal, jello cubes, sandwiches, etc. **NO JUNK FOOD/CANDY DURING THE MEET!** We want to instill healthy eating habits in our swimmers.

What about Spectators and Parents?

Pack CASH FOR HEAT SHEETS & CONCESSIONS, CAMP CHAIRS OR BLEACHER CHAIRS, CAMERAS, BLANKETS, SHARPIE MARKER, HIGHLIGHTER, DRINKS & SNACKS, E-READERS, NEWSPAPER...

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other parent for help or information! These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! Your swimmer gets to visit with friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. They also gets to "race" and see how much they has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice. Special Parent's Note The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! Also, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.

Where do we park?

At M.E. Lyons, in addition to the YMCA parking lot, AB Parents can park on the tennis courts behind the dome. On Saturdays, we can park across the street at the church. At away meets, occasionally we must park in a designated area, but it will be marked.

What time do we arrive?

Plan on arriving 15 minutes before the team warm-ups. Seating at away meets and championship meets can be very crowded. The earlier you arrive, the better the seats. Find the check-in place. There are meets where parents are not allowed on deck, so this may be a responsibility of your swimmer or your swimmer's coach. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach! Check for special posted instructions in the check-in area.

How do we know where to sit?

At M.E. Lyons YMCA, "**Camp Cuda**" is on the north side of the deep end of the pool. When you arrive at away meets, team areas are marked. Parents and swimmers sit together at most Y meets. **Swimmers are strongly encouraged to meet and mingle with other teammates from all three (Campbell, Clermont, and Lyons) age group practice squads.** At large meets and championships, parents are not permitted on the pool deck. At such meets; there will be team volunteers to help with the younger swimmers.

What time are team warm ups?

Parents are notified by team email with information regarding warm-up times and lane assignments for ABLY (M.E. Lyons/Anderson Barracudas).

Information about every meet can be found on the team website: www.ablyswim.org After logging in to the team website, go to the events page, click on the name of the meet and info will appear with links for the meet information packet. Normally 3-7 days before the meet, more specific information such as the warm-up times and lane assignments, psyche sheet, and the daily time line for events will be posted online.

Once you arrive in the team area, write or have the swimmers write each event-number on his or her hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.

Grab a sharpie and mark a grid on the forearm like this:

E (event)	H (heat)	L (lane)
212 50 Back	5	6
224 50 Fly	8	2
238 100 IM	10	3

Your swimmer now 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.

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 is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

What is Cuda Café? Can I get a Grande Skinny Double Mocha with Cinnamon at the meet?

No.....but you will find many reasonably priced food items and drink choices at our team hosted concession stand: The Cuda Café. The Café is located on the south side of the warm up pool.

YOU FORGOT WHAT!?!?..... *What happens if your swimmer leaves their gear at home? Always do one last double check before you start the car* to make sure your swimmer has packed their team suit, team T-shirt, swim cap and goggles. At most, but not all swim meets, a swim vendor will sell goggles, swim caps, and swim suits (but not AB team suits or apparel). Not every vendor is able to accept personal checks, so it is always a good idea to bring cash and debit/credit cards to the meet. It is a good idea to keep extra goggles and caps in the vehicle you drive to meets.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other parent for help or information! These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! Your swimmer gets to visit with friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. They also gets to "race" and see how much they has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice. Special Parent's Note The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! Also, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.

HOW A MEET IS RUN

1. Meets are computerized. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane:
 - A swimmer usually reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she actually swims. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions.
 - 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". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle.
 - Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, report to Clerk of Course."
 - The clerk volunteer will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event.
2. The swimmer swims his or her race.
3. After each swim:
 - The swimmer should then go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.

4. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - Positive comments or praise
 - Suggestions for improvement
 - Positive comments
5. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - Tell him how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell your swimmer how proud you are and what a great job they did.
 - This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
6. The swimmer now waits until their next event is called and starts the procedure again. When a swimmer has completed all of their events for the day, they get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer 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 they are not there.
7. Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility and available on the Meet Mobile app. 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.

PLEASE DO NOT STAND WITH YOUR SWIMMER AT THE STARTING BLOCKS!

