

Swim Meets: Basic Information for New Swim Parents

We participate in a variety of Swim Meets ranging from the most basic developmental Dual Meet to Regional and National level Championship Meets. Developmental Meets are low key and designed to be learning experiences. Winning means improving start, stroke, turns, pace, and time. Racing, the ability to race, and the strategies in racing are a close second priority. Beating someone else is a bonus but not overly emphasized until each swimmer reaches higher levels of competition. We try to attend/host 1 US and 1 ESSL/ODSL Meet per month during our fall/winter and spring/summer seasons.

Swim Meets are preceded by a warm up period of 30 to 60 minutes. The Coaches will tell parents what time swimmers are expected to be at the meet. Once at the meet, the Coach will manage all the warm-up swimming, speak with swimmers before each swim, and review the swim with the swimmer immediately after. Parents should find a comfortable place to view the meet away from the upstairs viewing area. (Most of our swim parents sit together.) Parents are not to engage in coaching their children at the meets. However, parents are welcome to speak with Coaches before and after each meet.

What a thrill to watch your child swim! We ask that you sit in the bleachers and stay off the pool deck. (Unless, you would like to be a timer - no experience required and the best seats in the house!) Your child will be under the care of the Coaching Staff during the whole meet. All the swimmers will be in the same general area waiting for their next event. It is very important that children speak with their Coach before their event and immediately afterwards in order to provide reminders and then to provide feedback. If time allows a swimmer may be able to visit with parents after each race. When you visit with your children tell them how much you love them and how proud you are of them. Please refrain from providing critical comments on your child's performance as this is the role of the Coaching Staff.

What's going on?

Children should first find their Coach who will conduct a warm-up prior to the start of the Meet. The purpose of the warm-up is to loosen up

muscles and tendons, get the capillaries opened up for improved blood flow, and to review skills. The amount of warm-up varies depending on training background. After warm-up the children will gather in an area with the Coaching Staff. A good role for parents at this point is to be sure their children have a warm towel and clothing. The general order of events at an ESSL/ODSL is younger swimmers first, and girls before boys. At a US swim meet the age order may vary. Age groups are 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18/Open There may be several "heats" of one event. For example, there may be fifteen 9-10 girls so we would run several heats of 5 or 6 girls at a time. In each heat there may be swimmers much faster or much slower than your child.

It is natural for parents to want their child to win the heat. There are three things Coaches look for and at this level winning the race is the LEAST important. The first thing our staff looks at is technique -- starts, stroke, turns, and finish. The second thing our Coaches look at is their time. Is it a best time? Finally they look at "racing." Racing means being competitive WITH other swimmers. Perhaps the race is for 5th place or perhaps it is for 1st place. In any case we like the swimmers to have fun racing and focus on bettering their own personal times. Losing is not a big deal - effort is.

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We hope you have a good Meet experience along with your children. Please visit with the Coach if you have any questions. They are available 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after each Meet.

Swim Meets: Basic Information for New Swim Parents and Swimmers

1) Arrive to meet on time

Arrive at the pool usually 15 minutes before scheduled warm-up starts unless a Coach states otherwise. Warm-up times are posted on the meet sheet. Meet sheets can be found and printed online at:

<http://gocudas.org/meets.htm>. The Meet sheet has info for pool location, directions, etc. PLEASE do not lose it, as many simple questions can be answered by the information there. Directions to all Meets can be found on our Website.

2) Check in at with your Coach

One of your Coaches will be located somewhere on the pool deck. Some pool decks are very big and swimmers may have to walk to the opposite side of the pool in order to find their Coaches. CHECKING IN IS VERY IMPORTANT: your child will not be able to swim in the Meet if they are not checked in on time.

3) Find the Coach to warm up

Look for the Team area on the pool deck. This may take a few minutes you might have arrived before other families. Team areas are not marked, they are very informal. The CUDAs warm up as a team and the Coaches have a specific warm up schedule and routine that they follow. Warm-up is a very important part of race preparation, both physically and mentally. Therefore it is vital that your swimmer is present and ready to get in the water. Be there on time!

4) Knowing your heat and lane: how it works

FYI Meet programs are available for purchase at all the Meets; however, these ARE NOT heat and lane assignments. Programs are only a list of the events with the swimmers entered according to their seeded time. Heat and lane assignments are posted on the pool deck prior to each event, usually by at least 20 minutes. All Meets are organized first by event, then by heat and lane. The Coaches ARE responsible for giving out heat/lane information to each swimmer. Coaches ARE NOT responsible for telling heat/lane information to parents.

5) Check in with the Coach before and after your race

Swimmers should talk to their Coach both before their swim (to talk about race strategy, last minute concerns, and general advice) and after their swim (to go over the race).

6) What to do during the meet

Pay attention to what race (age group, distance, event number) is in the water. It is the swimmers responsibility (Coaches will assist younger swimmers) to be ready and behind the block before their race. Please do not ask the Coaches what event is in the water! This is their time to Coach. Make sure swimmers keep well hydrated (do not fool around in the warm-up pool). If you're eating, make sure it is healthy foods and well in advance of your race. No greasy foods!

7) What to bring

Food: there is usually a snack bar at the pool but we suggest you bring your own food as well. Healthy snacks are best, for example: fruit, nuts, sandwiches, energy bars are ok. And don't forget lots of water.

Clothes: bring warm clothes, a change of clothes

Swim gear: team cap, extra caps (yours might break!), goggles (an extra pair if you misplace yours), extra towels; WEAR your swimsuit!

Swimmer accoutrements: swimmers should pack books to read or a deck of cards as there may be a lot of time between their events.

Parent accoutrements: a notebook and pen to write down swimmer's times from official results posting.

8) Lap counting

During the longer distance events, the swimmer maybe asked to provide someone to hold the counter in the water for them. Ask the Coach if you can help with this responsibility.

9) When can I leave?

During ESSL/ODSL Meets swimmers are required to stay for the entire Meet. If for some reason you must leave one of these Meets early please see your Coach, as your child may be part of a relay at the end of the Meet.

During US Meets swimmers may leave after they have completed all their events. Again, please check with your Coach prior to leaving to be sure your athlete is not on a relay.