



Tips for Parents New to Meets

We answer some of your basic questions.

Again we would like to welcome you to the BCSSA. The swim club that you have registered your child in is a member of BCSSA, so we want to provide you with some tips about swim meets. For some of you this will be your first experience with a summer swim meet. To help you get around and understand what happens at a summer swim meet, we would like to give you some helpful hints.

Warm-Ups

Warm-ups for meets can start as early as 6:30 AM at some meets. Early Yes! Important Yes! Coaches will want to have their swimmers ready to go 10 to 15 minutes prior to the start of Warm-ups. This will give the swimmers time to do their activation and coach's time to organize and explain the warm-up drills.

During the warm-ups, swimmers will learn about the pool: how many strokes to the wall from the backstroke flags, where they start their flip turn, and get a feel for the start blocks. The warm-ups provide a final rehearsal for the events which the swimmer will be competing in, and finally an opportunity for swimmers to get their bodies awake and in motion. At 6:30 AM, this is an important task.

How do you know what event your child is in?

There are two ways:

- You can purchase a meet program which will list all the events, the swimmers in their event, heats and lanes.
- Your child's coach will know. The coaches will write your child's event numbers on your child's hand before or after warm-ups. Prior to marshaling, your swimmer should report to their coach, so he or she can get any last minute instructions and encouragement.

Marshaling

This is the area where the swimmers are organized into their lanes and heats. There will be a notice board with the number of the event being marshaled at that time.

Once in marshaling, the swimmer is under the guidance and instructions of the marshaling volunteers. Parents, this is where you wish your swimmer the best of luck because parents are not allowed beyond the marshaling area or on the pool active deck. Sometimes, clubs have volunteer coaches that will be available to assist swimmers and ensure that they get through marshaling.

What to bring?

As I said above, this will be a long day, so be prepared. Between their events, your swimmer as well as yourself will most likely be outside camping in a large gym or outside on a field. Yes we said camping, and the end of May can be kind of chilly, but as the summer progresses it heats up. You will see the seasoned veteran summer swimming families with their pop-up tents, chairs, sleeping bags, tables and tarps all set up as if they are planning to stay a week.

Many clubs have big club tents, which are usually setup. This is the club's focal point for the club members. Like camping, the social aspect is a huge part of summer swimming, not only for the swimmers, but also the families.

Equipment List

1. Chairs to sit on
2. Pop-Up Tent and Ground Sheet (if you have one).
3. Warm blankets or sleeping bags that the swimmers can crawl into between swims. Don't forget the pillows.
4. Snacks and drinks: It is a long day, so snacks, drinks and lunches are a necessity. There is usually some sort of concession at meets, but the food choices are limited.
5. Games which will entertain the kids, or books to read.
6. Lots of towel, 3 minimum per swimmer.

Volunteering

A swim meet is run by volunteers only, and it takes a lot. As a participating club, your club must supply a number of volunteers. Timers and place judges are two areas where new families can volunteer. No previous experience is required; you get the best seat in the house to watch. You will meet people and get fed. During warm-ups there will be a sign up chart, usually around the officials area or marshalling (just ask someone who is on deck and dressed in full white, as they will probably know). Most shifts are normally 2 hours. Lanes will be assigned to the club for timing. We encourage as many new parents as possible to help out with timing and Place judging. Finally, if you have any questions, please talk to one of the many veteran swimming families in your club.

Have fun at your first meet