This area is very congested and not a place for parents or cameras and is against the Safe Sport guidelines which will be enforced by USA Swimming and the YMCA.

REMEMBER: NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE START OF ANY EVENT!

The starting system uses a strobe flash and audio start. Cameras interfere starting system with the starting mechanism and can delay the meet.

How are lanes and heats assigned?

The size of the pool and number of swimmers determines the number of heats required for each event. Normally slower heats swim first and the fastest heats swim last. Swimmers always swim with others who have comparable times. Lanes are assigned by the fastest to slowest seed time in that heat. Faster times are in the middle, slower times are in the outside lanes.

Some swimmers will have NT for a seed time. This means the athlete does not have a documented time for the event. For the most part, NT times belong to first time swimmers, swimmers who have moved into a new age division, and/or swimmers who have not swum the distance (yards/meters) for this event. Occasionally, there will be an experienced NT swimmer who is much faster than others in the heat, and the race can be quite lopsided. Officials and coaches try to prevent this as much as possible, but it can happen.

What is a heat sheet and do all of us need to buy one?

Heat Sheets are a schedule of the day's events listing the name of each swimmer and which heat and lane they will be swimming in during their event. **Most swim meet sites will only accept cash for the heat sheets.** They normally cost \$4-5 dollars. Heat sheets are usually sold at the front entrance of the pool and the proceeds stay at the host site. It is perfectly fine to share heat sheets with other families. Bring a highlighter or pen to mark your swimmers events and keep track of times for your swimmer.

There are Apps like On Deck Parent which can be found on our website and Meet Mobile that allow you to see live results at participating meets and/or purchase a digital heat sheets for a fee.

What is the difference between a heat sheet and a psych sheet?

Psych sheets are a coaching and motivational tool. Psych sheets are normally available online at the team website the week before a meet and list all the swimmers names and seed times. Psych sheets allow you to see where a swimmer is ranked in their event, but they do not indicate the heat or lane assignment for the swimmer's race.

How do you read a heat sheet?

Girls' events are normally odd numbers. Boys' are even numbers. Day 1 events are numbered 100's, Day 2 are 200's, and Day 3 are 300's at most meets. You can find the event numbers for your swimmer on the ABLY event page each meet. Click on the "attend" button on the meet page and the events for that meet will appear. Information on the heat sheets is listed as: **EVENT: HEAT: LANE: NAME: AGE: SEED TIME**

What do AA (Y Champs), ZN (ZONE), and NA (National) times mean on the heat sheet?

Championship meets and select invitationals have time standards. Swimmers must make the qualifying time to qualify to swim at these meets. Many will make AA YMCA times, some will make Zone cuts, but only elite swimmers accomplish National times. Heat Sheets will list these time standards at the top of an event as information for parents and incentive for the swimmers.

How do I know what event is in the pool?

Listen to the announcer or look at the time board. The event and heat will normally appear at the top of the board. At meets where the team areas are not on the pool deck, there will normally be an event/heat clock or announcer letting swimmers know what event is on deck. Some heat sheets also have an estimated timeline included.

As parents, we are responsible for making sure our swimmers are rested, fed, hydrated, have the proper team gear, and on time for their events.

Each event is announced 3 times: first call event #, second call event #, final call event #. Swimmers are to be behind their starting block and ready to swim before the final call.

Swimmers generally should be getting ready to swim their race, 1 -2 events before their assigned event, dependent upon the number of heats in each event. Swimmers 10 & under should go to the Clerk of Course to check in for their race.

Who is responsible for lining up the 10 & under swimmers at the starting blocks?

Volunteer's and timers will do all they possibly can to make sure your swimmer is in the correct event, heat, and lane. Having the **E/H/L** info written on the swimmer's forearm is a tremendous help (and the kids love the swim tattoos!)

Make sure that you are listening with your swimmer for their events. It can get very loud and hard to hear at times, and if they aren't paying attention, an event can easily be missed.

PLEASE DO NOT STAND WITH YOUR SWIMMER AT THE STARTING BLOCKS!

REMEMBER: NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE START OF ANY EVENT!

