

Q & A - November 16, 2023

Q: What should I bring to a meet?

A: As a parent you will want to bring a highlighter, cash, and a Sharpie. The stands generally get pretty warm so you want to dress in layers. Some host clubs charge for heat sheets and concessions. You want to make sure you bring cash as most clubs do not accept any form of card payment. You'll want the highlighter to mark your child's events on the heat sheet, and the Sharpie to put their events on their arm if they need. For your child you want to make sure they have a towel, warm clothes, snacks, water, a suit, cap if they wear one, and two pairs of goggles in case on breaks.

Q: What is the chart on some swimmer's arms? How do I do that?

A: That is how that swimmer is keeping track of the events they are in without carrying the heat sheet. If you would like to help your child do this, you would build a chart like this:

E	H	L	
---	---	---	--

E is the event, H is the heat, L is the lane, and the space after that allows you to write what they are swimming like, 50 free.

Q: I didn't know what events to sign my swimmer up for. Can you give me some guidance?

A: If you are unsure what events to sign your child up for, please ask a coach before or after practice. It is best if you ask the coach that is typically in your child's lane, however any coach should be able to make suggestions. If you're super unsure and there isn't time to ask a coach, every child who swims for Casper Swim Club can complete a 50 free and a 50 backstroke. Those two are always safe.

Q: I'm not sure when to send my swimmer to their event. Can you give me some guidance?

A: It is almost always better to be early than late. As a swimmer I was generally creeping around the blocks 3 events in advance if the pool allowed that because I had horrible anxiety about missing a race. I never missed a race because of it, I also never swam in the wrong lane because of it. However, in many cases, three events in advance is overkill, especially because some events have 20 plus heats in them.

If your child is 10 and under, it is usually pretty safe to assume a 50 will take about one minute per heat, a 100 will take about two minutes, and a 200 will take about three minutes. If your child is 11 and over, it's usually safe to assume a 50 will take 30 to 45 seconds per heat, a 100 will take a minute plus or minus some change, and a 200 will take two minutes plus or minus some change (usually plus).

From there you make the call. If your child is swimming the 5th heat of the 50 free and takes 5 minutes to get ready, send them to the blocks in the last heat of the event before the 50. If your child is in the 4th heat of the 100 and takes 3 minutes to get ready, you can probably send them in the first heat of the 100, and they will have 3 minutes to spare.

Q: Will our head coach be at every meet?

A: The head coach is not at every meet, however there will be a coach of some kind at every meet listed under the team event category on the calendar. If you are unsure who is coaching your swimmer, but would like to know, please don't hesitate to send me an email.

Q: Why doesn't our coach talk to or coach my swimmer during the meet?

A: The coach *should* be talking to every swimmer at the meet, however, we will not chase your child down in order to talk to them. It creates chaos. If you or your child would like feedback before or after a race, your child needs to seek out a coach and we would be happy to provide feedback. Sometimes the coaches give back limited feedback like, that was a really good race, good job, or we simply will tell them good luck before a race. Rest assured that is not because we weren't watching, but because some kids begin to overthink their races if we give them any more than that. In most cases we want them to just swim, we will work on everything else in practice.

Q: Will we typically only have one coach at each meet?

A: The number of coaches at a meet is dependent on how many swimmers we have going to the meet, the experience of that group, and the comfortability of the coach. I always ask the coaches beforehand if they feel comfortable with having x number of swimmers or if they would like a second, and assign coaches based on that answer.

Q: Do I have to volunteer for a home meet if my child is not participating?

A: No. However, if you are willing to volunteer anyway, we would not say no!

Q: Does my child **have** to participate in a home meet?

A: No! Competition is still not required to be a part of this team. If your child feels like they are ready to compete, home meets are a great place to start because it is more comfortable to swim in the pool you practice in. If your child still isn't sure about competing but is thinking about it, home meets are also a great opportunity to get involved and just watch what's going on.

Q: Why do I have to time at meets?

A: We need every family to time at meets. Volunteering is vital to the success of our club and the hosting clubs. This is just a small part of all the time and effort that goes into making a meet happen, and the hosting club needs our help in order to get it done. However, if you are unable to time, please reach out to our volunteer coordinator, Haleigh, so you can work together to find a replacement.

Q: I was assigned to time but I don't know how. Can I have some training?

A: Yes! However, there is a timer meeting before every meet to get families up to speed if they have never done it before. It really is exactly what it sounds like. Start the stopwatch when the race begins, stop the watch when the swimmer in your lane touches the wall, and then write the time down so it can be given to the administration in the crows nest. If you need timer training, please ask me or our meet director, Sandra.

Q: How are timing assignments made?

A: Timing assignments are roughly made based on what events each child is swimming. We try to make sure parents are able to take their swimmer home when their swimmer is done. Occasionally, a parent may be asked to time for an event or two after their child's last event.

Q: The people assigned to time after me didn't show up for their shift. What do I do?

A: This one is always tricky because we don't want it to happen. However, if you find yourself in this position, it is best to remain timing if you are able and willing. We cannot have an empty chair. If you are able to continue timing, try to flag down a coach or our volunteer coordinator, Haleigh, to see if they can find another timer to take your place. Please keep in mind though, we may not always see you. If you know a swimmer on the team well, you might ask them if they can grab one of us.

Q: Why weren't all families assigned to time at the meet?

A: We try to make sure every family takes a turn timing so it is fair. However, if a family comes to every meet and times, but we're going to meet where there are enough other families, we might try to give them a break. There are also some families that only have one parent attending the meet, but have small children who cannot be left alone. Generally these families are also exempt if we know about it.

We have some families that are officials. Families who have officials who are officiating the meet will not have to time. I will take this opportunity to say, if you just really hate timing, you should consider becoming an official! Best seat in the house.

Q: Why do we need more timers for home meets?

A: Timing assignments at our home meets are based on how many swimmers are being brought by each team. Being at home, we have A LOT of swimmers because it's convenient, so we will time a lot of lanes.

Q: Why didn't our club have swimmers in the relays?

A: Our club did not have swimmers in relays in Laramie because it is extremely difficult to make relays that are legal based on gender and age group. Additionally, we had a lot of new swimmers joining us at that meet that might feel uncomfortable swimming a relay, but would have felt left out if they weren't in one. For the first meet I made the executive decision to cut relays completely until everyone feels comfortable swimming on one. We will try to proceed with relays at the next meet that offers them, which should be Gillette's Candy Cane meet.