

All You Need to Know About Swim Meets

Listed below is a guide to help navigate you through your first couple of swim meets. Please feel free to reach out to Black Shark Coaches with any questions you may have. We are trying to provide details in this document but do not want you to feel overwhelmed!

Events

- Freestyle: In the freestyle, the competitor may swim any stroke he/she wishes. The usual stroke is the Front Crawl. The distances are 25 yards, 50 yards, 100 yards, 200 yards, 500 yards, 1000 yards and 1650 yards.
- Backstroke: In the backstroke, the swimmer is on his/her back. The distances are: 25 yards, 50 yards, 100 yards, 200 yards.
- Breaststroke: The breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The kick is a simultaneous thrust of the legs called a “whip” kick. No flutter kick is allowed. On the turns and finish the swimmer must touch with both hands at the same time in the horizontal plane. The distances are: 25 yards, 50 yards, 100 yards, and 200 yards.
- Butterfly: The butterfly stroke features the simultaneous overhead stroke of the arms combined with the “dolphin” kick. In the dolphin kick the swimmer must kick both legs together and may not flutter kick as in freestyle. On the turns and finish the swimmer must touch with both hands at the same time. The distances are: 25 yards, 50 yards, 100 yards and 200 yards.
- Individual Medley (IM): The individual medley – or IM – features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, changes after $\frac{1}{4}$ of the race to backstroke, changes again after another $\frac{1}{4}$ to breaststroke and finishes the final $\frac{1}{4}$ in freestyle (any stroke but the previous three). The distances are: 100 yards, 200 yards, and 400 yards.
- Medley Relay: In the medley relay, all four strokes are swum by four different individuals. The order of the medley relay is: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle. The distances are: 100 yards, 200 yards, and 400 yards.
- Freestyle Relay: In this relay, four swimmers swim freestyle for the entire relay. The distances are: 100 yards, 200 yards, 400 and 800 yards.

Things to Bring to the Meet

1. Team suit (if your swimmer has one), team swim cap, and goggles. If you have extra caps and goggles, it is always a good idea to bring them along!
2. Towels - your swimmer will be in and out of the pool multiple times during the swim meet so it is good to pack at least two towels.
3. Seating - swimmers and families will spend their time between events in the swimmer seating area (often the gymnasium or large room) where bleacher seating is often limited. Seating you may want to bring includes bag chairs/folding chairs, blankets, or sleeping bags. It is also nice to have a few extra blankets to cover up in as the gymnasiums are typically cool.
4. Extra Clothes - some swimmers will sit wrapped in towels and blankets between events while others like to put sweats on. Either way, stuff gets damp so extra clothing is nice to have.
5. Games - swimmers will have down time in the gymnasium between their events. Packing card games, travel games, coloring books, or activities books helps to pass the time.

6. Food - swimmers are usually allowed to bring in their own food and drink. Most swim meets will also have a concession stand available to purchase snacks, lunch, and drinks. Most concession stands only take cash, very few will take a credit card.
7. Sharpie Marker and Highlighter - it is highly recommended that swimmers write their event information on their hand, arm, or leg. This helps them remember what heat and lane they need to be in while they are waiting their turn behind the starting blocks. It is also nice to go through the program and highlight each event that your swimmer is in so that you can reference the program quickly.
8. Printed Program - some swim meets will email the heat sheets (program) before the swim meet to allow families to print it before the swim meet. You can follow along on the digital version but it is nice to have a paper copy to cross off events as the meet goes and to write down times for your swimmers events. Meets will often have a small number of copies available for purchase as well.

*A note to spectators: the pool area is typically very warm so keep that in mind when you are getting dressed for the event!

