

# EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...

*But were afraid to ask (or didn't know what to ask)*

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions please ask one of the steering committee members or your swimmers' coach. At meets early in the season, you will see some FCYST parents wearing orange "ASK ME" shirts—they are a great source of information!

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information that is always posted on the website.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags, and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together so look for some familiar faces.
3. Have your swimmer check-in with the head coach so that they know you have arrived.
4. Once "checked in" write each event number with heat number and lane number on your swimmer's hand with a permanent marker. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.
5. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmer's bodies are

just like cars on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.

6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until their event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

7. The meet will usually start about 5 - 10 minutes after warm-ups are over.

8. According to USA and YMCA swimming rules (due to insurance requirements), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

9. Heat Sheets: A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for two to five dollars per day. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

### **What to take to the Meet**

1. Most important: Swim Suit, FCYST Cap, and goggles (if your swimmer uses them).

2. Baby or talcum powder - To "dust" the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.

3. Towels - Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.

4. Something to sit on - Examples: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.

5. Sweat suits - Bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.

6. T-shirts - Two or three. Same reason as above.

7. Games - Travel games, coloring books, books, or music, anything to pass the time.

8. Food - Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet but the lines are long and most of the time they only sell junk food. Please refer to the nutrition section of this handbook for more information about foods during training and competition.

Suggestions for items to bring:

- Drinks: Hi-C, Fruit juice, Gatorade
- Snacks: Granola bars, Fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, jello cubes, sandwiches, bananas, etc.

9. Permanent "Sharpie" marker - to write your swimmers events on his/her hand and highlighters to highlight the swimmers names on the heat sheet.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other FCYST parent for help or information!

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams.

He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

### **Special Parents' Note**

The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly! At some of the meets, the parents are allowed to sit with the swimmers in the blanket area.

### **Meet Starts**

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

2. A swimmer should report to the blocks at least three heats before they swim. It is usually a good idea to talk to your coach before you head up to the blocks, sometimes they have something they want to remind the swimmer of before he/she swims.

3. The swimmer swims their race.

4. After each swim:

A. He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.

B. He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will ask him/her their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.

C. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:

I. Positive praise

II. Suggestions for improvement

III. Positive comments

5. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

A. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.

B. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.

C. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.

D. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the above over again.

6. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events, he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you (as a parent) check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there. (The coaches speak from experience on this issue.)

7. Make sure that all awards/ribbons/medals are picked up. Some awards are to be picked up by the swimmers and at other meets are bagged for the coaches to pick up and distribute at a later date. Relay teams are required to pick up all four awards/ribbons/medals for the four relay swimmers, you cannot just pick up your individual ribbon for their relay. It will then be up to you to distribute the remaining three awards to those on your relay team.

## **What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim**

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things.