

Meet Director Handbook

This is an aid for those who plan and organize swim meets. Swim meets offer a locally available competitive experience for swimmers, as well as a fund-raising opportunity for teams. Each swim meet has its own personality and purpose. This is not intended as an all-inclusive handbook, but a guide. The role of the Meet Director varies from meet to meet and for each team and LSC.

Role of Meet Director

The Meet Director is the organizer of and coordinator of the swim meet. The Meet Director delegates jobs to volunteers then supervises. When warm-ups begin, the Meet Referee takes control of the meet, however the Meet Director should be available to troubleshoot any problems, working with the Meet Referee to find a solution.

Getting Started:

In a perfect world, the Meet Director will have notes to rely on from the previous meets, including a meet announcement and financial records including facility rental costs, awards, and hospitality receipts. More likely, the Meet Directors are new every year and just getting started can be intimidating!

The Facility:

Identifying potential meet dates and reserving a facility six (6) or more months is not uncommon. It is best practice to meet with the facility director and/or pool supervisor and discuss what parts of the facility are needed (example: locker rooms, party room/kitchen, spectator restrooms, parking, awards areas, official/coach meeting areas). Discuss who will be responsible for items, including but not limited to: set up, lifeguard staffing, trash and spill clean-up, and restroom restocking. Additional equipment that may need to be rented or borrowed include additional tables and chairs.

Key Officials: After the facility has been reserved for the meet dates, the following key meet personnel should be secured: Meet Referee, Administrative Official (AO), timing system operators (sometimes this is lifeguards trained by the facility) and other officials, including starter, chief judges, and stroke and turn officials. The Meet Referee should be part of the planning procedure including preparation of the meet announcement.

Meet Format: The meet format is driven mainly by what the team needs and when the facility is available. Working with the head coach can help direct team needs. Does the team have many families that do not travel? If so, offering an at home experience as a one-day meet may be the focus. If the meet is a big fundraiser, then a multiday meet with more event offerings will attract other teams.

The vast majority of LSC season meets are pre-seeded timed finals, while championship meets are preliminary trials/finals events. Each meet may be one or more days. When choosing the order of events and age groups, consider offering championship qualifying events for each age group, and running events as larger subgroups (i.e. 12 & Under, 13 & Over, Open) to have more competition and fuller lanes for each heat. Offer a variety and number of events to encourage attendance of all age groups or target the team needs and cater to that.

Timeline: With the exception of championship and open water meets, the program in all other age group competition shall be planned to allow the events for swimmers twelve (12) years and younger to be completed in four (4) hours or less per session (prelims, finals, timed finals). Events for the same 12 & Under swimmers shall be limited to one session per day, except for prelim/final meets where events for 12 & Under swimmers may be offered in both prelims and finals. Time measurement begins at the published start time (not the first 12 & Under event) and ends at the conclusion of the last 12 & Under event of the session. Sessions may not be terminated before all individual events have been completed as a means of complying with the rule. The meet announcement should include a statement of how the host team plans to comply if the number of entries exceeds 4 hours. Such protocol may include cutting relays or reducing individual swims to less than the total allowed. Another consideration would be to cap registration numbers up front (i.e. The meet will be limited to the

first 250 swimmers, teams will not be split) or entries will be accepted on a first come first serve basis until the meet is full. Creative solutions to prevent problems: have distance events on a Friday night, limit the meet to 3 heats of the 1650, have minimum qualifying times for distance events (coach times allowed).

Sponsorships: Corporate or local sponsorships can help offset the costs of running a swim meet. Sponsors can be recognized through ad placement in a meet program, publicity by the announcer, logo placement on the heat sheets as well as banners/signs hung in the facility during the meet. While dollar contributions are always well received, additional support through food donations for hospitality or concessions is also beneficial when considering the bottom line. Non-profit swim clubs can offer tax donation receipts for goods, services, or money donations.

Safety Considerations: Two factors are at play here: *Safe Sport* and *Safety*. While separate considerations, they are intertwined in the meet planning. *Safe Sport* is a mandate from the U S Center for Safe Sport which ensures a healthy and positive environment free from abuse for all members. *Safety* is preventing accidents and injuries when possible and having first aid available if needed.

Safe Sport: [Safe Sport](#) signs should be hung throughout the facility to remind meet participants and spectators of the rules to follow. These signs include but are not limited to: No cameras behind the blocks, designated athlete only areas for changing, and no deck changing.

