

What Should I Expect At Those (really long) Swim Meets Anyway?

Swimmers should always bring:

1. Team Suit
2. Team Shirt
3. Two Towels
4. A pair of goggles
5. Games, cards, books
6. Snacks, preferable healthy ones...usually food is available at meets, but the lines are usually long and the stuff is mostly junk food.
7. Big water bottle...if you have time to ice half of it, it will stay nice and cold through most of the meet.
8. **An extra suit, cap and goggles can save the day.**
9. Extra dry clothes...in case the first set gets wet.
10. Lots of patience. Meets can be long and there is a lot of time in-between events.



What are the roles of the “officials” at the meet?

There are many important positions at a swim meet. The Starter/Announcer will call the event, and after telling the kids to get on their marks, get set, they will sound a noise to commence the race. Each lane will have 2 Timers so we get an accurate time for each swimmer. There are also Stroke & Turn Judges who will watch to make sure that the child is swimming the stroke correctly, touching the ends of the pool correctly, and not starting before their relay partner has touched. If a child is disqualified from a race, every attempt is made to explain the reasons to the child. Please be aware that the judges are trained and are volunteers doing the best that they can. Please be respectful of their positions and their judgment.

How do relays work?

The most confusing event, especially for beginners, is the relays. Swimmers compete in age groups. All age groups have two types of relays: Freestyle (where all four swimmers swim Freestyle) and the Medley relay (where the first swimmer swims Backstroke, the second swims Breaststroke, the third swims Butterfly, and the fourth swims Freestyle). 100 yard relays for the younger swimmers can be particularly confusing. Parent volunteers will get the team together prior to the event and determine who is swimming what leg of the event. One of the parents should then take the first and third swimmers to the blocks while the other parent takes the second and fourth swimmers to the same lane at the opposite end of the pool. Remember to watch for "which leg" of the relay your child swims! (You can tell by the order that their name is listed on the relay). This is especially true for the Medley relays so they also know which stroke to swim!



Below is a description of each type of relay by age group:

8 & Unders: swim 25 yards for both the Medley and Freestyle relays.

Free Relay:

- Swim 25 yards (one length)
- 1st and 3rd swimmers leave from the starting end of the pool
- 2nd and 4th swimmers leave from the far end of the pool

Medley Relay:

- Swim only 25 yards (one length) for each leg of race
- Order of strokes: Back, Breast, Butterfly, Free (Alphabetical Order)
- Backstroke and Butterfly will leave from the starting end of the pool
- Breaststroke and Freestyle will leave from the far end of the pool

10 & Unders:

Free Relay:

- All swimmers swim 50 yards (2 lengths) and leave from starting end of the pool

Medley Relay:

- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths)
- Order of strokes: Back, Breast, Butterfly, Free (Alphabetical Order)
- All swimmers leave from the starting end of the pool

11-12; 13-14; 15-17

Free Relay:

- All swimmers swim 50 yards (2 lengths) and leave from starting end of the pool

Medley Relay:

- Swim 50 yards (2 lengths)
- Order of strokes: Back, Breast, Butterfly, Free (Alphabetical Order)
- All swimmers leave from the starting end of the pool

What is being “disqualified?”

If you are new to swimming you can expect your child may be disqualified at some point. Some strokes are trickier than others (breaststroke and butterfly) but even freestyle has some rules that need to be followed.

If your child gets disqualified, the judge/official will let try to talk to each swimmer right after the race. If they are not able to do that, they will notify the coaches as soon as possible and they will talk with the child. Many kids feel very upset when they get disqualified because they feel that they are the only ones being DQ'ed; or they were not prepared for the fact that it MIGHT happen.

So...encourage your child to swim the best race they can and emphasize that trying their best is what is important. But if your child gets DQ'ed...just remember...it happens to everyone and is an opportunity to grow. The officials are just helping him/her become a better swimmer. After all, just because your child was DQ'ed does not mean that they or you shouldn't be proud of their race. The best thing you can do is help them shake it off and move on to focus on the next event.



STROKES

If you're not a former swimmer, the strokes and their rules can be a cause of bewilderment. While the stroke rules are simple enough for a six year old to understand, most people do not have a copy of the USA Swimming Rules, so we'll briefly describe the strokes below.

Freestyle: The freestyle is defined as any means of swimming across the pool. Any stroke and kick are acceptable. There are, however, a few don'ts associated with this stroke, specifically: (1) You cannot walk on the bottom or pull yourself along using the lane lines and (2) In a 50 Meter race (two pool lengths) you must touch the wall at the 25 meter end before touching the wall at the 50 meter end (This may seem obvious, but sometimes swimmers miss the wall at the turning end of the pool)

Backstroke: Like the freestyle, almost anything goes on backstroke as long as you stay on your back. Watching swimmers learn the backstroke can be a little comical as they bounce off lane lines and wonder where they are especially at outdoor meets. Eventually, they will learn to guide off the lane lines, use the overhead backstroke flags and the lane line markings to know where they're at in the pool, and count strokes from the flags to the wall. Backstroke starts are different from all others because the swimmer is in the water feet planted against the wall, and hanging on to the starting block handles or the lip on the pool awaiting the starter's signal. Occasionally, swimmers may be asked to hold on to the legs of someone standing on deck if nothing else is available. "Legs" must be grabbed below the knee. Persons serving in an official capacity (such as timers or coaches) may not serve as "legs".

Swimmers 9 & over will eventually learn the backstroke flip turn. This is the one exception to staying on your back and can be used only as part of a turn (not a finish) at the pool wall.

