

Additional Swimmer Information



Pickens County YMCA

INFORMATION FOR FIRST MEET FOR NEW SWIMMERS

Every swimmer has his or her first meet. Some swimmers are nervous, scared, anxious, and/or excited. For those who have watched siblings swim for so long it's easier for them to fall in line. Everyone has a different reaction to his or her first meet, which doesn't make it any easier. No one knows what to expect at his or her first meet. Please ask questions and don't worry about anything seeming silly. The following information should help you:

1. Get a good night's sleep before a meet.
2. Eat breakfast one and a half hour before warm-ups. A high carbohydrate breakfast such as pancakes, oatmeal, or cereal is good.
3. Pack a cooler for the meet; include juice, no carbonated beverages, or milk products. Bring food to snack on during the meet. You won't want to eat a complete meal during a meet, save that for after the meet. Bring things like Jell-o, muffins, bagels, crackers, fruit, carrots, dry cereal, raisins, or fruit roll-ups.
4. Avoid dairy products.
5. Pack a bag; include your suit, if you didn't wear it to the pool, your cap, goggles, and several towels. You may want to bring a chair, towel or an old blanket to sit on.
6. It is recommended swimmers have a spare pair of goggles, and spare cap at all meets in case yours breaks.
7. Arrive at the pool 15 minutes before warm-ups are scheduled to begin. You don't want to feel rushed.
8. Before or after warm-ups you will get your "Numbers". These are the event numbers in which you will be swimming that day. They will be written on your arm to help you remember which events you are swimming and when. The clerk of course will call events by those numbers.
9. For warm-ups each team is allotted a given number of lanes, depending on the team's size. Sometimes the warm-up lanes are crowded; you will get use to this as you attend more meets.
10. Swimmers MUST sit with the team. This is VERY important. Team spirit is essential in how a team performs at a swim meet. Support and encourage your teammates.
11. You are competing for yourself. Each time you swim, you are trying to better your own seedtime. Set your own goals and work towards it!
12. As you progress you will get faster, you will move up in heats. Each event has several heats; the last heat is the fastest. You will begin in the first heat, because you have an NT- no time.
13. You will compete only in the events that your coach puts you in. At your first meet, you may only swim one or two events. Your coaches want you to have a good experience and will plan accordingly.
14. For YMCA league meets the age groups are as follows: 6 & under, 7&8, 9&10, 11&12, 13&14, 15-18, and 19-21. US meets are slightly different. You will move up to the next age group on your birthday.
15. The order of an IM is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. You swim 25 yards of each stroke. During the winter season, the older age groups swim a 200 IM, which is 50 yards of each stroke.
16. The order of a medley relay is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

If you have any questions at any time please ask your Coaches or the Aquatics Director. Remember everyone has a first meet, and we will do everything in our power to help you. Good Luck and have fun! That is what it's all about!

INFORMATION FOR FIRST MEET FOR NEW SWIM PARENTS

This is not only your child's first meet, but it is yours. Do not hesitate to ask questions. We have all been there. Please read over the information sheet for new swimmers. If you are asked to times please do not feel shy; it is a good way to learn more about a meet. You will be taught everything you need to know, and you will have a great view. Below you will find a few additional facts about a first meet that will be helpful.

1. Pack a cooler for yourself. Meets can be long. It is important to drink enough liquids to prevent dehydration.
2. You may bring your own food to the meets. Most meets have a concession stand if you would rather have something hot.
3. Bring a chair; bleachers get very hard by the end of the day.
4. Just because its winter doesn't mean the pool area will be cool. Remember swimmers are running around in suits, and the temperature is set to try to accommodate them. Wear layers, or bring shorts and a T-shirt to change into after arriving.
5. Encourage your children to do their best. They are competing against their own times as well as other swimmers. As long as they better their own seedtimes, they are improving. Keep in mind your swimmers will not drop time at each meet; sometimes they are swimming tired, due to the practices. Their coach has designed their workouts for this; it will prepare them for the championship meet.
6. Never criticize your child's coach in front of your child or others. If you have a problem or question about your child's progress, talk to the coach/coaches at an appropriate time. Your child's coach wants to do what's best for your child and sometimes we do need your input.
7. During practices, please do not talk to the coaches unless absolutely necessary. Everyone is working hard during this time and is focused.
8. During meets parents are not allowed behind the starting blocks. Please cheer and encourage your child from the sides of the pool in the designated areas. It is important that you stay out of the way of the stroke and turn judges.
9. Be proud of your swimmer and their teammates. Please cheer them on as they race.
10. Your children will need to sit with the team.

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BEFORE A MEET

What is a heat sheet?

A **'heat sheet'** is the swim meet 'schedule' that identifies each event, and when and in which lane each swimmer will race. The home team sells these schedules for \$1 -\$2 prior to each swim meet. Parents generally bring a pen or highlighter so it's easier to keep track of your swimmers' events.

