

EXCEL SWIM CLUB

This document highlights many of the most common questions we get asked about swim meets. It is a living document and may be updated from time to time. We hope that it answers questions you all may have about participating in swim meets!

If you have a question about something that isn't covered in this document, please email Coach Chris (coaches@excelswimclub.org) and he will try to answer it. Your questions might end up on this document too!

How do I sign up for a meet?

- Swimmers will get the meet invite link sent through their swim portal. Invite links will be sent out roughly 3 weeks in advance of the meet so be sure to check your swim portal and the website for information on when they will be posted. Also be sure to check the invite link, Excel website, and the PNS website for the meet information document. Those documents contain all of the relevant details for each competition.
- In your swim portal, you will check the boxes next to events your swimmer wishes to do. If you have questions about which events are appropriate for your swimmer, please email Coach Chris or Coach Megan and they will help you out.
- Some of the meets require qualifying times in some or all of the events. These details will be conveyed in the meet information so be sure to read those documents. Swimmers can only achieve the qualifying times in USA swimming meets so be sure to attend a couple early in the year to potentially open up opportunities for competition later in the season!
- Swimmers will compete as the age they are on the first day of the meet.

What time do we need to get to the pool?

- In the meet information, they will have start times for the morning session competitions.
- Warmups will begin 1 hour before the start of competition for each session

- Once the entries have been sent and compiled, the meet host will release a timeline (usually a week before the meet) and that will give an idea of when the warmups for the afternoon session will be.
- At most meets we go to, morning session warmups begin at 8:00 AM and competition at 9:00 AM. For afternoon sessions, warmups begin around 12:30 PM and competition at 1:30 PM (roughly). The exact times will be sent out the week before the meet.
- **Please arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled warmup time. Do not look at the timeline and try to get to the meet 15 minutes before the timeline states you will swim.**
- If you have schedule conflicts, please email coach Chris so he knows when you will arrive and can alert the other coaches if necessary.
- Getting swimmers to meets on time is the best way to set them up for success and reduce anxiety about racing.

What time will my races be?

- It's hard to tell exactly what time races will take place. It all depends on the number of entries and how fast or slow the meet is running. Coaches will not be able to r
- Estimated timelines are provided to give an idea of when races will take place, but stoppages and technical issues do occur and these timelines are not completely accurate.
- If you have other plans or have doubts about your swimmers ability to make a certain race at a meet, it's best to not sign up for that event.

What does my swimmer need to bring?

- Swimmers should bring the following at a minimum:
 - Racing suit (more details below)
 - 2 Towels
 - 2 pairs of well fitting goggles
 - 2 caps
 - A warm coat or parka (even inside)
 - Slip on footwear
 - A change of clothes for after the meet
 - A water bottle and/or sports drink
 - Light Snacks
 - Entertainment
- The following items are useful to have:
 - An extra suit (sometimes a friend needs one!)
 - A folding chair
 - Sharpies
 - Highlighters

What are the rules for swimwear?

- Swimmers should wear a suit that is comfortable enough for them to wear for the entire meet session and something that will reduce drag. Some swimmers will choose to wear tech suits (see below bullet point regarding tech suits) and others will swim in what they use in practice. We do not require swimmers to wear an Excel Team suit.
 - [This page on the USA Swimming website](#) outlines the rules around 12 and under tech suit usage. Please refer to it before spending money on a suit your swimmer cannot wear in competition! When in doubt, buy something else.
- We do ask that all swimmers wear an Excel Team Cap during their races! If a swimmer doesn't have one, they will be provided with one at the meet.
- Swimmers are not allowed to wear the following:
 - Tie back suits (Jolyn)
 - 2 Pieces
 - Watches
 - Swim shirts or rashguards
 - Caps that aren't Excel Team caps, PNS caps, or caps with the American Flag (cannot wear summer league caps, high school caps, etc)
 - Necklaces
 - Swim equipment, fins, paddles, snorkels, etc.
 - If an exception needs to be made, please let Coach Chris know and he will contact the meet officials.