Breaststroke

The Breaststroke has two components, the kick and the arm pull. The pull and its recovery must both be under the breast and cannot extend further back than the waist area. The kick is a "frog" kick and the toes must be pointed outward during the propulsive part of the kick. The arm pull and kick must be in an alternating sequence and the elbows must stay below the water except for tagging the wall at the finish. Breaststroke turns and finishes require a simultaneous two hand touch.

Butterfly

A well executed butterfly (or Fly) is the most beautiful exhibition of power you'll ever see in a swimming pool. Quite frankly, the fly is the hardest stroke for most swimmers to perfect and while they are learning it many look like they are drowning. There are two components of the fly; the arm pull and the kick. The arm pull must be an over the water recovery (elbows breaking the surface of the water) with the arms moving simultaneously. The kick is a dolphin (or mermaid for our younger girls) style kick with both legs moving simultaneously. Unlike the Breaststroke, there is no requirement to alternate the kick and pull. Turns and finishes require a simultaneous two hand touch at the wall.

Individual Medley

The individual medley (or IM) is when an individual swims each of the four strokes in the sequence Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. We swim a 100 Meter IM, which means that 25 Meters, or one pool length, of each stroke is swum. In a 100 Meter IM, every turn is a stroke change and stroke finish rules apply. This means no Backstroke (or any) Flip Turns



EVENT LIST

You will get notice of the events your swimmer is entered into at each meet prior to arriving at the pool. It is helpful for parents write the event numbers on their arm that correspond to what they are swimming. The announcer will put you on notice as to what event is being called to line up behind the starting blocks.

<i>Event No.</i>		<i>Event No.</i>	
1	Boys 8 & Under Diving	2	Girls 8 & Under Diving
3	Boys 9 – 10 Diving	4	Girls 9 – 10 Diving
5	Boys 11 – 12 Diving	6	Girls 11 – 12 Diving
7	Boys 13 – 14 Diving	8	Girls 13 – 14 Diving
9	Boys 15 - 18 Diving	10	Girls 15 - 18 Diving
11	Boys Open 200m Free	12	Girls Open 200m Free Relay
13	Boys 8 & Und 100m Med. Relay	14	Girls 8&Und 100m Med Relay
15	Boys 9 – 10 200m Med Relay	16	Girls 9 – 10 200m Med Relay
17	Boys 11 – 12 200m Medley Relay	18	Girls 11–12 200m Med Relay
19	Boys 13 – 14 200m Medley Relay	20	Girls 13–14 200m Med Relay
21	Boys 15 - 18 200m Medley Relay	22	Girls 15 18 200m Med Relay
23	Boys 8 & Under 25m Free	24	Girls 8 & Under 25m Free
25E	Boys 9 – 10 25m Free	26E	Girls 9 – 10 25m Free
25	Boys 9 – 10 50m Free	26	Girls 9 – 10 50m Free
27	Boys 11 – 12 50m Free	28	Girls 11 – 12 50m Free
29	Boys 13 – 14 100m Free	30	Girls 13 – 14 100m Free
31	Boys 15 - 18 100m Free	32	Girls 15 - 18 100m Free
33	Boys 8 & Under 25m Breast	34	Girls 8 & Under 25m Breast
35	Boys 9 – 10 50m Breast	36	Girls 9 – 10 50m Breast
37	Boys 11 – 12 50m Breast	38	Girls 11 – 12 50m Breast
39	Boys 13 – 14 50m Breast	40	Girls 13 – 14 50m Breast
41	Boys 15 - 18 50m Breast	42	Girls 15 - 18 50m Breast
43	Boys 13 – 14 50m Free	44	Girls 13 – 14 50m Free
45	Boys 15 - 18 50m Free	46	Girls 15 - 18 50m Free
47	Boys 8 & Under 25m Back	48	Girls 8 & Under 25m Back
49E	Boys 9 – 10 25m Back	50E	Girls 9 – 10 25m Back
49	Boys 9 – 10 50m Back	50	Girls 9 – 10 50m Back
51	Boys 11 – 12 50m Back	52	Girls 11 – 12 50m Back
53	Boys 13 – 14 50m Back	54	Girls 13 – 14 50m Back
55	Boys 15 - 18 50m Back	56	Girls 15 - 18 50m Back
57	Boys 8 & Under 25m Fly	58	Girls 8 & Under 25m Fly
59	Boys 9 – 10 50m Fly	60	Girls 9 – 10 50m Fly
61	Boys 11 – 12 50m Fly	62	Girls 11 – 12 50m Fly
63	Boys 13 – 14 50m Fly	64	Girls 13 – 14 50m Fly
65	Boys 15 - 18 50m Fly	66	Girls 15 - 18 50m Fly
67	Boys 9 – 10 100m IM	68	Girls 9 – 10 100m IM
69	Boys 11 – 12 100m IM	70	Girls 11 – 12 100m IM
71	Boys 13 – 14 100m IM	72	Girls 13 – 14 100m IM
73	Boys 15 - 18 100m IM	74	Girls 15 - 18 100m IM
75	Boys 8 & Under 100m Free Relay	76	Girls 8&Und 100m Free Rel
77	Boys 9 – 10 200m Free Relay	78	Girls 9 – 10 200m Free Relay
79	Boys 11 – 12 200m Free Relay	80	Girls 11–12 200m Free Relay
81	Boys 13 – 14 200m Free Relay	82	Girls 13–14 200m Free Relay
83	Boys 15 - 18 200m Free Relay	84	Girls 15-18 200m Free Relay