What is an event?

Each race is called an **'event.'** These events are determined by the age group competing and the type stroke they swim. For each event, there may be multiple heats.

What is a heat?

A **'heat'** represents a single group of swimmers competing at the same time in an event. For example, the Pickens County YMCA pool can field eight lanes of swimmers. Should an event have a greater number of swimmers entered than can be accommodated in a single race, the swimmers are separated into groups. Each race of that single event is considered a heat. Swimmers are grouped according to their seed times, with slower times in early heats, ending with fastest times swimming the last heat of the event. Heat winners will receive a heat award, depending on the hosting teams choice.

What is a swimmer's seed time?

'Seed time' is a swimmer's personal-best recorded time for a particular event. When a swimmer has no recorded time for an event, a coding of 'NT' is listed in place of a time.

How is an event winner determined?

The swimmer with the best overall time, from all heats in an event, will claim first place. There is a first through seventh place awarded for each event. For relays there will be four ribbons awarded to each of the top seven places. Each swimmer will receive a participant ribbon. It is the responsibility of the team coach to distribute the ribbons among its team members.

How many races will my child swim?

The head coach makes the entries for all regular season meets. All swimmers are limited by swim league rules to a total of six events for each meet –usually by swimming four individual events and two relay events. A maximum of four individual events is allowed per swimmer. Your swimmer may not swim in two relays as this will depend upon the number of swimmers available – four are needed per relay

Who runs the swim meet?

Parent volunteers from each team fill all roles needed to conduct a swim meet. The home team has a designated **Head Official** who is ultimately in charge of the meet. A **Starting Official** directs the flow and sets the pace of the swim meet. At the beginning of each race, the Starting Official identifies the event name and heat, and starts the race with a horn and strobe flash. This official is in communication with the Head Staging Official and Head Scoring Official throughout meet.

What and where is the Bullpen?

The **Bullpen** is a designated location where all swimmers on a team stay when they're not participating in a race. Instead of sitting with parents or having free reign of the pool deck during a swim meet, swimmers are encouraged to sit with their team members in the Bullpen when they are not participating in a race. Coaches will determine the designated bullpen area before each meet.

Parents should bring their swimmer(s): two towels – one to sit upon, one for drying off; clothes to wear when not swimming (it does get cool at night); snacks/beverages and small games to make them virtually self sufficient during the swim meet. The swimmers LOVE the camaraderie of being with their teammates. The social aspect of swim meets, to some swimmers, is what they like most about swim team. The Bullpen parent volunteers and assistant coaches will get swimmers to the staging area for their respective

races, as well as keep a watchful eye on the swimmers in the Bullpen area. At away meets, our Bullpen parent volunteers will designate a Bullpen location for swimmers to congregate.

What is Staging and where is it located?

Staging lines the swimmers up so they arrive at their designated lane for their scheduled event and heat. The Head Staging Official communicates with the Bullpen to call swimmers for their races (a key reason all swimmers need to be in the bullpen area). The Staging area has seats (chairs or benches) near the starting blocks. Parent Staging volunteers arrange the swimmers and seat them to ensure a continuous flow of traffic for the races.

To help swimmers keep track of their individual races, many parents use a Sharpie marker to write the event/heat/lane numbers on their swimmers' hands. Example: Event 32, Heat 3, Lane 4 would be written 32/3/4. Some swimmers also have their names (first and last) written on their shoulder or back. This helps the Staging crew verify the swimmers as they arrive and helps the Timers identify swimmers before a race. Sharpie washes off with a good soapy scrub and/or baby oil. ** coaches will mark the swimmers arms **

What role do Stroke and Turn Judges play in a swim meet?

Stroke and Turn Judges confirm swimmers meet all league rules during their swims. These officials are trained on the rules. If a stroke judge disqualifies a swimmer for a stroke infraction, the judge will tell the swimmer what rule was broken. Although the swimmer's time will not count toward the team score, understanding the infraction and learning how to correct it is a learning experience for the swimmer.

What does a Timer do?

Timers use a stopwatch to record the duration of a swimmer's race. Each lane will have a timer from both the home and visiting teams. The home team timer will record times from each timer's watch. All timers participate in a brief information meeting prior to each swim meet to confirm expectations and roles.

IMPORTANT: No parent or other swimmer can enter the pool or touch a swimmer during a race. If there is a false start, do not try to stop the swimmer. Don't touch racers at the starting blocks before an individual event or any of the relay members once they are on the starting block.

What are the Scoring Table functions?

The home team runs the scoring function, providing the printed heat sheets and individual race sheets for recording times. At the conclusion of each event, a **'runner'** will collect recorded times from each lane and submit them to the scoring table. The head scoring official will input the times into a master database. There is one representative from each team to verify and reconcile written times with times entered into the computer. Another function of the scoring table is to create individual ribbons for each swimmer that state the details of the swimmer's race (teams, date, event and time).