THE STARTING SYSTEM USES A STROBE FLASH AND AUDIO START. CAMERAS INTERFERE WITH THE STARTING MECHANISM AND CAN DELAY THE MEET.

What is the coach's responsibility vs. what is the parent's responsibility at a meet?

Coaches are very busy during the meet. They monitor and evaluate every swimmer while they are in warm-ups and competing. They also help other coaches evaluate swimmers when ABLY has multiple swimmers in the same race. Coaches will meet with the swimmers before the warm-up period. (Always arrive 15 minutes before warm-ups start.) Most swimmers are also required to check in with their coach 1-2 events before they swim for warm-up instructions **and** immediately after they swim for evaluations of their event and instructions for cool-downs. The coaches will tell the swimmers before the meet when they are to check in with them before each of their events.

The times immediately before and after the race are for the swimmer and coach only.

Parents are expected to stay in the team area and talk to swimmers when they have completed their events and coach's instructions for cool-downs.

Who are all the people in white polo shirts and shorts blocking my view of my swimmer?

Meet officials are the people who make sure the rules are followed and that the meet runs smoothly. **They are trained and certified volunteers who give up their weekends so that your child can compete, so please be respectful.** If you have concerns or questions, approach a team coach and they will address it at the appropriate time. **Never approach the official or interfere with the progress of the meet.**

What are DQs? Are we getting ice cream?

Swimmers must perform all starts, strokes, turns, and finishes properly. If a swimmer does not follow the rules for each stroke as written by FINA, an official will raise his/her hand to notify the head official of a disqualification (DQ). Swimmers often do not know they have been disqualified unless told by the coach. At smaller meets and for younger swimmers, false starts are sometimes forgiven, and restarts are permitted. At large meets and championships, a false start results in an automatic DQ.

WOOOHOOO..... LTB!!!! Ummm.... What is a LTB?

LTB stands for "Life Time Best" swim and is the goal of every swimmer.

Please remember, not every race can be a LTB and your child is not swimming for Gold at the Olympics! Be encouraging and welcoming when your swimmer returns to you after each race. These are children swimming with other parents' children. The only competitor our swimmers have is hanging on the wall, the clock! Our swimmers do not compete against teammates, **they compete to better their times and improve their abilities. The goal of all of our coaches is to have all of our swimmers still swimming at 18 and beyond, and not become like so many young athletes with overzealous parents who are burned out or discouraged out at a young age.**

When do we get our ribbons?

Ribbons and medals are filed in award boxes a few days after the meet; you can find the boxes in the back hallway near the indoor pool. Some meets have ribbons and prizes for heat winners in the 10 & under events. Heat winners are given their prizes on the pool deck immediately after each heat.

What... there's more to meets than medals and cheering? You need me to do what.....? Volunteer responsibilities:

Families are expected to volunteer a pre-determined number of hours per season at our home meets, team hosted events, and Y Champs. You will be notified of these volunteer opportunities by email a few weeks before the meet or event. Each parent has their favorite job and you will find yours. When volunteer sign-ups are activated on the team website, be prepared to check for availability because job slots can fill quickly. A few jobs at meets do require training. **Please take the time to read the job descriptions listed so that you do not accidentally sign up for a position requiring training prior to the meet.**

When you are volunteering, most jobs will prevent you from sitting with your child. Please be sure to have a backup plan (a spouse, another parent, family member, etc.) to insure that your child is on time for all of their events.

Time spent volunteering generally goes very quickly. You will learn a TON about the sport of swimming and have the opportunity to meet new families. It's imperative that everyone does their part to make our swim meets run smoothly. A successful meet requires coaches, swimmers, and parents working together from start to finish. Your volunteer service enables us to have organized, well attended meets. Successful meets = \$\$\$ = lower team fees, upgraded facilities, innovative training equipment, etc.

If you are volunteering during a meet session, don't forget to sign in at the volunteer table.

At the M.E. Lyons Dome, the sign-in sheets are located at the heat sheet table near the double doors or the dome tunnel.

My swimmer is done for the day's session, now what?