Safety: One male and one female Meet Marshal should be patrolling to ensure that no hazards exist, and if one does present itself, is fixed. Meet Marshals are identified by the bright vests or armbands. Meet Marshals oversee warmups and ensure the warmup procedures (example: feet first entry unless dive starts) are being followed. Meet Marshals should be familiar with where first aid is available and be familiar with an emergency plan if first responders were called to the pool, in addition to protocols the facility has in place for dealing with a weather or facility emergency. In most cases, this is to defer to the lifeguards and support them as needed. If any type of injury occurs, a [Report of Occurrence Form](#) must be filed immediately.

The Meet Announcement: The meet announcement is the paperwork that governs the meet. Sanctioning is the process of approving the meet per USA Swimming standards by the LSC Sanction Chair whereby it is given a sanction number. Wyoming Swimming has a template that should be used to create the meet announcement. By using this template, all the USA Swimming required information is included in the meet announcement and using a standardized format allows the information to be easily referenced.

Meet Personnel:

The Meet Director often delegates work to designated committees or individuals. Committees may oversee Hospitality and Concessions, Awards, Safety, Set up/Break Down while individual positions may include the Entry Chair, Head Timer, Announcer, and Bull Pen.

Hospitality and Concessions: This may be the same group of individuals tasked with providing prepared food for hospitality for coaches and officials and selling food to spectators. *Tip:* A cooler with ice and bottled water on the deck for timers and officials is well received. For concessions: Consider easily digestible, healthy snacks for the swimmers (Cup of Noodles, cheese sticks, soft pretzels, etc) as well as coffee in the mornings and cold drinks in the afternoon for spectators. Concessions can also sell meet programs and meet memorabilia. Local swim shops may enjoy the opportunity to have a booth at a meet. Have change for cash available as well as QR codes if using Venmo.

Awards: Awards may or may not be given except in the case of a prelim/finals meet. In this case all top finishers must receive an award. Ribbons and medals can be an expensive investment. Consider not branding with the year so extra awards could be used for other team events. Participation gifts or heat winner awards are often enjoyed by the swimmers.

Per USA Swimming rules, the cost per award to an individual may not exceed \$25. If labels are printed to be attached to the award, be sure to order enough labels and establish a process to keep things moving.

Safety Committee: As outlined above, there should be at least two (2) Meet Marshals, one male and one female, per session. In addition, Safe Sport should be a primary focus and separate athlete and non-athlete restroom facilities should be made available when possible.

Set Up and Break Down: Work with the facility or aquatics director to have the necessary tables and chairs set up for timers, the timing table, awards, and concessions.

Entry Chair: The Entry Chair is the individual receiving entries and importing into the meet software. This may be the Meet Director, AO, or a separate individual with training in Meet Manager.

Announcer: An Announcer may be assigned to give announcements, prelims/finals results, shout outs to sponsors, give current race information, and run any music over the loudspeakers. Provide the announcer with a script and timeline to keep things on time.

Head Timer: The Head Timer coordinates all the lane timers and back-up timers. They are often also in charge of the runners and ensuring timing sheets and results get picked up and posted.

Timers: Timers are required to collect data to confirm or refute the electronic timing system. Two times should be assigned to each lane, ideally each with a stopwatch and a button/pickle/plunger. Visiting teams may be asked to provide timers to help with running the meet. A timers meeting should be held by the Head Timer or an official prior to each session of a meet. *Tip:* Consider training timing volunteers during a team practice when coaches introduce the starting procedures. Another suggestion: Schedule local families to time the last competition session so traveling swimmers can pack up and leave when finished.

Runners: Runners are individuals who walk around the deck picking up timer sheets (after each event) and may pick up disqualification slips from the officials.

Bull pen: In age group meets with a lot of young/new swimmers, it can help speed things along if heats of swimmers are lined up in advance. This has the benefit of not as many missed races, as well as reducing congestion behind the blocks. Volunteers will need heat sheets to double check names and order of swimmers. Lining up two to three heats with one behind the blocks is a good place to start.

