

A fun new year of swimming is upon us. For those new to swim meets, below is a list of things to consider when attending a swim meet.

1. All swimmers must register in advance for all meets. The meet sheet will state the method for registering for the meet. Most teams use either swimconnection.com or fastswims.com for meet entries. All members should create personal accounts for your swimmer(s) for both of these websites to receive email announcements about meets opening. All meets will have a registration fee. (Occasionally, the Coaching staff will do meet entries for swimmers, and an announcement will be made for those rare instances.) Reference the team calendar and team emails for the meet sheets and sign up instructions. Do not hesitate to ask your coach about meet sign ups.
2. All meets require parent/adult volunteers. If attending a swim meet, you will need to volunteer. For most, this will include lane timing. (Some parents volunteer as Officials or in some other capacity.) Meets can't run without lane timers. Teams attending a meet are usually assigned a lane number and will need to have parents from their team cover the three lane timing seats in that lane throughout the entire meet. Our team usually breaks this into 1.5 hour lane timing slots and creates a job signup on our team website. Sign up early to get the lane timing slot(s) that works best for you.
3. Most meets are deck seeded, meaning swimmers need to check in at the Clerk of Course first thing when they arrive to the meet to verify they are present to compete. There is a designated sign-in area and all swimmers need to find their name, initial next to it and circle the events they will be swimming that day. Swimmers must check in themselves, parents cannot do it for their child. Some meets are pre-seeded (especially now due to COVID) meaning the swimmers will be automatically checked in and have their heats and lanes assigned.
4. Bring some cash. There are usually concessions and most meets sell a kind of program for the swim meet (usually \$5). It can be helpful to go ahead and get one, especially for your first meet, so you can decide whether or not it's useful to you for future meets. (See #4 below as well.)
5. Meet programs are available at most meets and typically list all the swimmers signed up for each individual swim event, and if the swimmer has a history of swimming that event, what his/her previous best time swimming in that event was. To keep track of when your kid is swimming, going through the program and highlighting each of your swimmer's events can be useful. Some meets use the app MeetMobile for heat and lane information as well as results. Since COVID, more meets are using MeetMobile. The phone app does have a small fee, but most find it worth the fee.
6. Heat/Lane assignment sheets will be posted in a designated area, one for boys and one for girls, letting swimmers know which heat and lane they will be swimming in for that event. These are posted prior to the event, so it's good to keep checking the board when

your event is approaching. Depending on the meet sometimes there is stress for swimmers when the posted events are late and they panic, so keep an eye on the posting as well to help them get to the right lane and heat in time. Some meets have the heat and lane number for each swimmer included in the program. Similar to above, some meets are using MeetMobile for getting out heat and lane information as well.

7. Bring a Sharpie marker, a pen or pencil. Most swimmers use a permanent marker to write their event #, heat # and lane # on their arm so they know where to be for their events. A pen/pencil can be used for recording swimmers events, lane, heat and final time.
8. Spectator seating at swim meets is usually in bleachers or around the pool deck area or outside the pool area. Bring folding chairs and blankets to sit on. Spots are first come, first serve.
9. Swimmers should check in with their coaches before and after each of their events. The coaches have a designated table where they will be sitting for the entire meet. Parents with younger swimmers should be mindful if walking their child to their coach to NOT block any swimmers from reaching their coach. Some meets do not allow parents at the coach's area, so please be respectful.
10. Only coaches, timers, officials and swimmers are allowed "on deck" (the area around the pool and where the swimmers are getting ready to swim) at meets.
11. If you want to take pictures, keep in mind that the flash from cameras interferes with the timing equipment, so flash photography is definitely not permitted at starts. (It's a good idea to figure out how to avoid using a flash during the whole meet, to keep it simple.) And there is absolutely no cameras allowed behind the starting blocks.
12. Swimmers need to stay hydrated and fed during meets. Pack protein and high-quality carbs, not junk- those bodies are working hard. Water bottles are necessary.
13. Concessions are available at most meets.
14. Bring several towels.
15. You may be walking on wet tile floors; wear shoes that will help keep you sure-footed. Keep that in mind for your swimmer(s), too.
16. It can get pretty warm and humid at meets, even mid-winter when indoor. Wearing layers is a good idea. Your swimmer should have warm clothes to wear between their swim events, too.

17. Be prepared for quite a bit of down time between events. If you have children or other folks who need to be entertained, you may wish to have sleeping bags or blankets for them to sit on. Plan for needing more entertainment than you think. Books, games, cards, etc.
18. The team usually does stretches together and a team cheer before the meet starts.
19. Warm-ups usually start an hour before the meet- it's important for swimmers to be there ready to get in the water right when warm ups begin. See the meet sheet for warm-up start time. The coach will decide if the swimmers will be swimming the entire warm-up period or for a shorter time; whatever the decision by the coach, swimmers should be available to swim when warm-ups begin.
20. Results for each event take some time to be processed and are posted in a designated area (usually a hallway or wall within the pool area) sometime after each event.
21. Some meet hosts use the app "Meet Mobile" for posting results, as well as heat and lane information.
22. Relays: Often our team will compile relay teams of four swimmers to compete in the relay events. The relay teams are usually by age group/gender. The coaches or parent volunteers will notify swimmers/parents when they are going to be in a relay. Relay fees may be collected at the meet. (Another reason to have cash at the meet.)
23. Be prepared for hearing that your swimmer has "DQ'd": disqualified. The people you see walking around the pool with clipboards wearing white shirts and navy bottoms are swim meet officials. One of their jobs is to make sure the swimmers follow the technical rules of each stroke, such as swimmers only are to use dolphin kicks during butterfly events, that the swimmers actually use the correct stroke (e.g. no freestyle during a breast stroke event); the proper turns are performed at the end of the pool, two-hand touch on the wall for breaststroke turns, etc. When a swimmer is disqualified, this means the swimmer is not eligible for an award in that event, and their time is not recorded. Hearing that they have DQ'd can be really tough news, especially for a new swimmer. If your swimmer was DQ'd and wants feedback, they can ask their coach.
24. Awards: At each meet, there are different awards structures. All finishers above a certain place may receive ribbons; those in the top may get medals. Check the meet sheet for the award structure, and what the rules are for collecting the awards. Some meets will not send awards home with coaches if the swimmers don't pick them up at the meet. For most of our meets the coach will get the awards or they will be sent later, so check your file at the team kiosk following a meet for ribbons/awards.