Make sure the swimmer has checked in with the coach before leaving the pool deck. If your child is not swimming in relays or finals, and you are not working, you are free to leave. Please take a few minutes to make sure your swimmer has all of their gear and suits, and that all trash has been discarded. It never fails that a team suit does not make it home, so **make sure all of your child's belonging and team gear is clearly labeled with their name.** You don't want to know how many size 28 suits there are in this world!

If your child is swimming at a championship meet or invitational with finals and has qualified to swim in finals or is named an alternate, please make sure to confirm times for evening session warm-ups and finals. In the event that you cannot return for finals, you must scratch at the timer's desk within 30 minutes of the end of the event so that alternates can be determined. League policy is that if you qualify and do not swim in finals, you do not swim in your next event and the team is fined. The team fines are passed on to your swimmer's escrow account. **BOTTOM LINE: DON'T MISS FINALS!**

Excuse me, but I still have questions...

What? You still have questions? That's OK, even veteran swim families make new discoveries about swimming throughout the season! Never hesitate to ask other parents or experienced swimmers for help, talk to the coaches (at appropriate times), and ask your kids! It will take about 3 meets, but after that you'll be a pro!

Information about the South West Ohio YMCA League can be found at: <https://www.teamunify.com/team/ymcaswosl/page/home>. More information about competitive swimming can be found at, www.usaswimming.org.

Parent & Athlete

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes including self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success and to learn how to treat success and failure as two sides of the same coin, while becoming healthy and physically fit. As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, by coming to swimming meets and volunteering for your club at swim meets, or by participating in fundraising, etc. Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children emulate their attitudes. Be aware of this and strive to be positive role models. Most importantly, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and teammates. Remember that you are teaching your child at all times.

Be Enthusiastic and Supportive!

Remember that your child is the swimmer. Children need to establish their own goals, and make their own progress towards them. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals. Do not over burden your child with winning or achieving best times. Let them know that first they are the child you love, and second, a swimmer. Tell them you will love them whether they swim well or not, and ask only that they give their best effort. Learning about oneself while enjoying the sport is the most important part of the swimming experience. The swimming environment encourages learning and fun, which will help your child develop a positive self-image.

Positive Parenting Tips

1. Your child needs your emotional, physical, and financial support. Be liberal in providing this support.
2. Support but do not push your child.
3. Understand development – long-term development as an athlete, and growth and development as it impacts performance.
4. Be realistic in terms of expectations; factor in age and skill level; be aware of your child's perception of your expectations.
5. Emphasize performance and effort, not just outcome. The athlete only has control over his/her performance. Define and measure success as giving maximal effort and as personal improvement.
6. Keep winning in perspective.
7. Do not bribe.
8. Give plenty of encouraging and rewarding statements. Criticize sparingly.
9. View swimming as an arena in which to teach your child about commitment, hard work, and coping with adversity.
10. Work to form an effective Coach-Athlete-Parent Triangle.

You & Anderson Barracudas

Parental involvement is crucial to every club. Regardless of the organizational model of the club, parents play key support roles. In parent owned clubs, parents are needed in leadership roles as board members and committee leaders. Regardless of structure, clubs are looking for volunteers to help with swim meets, coordinate social events and organize fundraising. Volunteering to help your club is a great way to get involved, meet other parents and be a positive role model for your child. Contact the coach or an involved parent to find out more about what you can do and how you can be a positive force in your club.

Getting involved with your child's club is a great way to meet people, have fun and teach your child about commitment. Many swim parents develop long-term friendships and enjoy the family-like atmosphere that develops when people work together. Working at a meet can be a lot more fun than sitting in the stands! Additionally, when your child sees you devoting time and energy to help the team, he or she understands that team loyalty is important and worthwhile.

Let the Coach Coach!

The best way to help your child achieve goals and reduce the natural fear of failure is through positive reinforcement. No one likes to make a mistake. If your child does make one, remember that this is a learning experience. You and your child should learn to treat success and failure as learning experiences and not life changing situations. Encourage your child's efforts and point out the positive things. The coach is the one you have assigned to judge a swimmer's performance and technique. Your role is to provide love and support regardless of outcome.