

MSSL City Meet Bullpen Description

The bullpen is the area where younger swimmers (10 & under) from all teams are gathered prior to their events and put in their heat and lane order. The swimmers are then walked around the pool deck and lined up behind the starting blocks prior to their event.

Set Up:

6-8 rows of 10 chairs

Rows represent events and heats

Chairs in each row labeled 1-10 represent lanes (lane numbers can be printed at home and taped to back of chairs prior to start of meet)

Heat sheets provided for all volunteers

Minimum Staff:

1 Bullpen Lead

2 Additional Volunteers per team (helpful if they don't switch at half)

Job Descriptions:

- Bullpen Lead (1) - Stands at front of bullpen. Manages communication in the bullpen between volunteers. Communicates with announcer. Texts them to announce first call, second call, final call for events if needed. Also, texts announcer if bullpen needs to pause meet, and announcer will communicate with starter. Often checks front row one final time before swimmers head to lanes. Otherwise, communicates with volunteers when it is time to move the front line to the lanes and with swimmers when it is time to move forward a row.
- Door Monitor / Floater (1) - Stands at the back and tells swimmers if it's time to enter bullpen or wait outside for a few heats. Also, if another volunteer would like to watch their swimmer or use the restroom, this person can fill in and then go back to "door."
- Back of Bullpen Volunteers (2+) - Organizes swimmers into heats and lanes as they enter the bullpen. They should stay in back 2-4 rows and manage the initial flow in the "door."
- Front of Bullpen Volunteers / Runners (4+) - This is a rotating position that checks rows as they near the front of the bullpen and as rows are complete, you and another volunteer—one on each side—walk swimmers to their assigned lanes, then come back and filter into the system again to check heats and walk to lanes.
- Working in groups of 2 in the bullpen is ideal, but there are times when you may have to split up and send 1 volunteer with a row, which is okay, as long as you keep swimmers moving forward and to the lanes.

- If you have additional staff, you can divide them into back and front volunteers or you can have some dedicated as “runners” only walking back and forth to the lanes, while others stay in the bullpen to check swimmers before they move.

General Flow:

- Swimmers arrive at bullpen, Door Monitor checks event number, swimmers are good to enter.
- Back of Bullpen volunteers sort them into their heat (row) and lane (chair).
- Swimmers keep moving up a row—staying in the same lane (chair)—until their heat reaches the front.
- Front of Bullpen volunteers are filling in gaps by texting coaches or sorting more swimmers into heats as they come in the door.
- When they reach the front row, swimmers are checked one more time by Front of Bullpen volunteer or Bullpen Lead (whoever is available).
- When Bullpen Lead sees that front row is ready, announces, “front row—stand up, hold hands, walk to your lane.”
- Swimmer(s) walks with front row and 2 volunteers to their lanes.
- Bullpen Lead announces to rest of bullpen, “stand up, move up one row” and the cycle starts again.
- It’s very fluid, there are no breaks, as soon as you get last 9/10 boys heat seated, you start again with 6 & under.
- If you don’t see many 6 & under swimmers arriving to bullpen for next event when 9/10 boys are moving to their lanes, text announcer to make a first or second call for that event.

Tips to Remember:

1. Bullpen is for 10 & under, 11 & up get to the blocks on their own.
2. Bullpen is like the United Nations at City Meet, everyone helps with all the teams to get swimmers to their races on time.
3. The benefit of having a 2 volunteer(s) from each team is that if you are still missing “Joe Smith from Riverview Swim Team,” once that row gets toward the front, the Bullpen Lead can ask the volunteer from that team to text the coach.
4. When you text a coach to find a swimmer, it’s best if they walk or send them with a team parent straight to their lane. We cannot wait for them in the bullpen.—i.e. the volunteer from Riverview texts coach: “need Joe Smith for event 10 / heat 2, take them straight to lane.”
5. If there’s an emergency—potty accident, vomit, medical concern, etc— in the bullpen; stop and text meet announcer to pause meet, then re-group, and once the situation is under control, text announcer to resume meet.

6. Be mindful of length of races—25 yard races may start at opposite side of the pool than 50 and 100s, which will always start at block side of pool. Deliver swimmers to designated side.
7. Relays—it is recommended that each team's coaches bullpen and deliver their own relays to the blocks. If that is not agreed upon by MSSL league reps, then you have to use 2 rows per relay, and put 2 kids in each chair. —i.e. the front row will have "Riverview swimmers #1 and 3" in one lane (chair) and directly behind them in the second row will be "Riverview swimmers #2 and 4" for the same relay. This is because swimmers #1 and 3 for each relay are walked to the block side of the pool, and swimmers #2 and 4 are walked to the opposite side of the pool.
8. The key to a good bullpen is communication with swimmers, parents, announcer, meet officials, and each other. Stay calm and communicate!

Diagram

- Number of rows is determined by meet manager, best if it's an even number 6 or 8 so you can line up relays (if required by MSSL) which require 2 rows each.
- Number of chairs in each row is determined by number of lanes, usually 8-10.

