

Tips for a Successful Meet

So, you're about to go to your child's swim meet. Swim meets are an exciting opportunity for your child to bond with his/her teammates and push him/herself against swimmers of similar ability. But they can also be overwhelming for the whole family. Here are some tips to increase the fun and decrease the stress! **What to bring:**

Documents

- The Meet Info sheet coaches post this document as soon as it becomes available on the Meet Schedule tab of our blog. The meet info sheet contains everything you need to know: the sponsor team, the address of the pool, warm up times, event schedule, awards to be given, concessions, and more! Print it out, read it, and bring it along. You'll be surprised how often you will refer to it.
- The Psych Sheet or the Event Entries sheet that coaches send out after our registration is final. Print, and bring along!
- If your child is interested in qualifying for States, you can print the current qualifying times from the Wyoming Swimming website www.wyomingswimming.org and click on Time Standards to download q times.

Gear

- Suits, caps, goggles, and towels (at least 2 of each in case of things breaking, tearing, or getting lost. Also, towels get very wet by the end of the day, so extra backups in the car are a good idea).
- Deck clothes – fleece works great because it dries quickly. Robes, sweats, slippers, socks to keep muscles warm between events. Wet swimmers are cold swimmers!
- Activities to keep busy between events – cards, coloring books/sketch paper and crayons, pencils, etc, board games, puzzle books, etc. NO ELECTRONICS, PLEASE! Swim meets are a great time for teammates to socialize and have fun together and to cheer for their teammates!
- Sharpies and highlighters (a couple of each, since they disappear easily).
- Deck chairs and blankets if allowed (refer to the meet info sheet before packing).

Food

- Healthy snacks like yogurt, carrot sticks, sliced fruit, nuts – things that are easy to eat and digest to keep your swimmer's energy up during the day.
- Lunch, if there will be a lunch break. The meet concession stand usually provides snack and lunch options to buy as well, but the choices are not always the healthiest.
- Plenty of water! Your swimmer (and you) need to stay hydrated.
- A small insulated lunch bag or cooler is a great asset.

Have your swimmer pack their own bags – swim gear, deck clothes, activities, etc. Get them involved and invested in their success! Of course, if your child is young, give them small assignments, and please double check their work to avoid a pool-side crisis at the meet. ☺

At the Meet

Arrive at the pool well in advance of warm ups. This will give you time to “set up camp” if the pool allows parents poolside or to figure out where you will sit so your child knows where to find you. Also it will give your child time to change clothes if necessary, find the coaches, and relax a bit.

Purchase a Meet Program, also referred to as a Heat Sheet. These usually cost about \$3-\$5, (more at States). Write your name on the front to avoid someone else picking yours up by mistake! Using the Psych Sheet or the Event Entries form to cross-reference, highlight your child's heat and lane

assignments for each event in the Heat Sheet. Some people like to use 2 colors of highlighters; one for their child's events and one for other team members, so you can remember to cheer for the other kids too! Don't forget to check on relays, as these are not always listed ahead of time.

Either before warm ups or after, help your child create an event grid on a leg, arm, foot, or hand – anywhere they can easily read it. The grid should look like this:

E	H	L	S
3	2	6	50 Fly
7	4	4	100 Free



E=Event #, H=Heat #, L=Lane #, S=Stroke and Distance

If the meet is a 2-day meet, it is best to only list that day's events and make a new grid on the second day to avoid confusion.

Most pools have a large scoreboard where you can easily keep track of events, heats, and times. You can record your swimmer's time in the heat sheet and compare it with their seed time (their best time for each event coming into the meet). If you miss a time or are unsure about your child's final ranking in an event, the host team posts event results somewhere in the facility as they are finalized – usually in a hallway or lobby area. If you can't find the results, ask one of the meet volunteers, and they'll steer you in the right direction.

Parent Assistance at Away Meets

At many of our away meets, the hosting team will ask us to help with timing. Sometimes we are assigned a lane for which we are responsible; sometimes it is more voluntary. Please be aware that if there is a timing shortage, you will be asked to help. Parents are not allowed behind the starting blocks unless they are timing, so timers have the best view in the house! When timing, you really get to be involved in the meet and see things up close and personal. Though it may seem nerve-wracking the first time you're asked, you'll see after a few minutes that it is really quite simple and a lot of fun.

You also may be asked to help keep an eye on some of the younger kids or help round up swimmers before an event. All parent help is greatly appreciated in keeping our kids aware of the schedule (it takes a village)! **Before Leaving the Meet**

Please always check in with the coaches before leaving a meet. Relays often happen at the end of the day, and relay teams can get shuffled around depending on how many kids come to the meet, if anyone gets ill, etc. Even if you think your child is not swimming a relay, please make sure to let the coach know before you leave (try to do so between events and not while she's trying to calm a swimmer behind the blocks, etc). Please be responsible and clean up any trash in your area (even if you didn't leave it). We want to be responsible and helpful to the host team so we are always invited back! Also, double check that your child has all his/her towels, suits, goggles, sweats, etc. before leaving. It is much harder to get back lost gear from a distant facility!

If you are confused about something or have questions, don't hesitate to ask one of the other swimmers or parents. We all learn from each other!

Finally, please remember that every pool is different, and every swimming experience is different. If your child swims slower than normal or gets a DQ (disqualification) in an event, there can be many

reasons. The coaches will address any improvement areas in practice. Your job is to be supportive and congratulate your child for participating in the meet, regardless of the outcome! In general, the more fun they are having, the less nervous they will be. At the end of the day, we want your child to leave feeling great about him/herself and proud to be part of the Stingrays team!

Thanks for your participation, and....**GOOOOOOOO STINGRAYS!!!**