Do all swimmers receive ribbons?

Place ribbons are presented to the swimmers with the fastest seven times (first through seventh) for each event. These ribbons will be given at team practice within a few days following the meet.

Can parents stand with their swimmer at the starting block?

Swim meets tend to be somewhat chaotic at times, particularly in the staging and starting block areas. Parents should not enter the staging or starting block areas during a swim meet unless assigned to a specific job. If there is a problem or an important message for your swimmer, see a Bullpen parent volunteer.

SWIM TERMINOLOGY

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| "A" time | Beginner/intermediate qualifying time standard |
| "AA" time | Intermediate qualifying time standard |
| "AAA" time | Advanced qualifying time standard. |
| Age Group | Swim divisions based on age. For example for individual events, 6 & under, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18, 19-21. Relay age groups vary and will be assigned by coaches, for example an 8 year old may swim in a 12 & under relay. |
| Anchor | The final swimmer in a relay. |
| Backstroke | One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 25 (8 & under age group only), 50, 100 and 200. |
| Blocks | The starting platforms located behind each lane. |
| Breaststroke | One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 25 (8 & under only), 50, 100 and 200. |
| Butterfly | One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 25 (8 & under only), 50, 100 and 200. |
| Cap | The latex or lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers. |
| Circle Seeding | A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes. |
| Consolation Finals | After the fastest 6 or 8 swimmers, the next 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the Championship heat. |
| Deck | The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. |
| Deck Entries | Accepting entries into swimming events on the first day or later day of a meet. |
| Disqualified | A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. The swimmer's time will then be discounted. |
| Dive | Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warmups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmers coach. |
| Dryland | The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water. |
| Entry | An Individual, Relay team, or Club roster's event list into a swim competition. |
| Entry Fees | The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. |
| Electronic Timing | Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers. |
| Event | A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals 1 preliminary with its final, or 1 timed final. |
| False Start | When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although |

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| | the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances. |
| False Start Rope | A recall rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. |
| FINA | The international, rules making organization, for the sport of swimming. |
| Finals | The final race of each event. |
| Flags | Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall. These are used by backstroke swimmers to judge their distance to the wall. |
| Freestyle | One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 25 (8 & under only), 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500. In the US, distances of 500, 1000 and 1650 yards are swum in place of the 400, 800 and 1500 metre distances. |
| Heats | A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swam, after all heats of the event are completed. |
| Heat Sheet | The printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet. For example, it will list all swim events in the order that they are being swum, along with the lane assignments for each heat. |
| IM | Individual Medley. A swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. Equal distances must be swam of each stroke. Distances offered are 100, 200 or 400. |
| Lane | The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. (ie) Lane 1 or Lane 2. |
| Lap | One length of the course. We are a short course pool, or 25 meters. A 25 is one length, a 50 is two lengths, a 75 is three lengths, a 100 is four lengths, and so on. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of a long course, or 50 meter pool. |
| Leg | The part of a relay event swam by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM. |
| Length | The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See lap. |
| Long Course | A 50 meter pool. |
| Marshall | The adult(s) (official) who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet. |
| Meet | A series of events held in one program. |
| Meet Manager | The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet. |
| Nationals | Canadian national swimming championships - qualifying times are required. |
| NT | No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before. |
| Officials | The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition. |
| Pace Clock | The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warmups or swim practice. |
| Paddle | Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice. |
| Pull Buoy | A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice. |
| Qualifying Times | Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer. See "A" "AA" |

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| | (etc.) times. |
| Recall Rope | A rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. |
| Referee | The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions. |
| Relays | A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - one swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200 and 400 distances. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each of the 4 swimmers swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 200, 400 or 800 distances. |
| Sanctioned Meet | A meet that is approved by the Carolina YMCA. Meet must be conducted according to Carolina YMCA Swim League by-laws. All participants, including coaches, athletes and officials, must be qualified according to Carolina YMCA Swim League By-laws. |
| Scratch | To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events. |
| Seed | The lane assignment of the swimmer in each heat based on their submitted or preliminary times. |
| Short Course | A 25 yard or 25 meter pool. |
| Split | A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, that is timed. (ie) A swimmers first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances. |
| Start | The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race. |
| Starter | The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff. |
| Stroke | There are 4 competitive strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. |
| Stroke Judge | The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified. |
| Taper | The resting phase of a swimmer prior to a championship meet. |
| Timed Finals | Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by the those times. |
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| Timer | The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system. |
| Time Trial | A sanctioned event where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard. |
| Touch Pad | The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race. These are used only at state and regional meets. |
| Warm-down | The recovery swimming a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available. |
| Warm-up | The practice and "loosing" up session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum. |