My swimmer isn't on the meet entries, what do I do?

- Contact Coach Chris and see if there are any issues. Sometimes swimmers can be added in later and sometimes not, it depends on the meet and who is hosting.

My swimmer missed their event, what can they do?

- First, they need to find their coach who will take them to the meet referee.
- The meet referee will try to find an open lane for the swimmer to race in. It's not always a guarantee but they usually find one.
- The swimmer will need to tell their name to the timers so the swimmer's time will be recorded.

Food?

- Depending on the meet, food may or may not be available through a concession stand. Generally the fare at the concession stands is not the most nutritious.

- The best practice is to bring food that has a high amount of easily digestible carbs to consume during the meet, and then making sure swimmers get a good meal with lots of carbs, proteins, and fats after they are done with competition.
- Some good during meet foods are:
 - Bagels
 - Bananas
 - Light Sandwiches
 - Rice
 - Baked potatoes
 - Granola bars/fig bars/clif bars
- Foods high in protein and fat are great after races but are hard to digest and can lead to stomach discomfort during races. It's highly suggested that swimmers save protein bars and large meals for after meets.

Will I be able to sit with my child?

- Generally, the deck area is limited to swimmers, coaches, volunteers, and officials. Swimmers may choose to sit in the stands with their parents between events though the coaches generally like them to be within sight distance in case swimmers need to go behind the blocks!
- Swimmers may occasionally need to bring a portable chair to sit in at some meets, this will be communicated prior to the meet.
- If you'd like a front row seat to the competition, you can volunteer at meets that require them or you can become an official!
- The coaches will handle getting swimmers to their races or to the staging area.

How will my child know when to go to their race?

- Meets are sorted by Events, Heats, and Lanes. The "heat sheet" is the most important document for swimmers during a meet because it tells swimmers where, when, and what they are swimming.
- Many swimmers choose to write their events on their arms in sharpie before the meet starts to remind them of when and where to go.
- Many meets will have staging areas. Swimmers will line up in groups based on their heat and lane and be guided to the blocks by coaches and volunteers. Those of you who participate in summer league will be familiar with this process. Those of you who are new to competitive swimming will get the hang of the process very quickly.
- The meet announcer will do first, second, and final call for each heat of each event. First call means get to staging or behind the blocks, second call means you should already be in the right spot, final call means that heat is coming up next and if you're not ready, time to hustle!
- There will either be a scoreboard or some kind of sign indicating the event, heat, and lane. It's important to check that so you can keep track of the progress of the meet.

- Learning how the meet flows takes experience and practice. The coaches and older, more experienced swimmers will help guide newer swimmers through the process and help them have a great meet!

When should my child check in with coaches?

- Swimmers should check in with the coaches when they get to the meet, before each race, and after each race.
- It's important to check in so that coaches can remind swimmers of what they need to work on and give them feedback about the races that they have finished.

What does my swimmer do between races?

- Swim meets typically have a lot of downtime between races. Swimmers should engage in low energy activities so they don't tire themselves out between races. Activities include:
 - Playing card games or board games
 - Reading
 - Watching teammates race/cheering for teammates
 - Mobile video games
- Please refrain from:
 - Running around the facility
 - Standing for long periods of time
 - Walking up and down stairs more often than necessary
 - Spending a lot of time in the warmup area
 - Spending time outside or away from the eyes of coaches and parents.

What are the benefits of swimming in a meet?

- There are many benefits! Swimmers can see tangible benefits from their hard work at swim meets because everything is timed and swimmers know how much they improve meet to meet.
- Swim meets allow swimmers to get to know their teammates better because there is a good amount of down time between their races and this time can be used to socialize.
- Swimmers can compete against other teams and get to know swimmers from the area.
- Competing in a meet can lead to a big boost in self confidence and a feeling of accomplishment. This is especially true if a swimmer reaches a goal they have set for themselves or overcome an obstacle they have been struggling with.

When can we leave?

