

Hello Embark and Explore Swimmers and Parents.

Please read the below document.

I know this comes to you a bit late due to my delayed arrival, however, this is something I send out at the start of every season to help educate parents and swimmers on the meet process and my expectations.

If you have any questions please let me know

Coach Margaret

SWIM MEETS 101

Dear Embark/Explore Parents and Swimmers,

Our first swim meet of the season is just around the corner. Every swimmer has been working exceptionally hard since training begin in September and has improved leaps and bounds. I am **SO EXCITED** to see all their efforts translate into racing this weekend.

Since several families in this training group are **NEW** to competitive swimming, I have put together what I hope to be a helpful guide on what to do before and at a swim meet.

For starters, swim meets are very fun, but quite frankly long. Lasting up to 4+ hours/session. Please have your swimmer come to meets early and well rested. A good night's sleep is crucial prior to swimming. I have kids too, so I know as a parent when you say "let's get to bed early tonight" they groan. But remind them, if they want to perform well their bodies need to be rested. Nutrition is also a key to performance. Make sure they are eating nutritionally balanced meals and are well hydrated. It is easy to be tempted by all the treats at concessions but please save the treat for after the meet. Remind them that good food choices make for faster swims. Some good at meet swimmer food is fruit, bagels, pasta, peanut butter (if not allergic), protein bars and veggies. It is easier to avoid the perils of concessions if you pack your swimmer a snack bag for the meet. If you are unable to prepare snacks ahead of time, there is always healthy choices at concessions. Don't let your swimmer fool you into thinking there was only brownies and red vines. Feel free to use me as the bad guy. Tell them Coach Margaret said, "Only healthy snacks while swimming". (See USA swimming website for great nutrition tips).

At meets, I encourage that my groups sit together. For starters, this makes it so much easier for me to find them before races, but more importantly Explore/Disco is now extended family. To foster a solid sense of team I very much want them to get to know each other, support each other and more importantly cheer each other on. Also, they need to start their education on how to manage swim meets and begin to be independent. That education begins now (see attached instructions below). Swimmers also need to learn to speak with **ME**, their coach, **BEFORE** and **AFTER** every race. Meets play a critical role in becoming a better swimmer. We learn from both the things we do great and the things we need to improve on. There is nothing like a meet to learn. Please help me by reminding them to do this.

Parents please remember your role is to support, cheer and love your swimmer unconditionally. Let me, the coach, do the coaching. At this age swimmers need consistent messaging. If they hear one thing from me and another from you it gets confusing and quite frankly frustrating for your swimmer. Competitive swimming is a roller coaster full of emotions. It is my job to smooth out the ups and downs, teaching them how to understand and manage times of great swims and times of not so great swims. Remember they will all make mistakes, but it is how these mistakes are turned into positive learning experiences that will help them achieve their full potential.

(Read more about being a good swim parent. USAswimming.org. Gold Medal Swim Parenting. <https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/clinics/online-clinic-series/parents/gold-medal-swim-parenting.pdf?sfvrsn=2>)

In sharing my passion and love for the sport, my goal is to have swimmers with equal or greater passion. During their time with me and future at WEST, I wish for them to achieve long term enjoyment, fulfilment and success while molding future adults to value hard work, dedication and health

Ok... I have rambled on enough. Can you tell I am excited!

Can't wait for this weekend!

Let's swim fast and have fun. Go WEST!

Margaret Brunke – Embark/Explore Coach

P.S. Thought I was done, did you? As always if you have any questions feel free to ask. Remember fellow seasoned swim team Parents are more than willing to help too.

What to Bring to a Swim Meet

- Team suit and **back-up suit (Anything can happen so always have a spare)**
- Team cap
- Goggles and **back-up goggles (Again, anything can happen)**
- Lots of towels. Make sure to dry off immediately after each event to prevent chill.
- Warm clothes. Sweats, swim parka. After drying off get cozy in something to keep the muscles warm until your next event.
- Books and/or games. Cards are great. Great way to get to know your fellow team mates as well as having fun while passing time
- Parents. Might want to bring a folding chair or two. Stands tend to fill up quickly so it is nice to have an alternative.
- Truck. To haul the items you need for a swim meet. And I bet you thought this was a low equipment sport!

*Note: If you forget something at home, like goggles, there is usually a swim shop vendor at the meet.

How to write Events on your swimmers

A critical part of swim meets is knowing when to swim. There is nothing worse than missing a race. All swimmers must learn how to manage meets and eventually be independent. To help them with this, it is best to always have them, or you, write down their events on an arm or leg. Why an arm or leg? They don't get lost. They are never left behind.

First you will need to purchase a heat sheet or locate where one is posted in the facility. Then you need to find your swimmers events in the heat sheet.

For every event your swimmer is entered in you will need to write down 3 numbers on their arm or leg. Swimmers must be able to see and read these numbers easily. First number will be the EVENT (ex: Event **10** - Boys 10 & U 50 Freestyle). Next, you want to write down is the HEAT #

(Note: many races have more than 1 one heat so make sure to pay particular attention to this number). Lastly, you want to write down the LANE # your swimmer is in.

An example of how the numbers should look on your swimmers arm is below. Also, at this age, I like to write the name of the event after the numbers serving as an additional cue.

12 / 3 / 2 (50 Free)

If they are swimming in a relay an additional number needs to be added. That is the order number in which they are swimming. Are they the first second third or fourth swimmer in the relay?

13/5/1 **(3)** 200 Free relay

My goal is for this to be a **NO TEAR** meet. Which means no missed races. Please make sure you and your swimmer are listening to the announcer. Remember to leave plenty of time for your swimmer to speak to me prior to their race. I would like ALL swimmers to be behind the blocks when the announcer calls "**FIRST CALL**" for their event. – **GOOD LUCK SWIMMERS AND PARENTS!**