

What to Expect at your FIRST Swim Meet: A Guide

for YCV Swim Families

What to Take to Your First Swim Meet:

Swimmer:

- Swim Bag or Backpack
- 2 Towels – everything is wet
- 2 pairs of goggles – it is inevitable one pair will break at an inopportune time!
- 2 swim caps – these also break!
- Nose plug if you use one for backstroke
- Racing suit (some kids bring 2 just in case)
- Healthy snacks – crackers, fruit, cheese sticks, trail mix, applesauce, fruit snacks are some of our favorites
- Clothes to change into at the end of the meet
- Warm Up clothes or a swim parka to stay warm between races. If you aren't wanting to invest in a swim parka quite yet bathrobes work great too!
- Blanket for the gym
- Entertainment – cards, book, etc for downtime in the gym
- Sharpie to write on your arm
- WATER BOTTLE!
- Shower supplies/toiletries if you shower at the pool
- A positive attitude – swim meets are so much fun!

Parents:

- Chairs/Blanket to sit on in the gym
- Snacks/Lunch items for family depending on the duration of the meet.
You can always look at the meet timeline/session report to know how long you can anticipate being there.
- Entertainment for yourself and/or siblings of your swimmer
- Dress in layers! It is HOT in the pool and generally freezing in the gym so you will want to be able to easily adjust your clothing.
- Heat sheets/session report
- Highlighters to highlight your swimmers' races
- Sharpie – help your swimmer by writing events on their arm. This usually comes off in a few days in the shower otherwise spray sunscreen works very well for removing it.

Useful Tips/What to Expect Before the Meet Starts:

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm up time begins. Warm up times are posted in the meet information or on the meet website. Coach Ryan will also email these out as soon as possible.
2. Find the gym or team meeting area. Some meets have a gym or place outside of the pool that the teams use. Some meets your swimmer will be on deck in the pool area the entire meet and you will be in the stands.
3. Write on your swimmer's arm:
 - a. E: Event Number from Heat Sheet
 - b. H: Heat Number from Heat Sheet
 - c. L: Lane Number from Heat Sheet



4. Help your young swimmer put on their cap and find the coaches or have your older swimmer go out to the pool deck to find their coaches. For larger pools, Ryan will communicate where to find him or other coaching staff. If you see an older swimmer in the gym or common area definitely ask them to walk your younger swimmer out to the pool deck if parents aren't allowed and you are nervous about them finding the team. Warm up lanes are almost always assigned so your swimmer will know ahead of time the time and lane the team is in for warm ups. There are a lot of adult volunteers that can assist your swimmer as well. The swim community is one of the nicest sporting communities out there so don't be afraid to ask for help!
5. Swimmers will warm up as a team and will generally report back to the gym or common area or will go sit in the team area in the pool once warm ups are over. The swim meet generally starts 10 minutes or so after warm ups.

Useful Tips/What to Expect Once the Meet Starts:

1. Know what events your swimmer is competing in. This information is on the heat sheets. Again, highlighters are your friend.
2. Listen for event announcements. Upcoming events are usually announced and go in order on the heat sheet. You can usually follow along on the heat sheets very easily so you don't miss your swimmers races. If you are camped out in the gym or common area, the meet host often has a clock displaying the events or a livestream feed set up so you can keep up on which event they are currently on. For younger swimmers the meet host will "stage" swimmers ahead of time. This means they will make an announcement for what event is being staged and the swimmers report to the staging area. Adult volunteers will then get them lined up in their heats and lanes to prevent any confusion. Older swimmers generally report directly to the blocks and get lined up several heats before their race. Make sure swimmers have their cap and goggles when reporting to the staging area or behind the blocks.
3. Parents – time to find a spot in the pool to watch your swimmer race! It is important to note that parents are not allowed on deck or in any way behind the blocks during a swim meet unless you are serving in an official role or volunteering in some capacity. There are very important USA swimming guidelines in place to promote a safe, healthy, and fun environment for swimmers, coaches, volunteers, and parents.
4. Swimmers – Swim hard in your race and have fun!
5. Once the race is complete, your swimmer should always check in immediately with their coach for feedback. This is an awesome time for your swimmer and coach to debrief about the race and for coaches to provide immediate feedback.
6. Swimmers can now check in with parents back in the gym/common area or in the stands and grab a snack/relax until their next race. Please note that many pools have very limited seating so it is greatly appreciated that you leave the bleachers right after your swimmers race to allow other parents to watch their kids swim.

7. REPEAT the steps above for all races until the meet is complete.
8. Finally check out with your coaches before heading home. When a swimmer has completed all of their events for the meet they are able to go home. It is important, however, to pay attention to relays and make sure that there are not relays your swimmer is signed up for at the end of the meet before leaving. It is not fair to other swimmers that may have waited to swim on the relay if your swimmer is expected to be a member of the relay and is not there. Relays are generally swam at the start of the meet and/or at the end as the last events. The majority of the time your swimmer will be listed on the heat sheets by name as a member of the relay so you know in advance. However, at some meets the listing is more general "YCV A, YCV B, YCV C" so always ask a coach if there is any question about relay participation.
9. Ask for help! If at any point you feel lost or confused, be sure to ask other YCV parents for assistance. We have all had our "first meets" and know it is overwhelming. Once you have attended one or two, you will quickly establish your family's swim meet routine.

Where do We Race? Useful Tips about Common Pools:

- Onalaska YMCA
 - <https://www.laxymca.org/locations/houser-branch>
 - 400 Mason St/Onalaska, WI 54650
 - Enter through the main doors and pool is attached to the lobby area
 - Please note seating here is limited so it is helpful to go out to the lobby when your swimmer is not swimming
 - Please do not stand at the turn end of the lanes to keep it clear of traffic and to allow swimmers to cheer on their teammates. Spectators should stay in bleachers or outside of the glass in the lobby.
- Stevens Point YMCA
 - <https://www.spymca.org/>
 - 1000 Division St/Stevens Point, WI 54481

- Enter through the main doors and follow the hallway on the right to get to the pool area
- Wausau – Woodson YMCA
 - <https://www.woodsonymca.com/>
 - 707 N 3rd St/Wausau, WI 54403

*NOTE Wausau has 2 YMCA's . . . we swim at the Woodson location if you are putting it into GPS

 - Enter through the main doors – the pool is straight ahead
- Chippewa Falls Middle School *HOME MEET LOCATION
 - 750 Tropicana Boulevard/Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
 - Enter through Door 5
 - The gym is on the right and the pool will be on your left
- Oshkosh YMCA
 - <https://www.oshkoshymca.org/>
 - 3303 W. 20th Avenue/Oshkosh, WI 54904
 - *Enter through the main doors and follow signs to the gym and pool areas*
- Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center
 - <https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/wiwsac/page/home>
 - 9240 N Green Bay Rd/Brown Deer, WI 53209
 - When you pull into the complex there will be signs directing traffic. You can park in the back lot and enter through the back drop off door or you can park in the front lot and enter through the front door. NOTE – YOU PAY TO PARK! Cash only
 - This pool has a large spectator area elevated in stands above the pool. During short course season the racing pool will be on the right side and the warm up pool on the left side (diving board area).
 - There is not a gym or common area at this pool so the swimmers will meet coaches on the pool deck and they will sit as a team in bleachers by the pool area. The hallway in the entry or by concessions is a great spot to meet your swimmer to chat or to meet when done.