Before the Meet

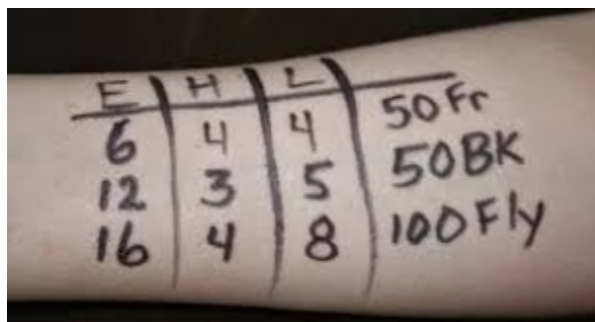
1. Arrive at the pool about 15-30 minutes before your warm-up time begins. This will allow plenty of time to find the gymnasium, get your swimmer settled, have your swimmer use the restroom before warm-ups start, and be on the pool deck 5-minutes before warm-ups begin.
2. Before warm-ups start (it is too hard to write on wet skin), write your swimmers event information in permanent marker on their body as pictured below. It is very important for your swimmer to have this information as nerves can sometimes take over while they are waiting behind the starting block. Parents are only allowed to be seated in the bleacher area and may not be walking around the pool deck with their swimmer.

E=Event

H=Heat

L=Lane

Distance and Stroke



3. Warm-ups are important! Please make every effort to have your swimmer report to warm-ups, on the pool deck, 5 minutes before the start. This time is important to get the muscles ready to compete, get a feel for the pool, learn how to adjust the starting blocks if necessary, and count strokes!
4. The team usually sits in an area together in the gymnasium. Some locations post signs on the gymnasium walls to show where each team sits while others do not. Look for team mates or parents in Black Shark gear and don't be afraid to say "hi" and sit together! We are all on the same team and the swimmers enjoy sitting together to interact with each other between swimming events.
5. Generally, spectators do not stay in the pool area unless they have a swimmer competing. Space is limited, so go to the pool area a few heats before your swimmer competes to find a place to sit and then feel free to leave the pool area once your swimmer has finished the race. This allows for every spectator to have the opportunity to watch their swimmer.
6. Purchase a program if not printed in advance! The program (also known as heat sheets) will have all of the events and swimmers listed in it. It will let you know what event number, heat, and lane your swimmer is in. It is nice to go through the program during warm-ups and highlight each event that your

swimmer is in. Coaches must submit swimmers' previous best time for each event so you will see that time on the heat sheet as well. If your swimmer is competing in an event for the first time, you will see "NT" in the time area of the heat sheet. This simply means your swimmer does not have a previous best time and is noted as "no-time".

7. Meet Mobile - this app posts swim meet heat sheets and results live. The app is about \$10 for a calendar year.
8. Have your swimmer report to the coach, ready for warm-ups (suit on, swim cap and goggles in hand or on). Depending on your warm-up time, coaches may be in the gymnasium to collect swimmers or already out on the pool deck.

During the Meet

1. It is very important to note that meets move VERY quickly! Each heat typically has a start time in the program but some meets may get ahead or behind schedule. It is critical that each swimmer (and parents) knows which events they are swimming and listens for their event to be called.
2. Some meets will be "seeded". Seeding is when the swimmers are lined up in the gymnasium according to their event, heat, and lane and then walk into the pool area. There will be a representative from the home team calling out events and heats so always have one ear open when seeding is occurring.
3. If no seeding is occurring, swimmers will report to the lane for their event. Swimmers should be behind their starting block two or three heats before their event to ensure that they do not miss their event.
4. Your swimmer will swim his or her event! You can watch from the bleachers in most pool areas or some meets have a screen in the gymnasium where you can watch the event live.
5. After each swim before your swimmer leaves the pool area, your swimmer should check in with a coach to get any immediate feedback. After stopping by the coach, they can go back to the team area in the gymnasium. Parents, be sure to encourage and congratulate your child after each swim!
6. Check how far out the next event is that your swimmer is in. If time allows, make sure your swimmer has a snack, keeps hydrated, and uses the restroom.
7. Once a swimmer has completed all of his or her events for the day, they may leave the event or stay to cheer on their teammates. If you decide to leave early, please have your swimmer check in with a coach to let them know that you are leaving. Awards from the swim meet will be passed out at practice at a later date.
8. More experienced swimmers are always encouraged and welcome to stay (or come early) to support the newer and younger swimmers!

Most importantly, swimmers and families have fun! Do not be afraid to ask questions to other parents or any of the volunteers working the swim meet.