Equipment and Supplies for the Admin Desk:

Timing console (Colorado Timing System/Daktronics/Omega) + printer

Meet computer with Meet Manager + printer + connecting cables

Toner cartridges—spares

Paper, multi color paper (for re-seeds)

Desk supplies: stapler, paper cutter, pens, pencils, sharpie markers, tape for signs, post-its, highlighters, scissors, spare staples, trash and recycle bins, 3-hole punch

Labels for awards

Extension cords + power strips

	TASK CHECK LIST	Assigned to:	
	4-6 months before meet: Set meet date ○ Check facility availability. Pool + party room + gym for team seating (as needed). ○ Submit written availability confirmation along with priority meet dates before spring HOD. ○ Following meet date awards, reserve facility. Request a Certificate of Insurance , if needed for facility contract Sponsors Vendors for concession/food trucks, souvenirs Identify key meet personnel ○ Meet Referee ○ Admin Official ○ Two officials from the host team		
	60-90 days before the meet: ○ Prepare meet announcement (use template on WYSI website under Sanction and Meet Requirements). ○ Prepare Meet Manager database ○ Hotel room blocks		
+	45 days before the meet: ○ Submit Sanction Request Form and sanction fee – once approved, meet announcement and entry file will be posted on WYSI website ○ Email invitation out to area teams ○ Identify supplies not provided by facility and ensure in working order ▪ Radios ▪ Touch pads ▪ Buttons ▪ Starting system ▪ Timing console ▪ Printers ▪ Computers ○ Order supplies: DQ slips, relay entry forms. ○ Order awards		
	10-30 days before the meet: ○ Receive entries ○ Finalize Volunteers ▪ Timing Console Operator ▪ Starter ▪ Chief Judges, if using ▪ Safety Marshals ▪ Runners ▪ Timers ▪ Concessions ▪ Awards (sticking labels, sorting into team bags or for awarding) ▪ Clerk of Course/Bull pen ○ Check supplies ▪ Stop watches (2/lane or more + head timer + backups) ▪ Radios/headsets/batteries ▪ Clipboards ▪ Pencils/Pencil sharpener ▪ Printer paper ▪ Toner—spare ▪ Stapler/staples ▪ Labels for awards. Bags/boxes to sort awards into ▪ Bell + lap counters		

	▪ Painters tape for signs ▪ Scotch tape for posting results ▪ Extension cords, power strips ▪ Tape to secure cords to prevent tripping ▪ Scissors ▪ 3-hole punch		
	5-10 days before the meet: ○ Print Safe Sport signage. WYSI website under Safe Sport. ○ Submit Meet Backup to WYSI Registrar for USAS membership reconciliation ○ Notify teams of exception report results ○ Ensure no swimmer is over entered per meet announcement ○ Send each team their entry report for verification of entries and fee report ○ Collect meet fees		
	1-5 days before the meet: ○ Send out warm-up lanes/timing assignments ○ Compile meet program (if using). ▪ Heat sheet ▪ Ads from sponsors ▪ Warmup/timing assignments ▪ Qualifying time standards, records if applicable ○ Announcer ▪ National Anthem or pledge of allegiance ▪ Warmup music ▪ Script: short example on WYSI website under Sanction and Meet Requirements ○ Meet Marshals ▪ Meet Marshal Guidelines ▪ Safe Sport Signage posted ▪ Vests ○ Concessions ▪ Price signs ▪ Venmo QR code ▪ Cash—small bills/coins for change ▪ Games, gear, meet programs, meet memorabilia		
	At the Meet: ○ Set up at least 2 hours ahead ▪ Equipment check: touch pads, buttons, starter, lap counters, bell, chairs, tables, timing console, computer, printers. ▪ Cooler on deck with water for volunteers ○ Paperwork ▪ Heat sheets for sale versus Meet Mobile ▪ Heat sheets for officials ▪ Positive check-in paperwork/Scratch sheet ▪ Lane timer sheets ▪ Relay cards ▪ Count sheets for distance events. ○ Clipboards: deck referee closeouts, starter, Order of Finish		
	After the Meet ○ Collect and store equipment ○ Take out trash ○ Send Meet Backup to Times Chair and Registrar for reconciliation and approval ○ After approval, send out results (zip, pdf) to visiting teams ○ Submit Participation Fee Report and payment ○ Submit Financial Report		

Be prepared for the unexpected—think ahead!

Problem	Solution
The computer fails.	Have a back-up computer with Meet Manager and a copy of the meet installed.
The printer fails.	Have a back-up printer on hand.
Timing system fails.	Add a third watch to each lane.
Starting system fails.	Use whistle to start race.
Run out of awards.	Communicate with coaches and mail them when replacements are received.

References:

USA Swimming Meet Director's Handbook

New England Swimming website

Wyoming Swimming website

Potomac Valley Swimming website