- Swimmers are welcome to leave as soon as they are done with their events. Be sure to check with the coaches before you leave to make sure you're actually done!

- Please make sure to double check your area before you leave to look for forgotten items and to clean up any trash you may have generated during the meet. We want to be good representatives of the team and not put any additional work on the meet hosts.

Cost

- There are 2 different costs associated with swim meets.
 - The surcharge for the meet host is \$10-\$20 depending on the meet. Excel will add \$10 (meets closer than 60 miles), \$15 (meets further than 60 miles), and \$20 (for travel meets that require paying for accommodations for the coaches.)
 - The individual event fees are \$4.50-\$7.00 per event.
 - A great way to not have to pay these fees is to become an official! Excel will waive your meet fees if you are on deck working as an official during a meet.

Does my child need to warm up?

- Yes. Warmups are required for all swimmers for several reasons:
 - Swimmers need to get used to the pool they are competing at. While pools are all the same length, many have differences such as wall composition, positioning of pool ladders, ceiling composition, water temperature, gutter construction and many more.
 - The coaches need to know the swimmers are at the meet before the competition starts. There are usually a lot of swimmers at meets and coaches don't have time to be looking around for swimmers who aren't accounted for during warmup.
 - A good warmup is the most important thing to get ready for a race. Swimmers will perform their best when their bodies are ready for the strain of a competition.
 - Dives. Starting blocks vary from pool to pool and swimmers need a few reps to get used to different blocks
- **Swimmers are asked to get to the pool at least 15 minutes before the start of warmup.**
- Swimmers will need to enter the water feet first during warmup. The coaches will provide a structured warmup set to get the swimmers ready for their races and also include several practice dives to get swimmers used to the blocks. Warmups tend to be crowded and can be difficult to navigate but they are essential to a swimmers success in competition.

What happens if my child is unable to attend at the last minute?

- Please email Coach Chris at coaches@excelswimclub.org so he can account for the swimmers and rearrange relays if necessary.

How are relays formed?

- Relays are formed by the coaches before sending entries in. Coaches have the ability to change the relays on the day of the meet if necessary.
- Relays are teams of 4 swimmers doing either freestyle or a medley (all 4 strokes). Distances are 200, 400, and 800 (fairly rare)
- If numbers permit, there may be multiple relays. They are labeled in order of speed A, B, C, etc.
 - Those of you who do GSSSL know that the relay spots can be competitive and coveted by swimmers and parents. Here are some considerations the coaches take when making relays.
 - Availability: Some swimmers can only make certain days meaning they will not be on a relay on the days they are not at meets.
 - Speed: The fastest 4 will be on the A relay (unless there is a strategic consideration). We try to look at recent times to see who the fastest 4 are. Sometimes we miss things, and sometimes the times are close and we make a call based on other factors.
 - Inclusion: We try to get as many swimmers included on relays as possible and sometimes that means not just going down the list of swimmers speed wise and putting them in groups of 4. Some swimmers will not participate in multiple relays in order to give another swimmer a chance.
 - Experience: We want to make sure swimmers have a good time at meets and don't get nervous at the prospect of racing on a relay. We like to make sure swimmers are able to dive and perform the strokes legally before they participate in a relay. We also refrain from placing swimmers in relays at their very first meet so they can focus on their individual races.

Sportsmanship

- Sportsmanship is very important in all competitions. Ways to practice good sportsmanship include:
 - Wishing luck to your competitors before the race.
 - Shaking hands/fist bumping/high fives/elbow bumping after the race.
 - Staying in the pool until all swimmers in the heat are done.
 - Cheering for teammates.
 - Not making rude comments about other swimmers speed, technique, or swimwear. We all have to start somewhere!
 - Congratulating teammates.
 - Holding teammates accountable for their behavior.

Cheering!

- Cheering is a great way to encourage team bonding and will give an extra boost for swimmers in the water.
- Swimmers are encouraged to cheer for their teammates, especially for swimmers in close races, those who are close to qualifying times, or during relays when everything gets a bit more exciting.