

Swim Meet Survival Guide

Swim meets are a great family experience. Like anything new, the whole process of attending a meet can be overwhelming. Here are some suggestions to familiarize you with the process and hopefully make attending meets more enjoyable for you and your family.

Before You Leave Home

Preparing for a swim meet begins with packing the items your swimmer will need and/or like to have with him or her. For example:

1. Swim suit (usually worn underneath clothing to a meet), cap, and goggles. If the swimmer has a Dolphins team suit and/or team cap, a meet is the time to wear them.
2. At least two towels.
3. Something to sit on in the resting area. This is usually a sleeping bag or an old blanket. This does not apply to scrimmage meets where the swimmers stay on the pool deck for the entire meet.
4. Sweat suit or Hampton team warm-up suit to wear to the meet.
5. T-shirt, sweat shirt, sweat pants, to wear in between events (depending on air temperature, all may be needed to keep the swimmer comfortable).
6. Games, cards and other activities. There is often a lot of time between events, especially at USS meets, and having things to do will help your child avoid boredom. This also applies to the parents - bring a book or magazine, etc.
7. Food is available at the meet's concession stand all day, but each swimmer should eat a good breakfast (or lunch) prior to coming to the meet. Swimmers should NOT eat large items, or meals, between events—just snacks.
8. Miscellaneous swim bag items: brush, comb, shampoo, etc.

Please label your child's belongings with his or her name and "HD" on everything—including suits and caps.

Parents should dress in layers, as spectator areas in indoor pools are usually very warm and humid.

Warm Ups

The team is usually assigned a warm-up time prior to the start of each meet session, and you will be informed by the coach via email as to when warm-ups

begin. The email is sent by the club Communications Director several days before each scheduled meet.

Swimmers should arrive at the pool, dressed in suits and on deck with the coach at least **15 minutes before warm-ups** are scheduled to begin.

Preparation for Your Swimmer's Events

Parents can follow the meet progress in a meet program; programs are available for purchase when you walk into the meet. When you arrive, please check the program and/or the meet sheets usually posted in the hallways, and mark the back of your child's hand with a Sharpie with his or her event numbers, heats, and lanes.

For example: Writing E21, H2, L5 means the swimmer is swimming in Event 21, Heat 2, Lane 5. You should teach your child to follow along with the meet, via the scoreboard, so that he or she knows when to swim. The scoreboard typically says which event and heat are currently in the pool swimming.

Please be sure your child has gone to the bathroom before sending him or her down to the deck for warm ups or before events!

During the Meet

The team will usually be able to sit together in a space on the pool deck. Also, swimmers may sit with their parents in the stands for brief intervals between events. Swimmers need to be on deck with coaches one or two events prior to each event in which they are competing. Coaches will talk to each swimmer prior to swimming and immediately after swimming. Swimmers may then join their parents in the stands afterwards.

Food is available at the concession stand all day, but each swimmer should only have healthy, nutritious snacks between events.

Knabes, a swimming equipment supplier, will have merchandise for sale at the meet both days if you need to purchase goggles, suits, equipment, or other swimming items.

Expectations for the Youngest Swimmers

Most of our youngest swimmers will get disqualified in one or more events. They are still young and fairly new to the sport, so that is to be expected. Downplay

that negative and just offer praise for the effort. Your child's coach will have had to "guess" at entry times for the swimmers who have never done meets before, so if your child does better than the coach guessed he or she would, that is a good reason for praise.

If this is your first meet, your child will be nervous and not know what to expect. That is normal, and we will try to make it as fun as we can. Most swimmers will not get ribbons at their first few meets, but coach may have some to hand out for exceptional efforts. Results are always posted on some hallway wall at the meet facility, so parents can watch for them.