

HAVING A SUCCESSFUL SWIM MEET

What can swimmers and parents do to give swimmers the best chance to have a successful meet.

PRE MEET PREPERATION:

- Nutrition: (see my nutrition write-up later in the newsletter)
Good nutrition plays a very important role in your swimming success.
Nutrition is the fuel for the body.
Eat properly before the swim meet.
Plan your nutrition for the meet, before the meet.
Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate (before, during, and after).
- Mental Preparation:
Swim meets are like exams. To do well on an exam at school you must study the night before. The same is true for preparing for a swim meet. Go over your races in your head. Try to visualize your races and be as vivid as possible. Good visualization lays down the tracks for a successful meet. At season ending "focus" meets you should visualize the week before the meet.
- Sleep:
Make sure to get a good night sleep before each day of the meet. If you don't get proper sleep it will have an affect on your swimming.
- Equipment:
Make sure you have all of your equipment packed for the meet. Swim suits, goggles, towels, proper clothing for the meet...
Usually it is not a good idea to use new goggles for the first time at a meet. Although sometimes it is unavoidable it's good to practice with them before you race with them. I can't tell you how many times I have seen swimmers get "goggle" lunch with new goggles at a meet.

DAY OF MEET:

- Arrive On Time:
Part of having a successful meet is showing up on time and prepared for the meet. Coaches like to do group warm-ups and if you are late you will miss the group warm-up. If you have expectations of having a good meet and you miss the group warm-up you have started the day on a bad note.
- Check In For Events:
Once you arrive at the meet the first thing you need to do is check in for the meet.
- Check In With Your Coach:
After you check in for your events check in with your coach to see when they want you to get ready to warm-up. Usually the coach likes the swimmers to come around 10-15 minutes before they get in to warm-up to stretch and prepare for warm-ups.
- Warm-ups:
It is very important to do a proper meet warm-up. Don't cut corners here!
Warm-ups for swimmers vary depending on the age and workout group of the swimmer but the general rule is that if you don't get tired in your warm-up, you will get tired in your race.
Have you ever done a timed swim at the end of a workout or hard set and had a surprisingly fast time? Well, it's probably because you were very warmed up.
- Warm-up Structure:

- 1) General Warm-up: Usually a long easy swim. Might involve some kicking, sculling, or drills.
- 2) Warm-up Set: A set of more specific work. May involve kicking, drills, and variables in speed... A higher intensity than the general warm-up.
- 3) Speed & Heart Rate Set: This is usually a short set that is used for speed work and to get the heart rate up. It's usually very intense but also very short. Kind of like revving up the engine of a car.
- 4) Starts: Swimmers will do one or two starts. If you are swimming backstroke you should do a backstroke start especially if you are at an away meet. (backstrokers should also get a stroke count from the flags to the wall at race pace).
- 5) Pacing: Pacing may be done for longer events at the coaches discretion.
- 6) Warm Down: Swimmers will usually swim a 200 warm down.

RACE TIME:

- Pre Race Routine:
Swimmers should have a pre race routine that they do before every race. The pre race routine should include the following:
 - 1) Warm-up for your race 10-15 minutes before your race. Ask your coach about how much you should do.
 - 2) Talk to your coach about your race.
 - 3) Go behind the blocks and prepare to race (stretch, visualize...).
- Post Race:
 - 1) Talk to your coach about your race. This is an excellent time to learn about areas that you need to work on to improve and also get reinforced on things that you did well.
 - 2) Warm Down. Most swimmers do not warm down after a race as much as they should. If you don't warm down enough it will probably have an effect on your races later in the day. Ask your coach how much you should do.

Number one and two can be switched.

AT THE MEET:

- Swimmers:
 - 1) Swimmers should stay in the team area at the meet. If coaches need to find a swimmer they should know where to look for them.
 - 2) Conserve your energy. Don't use all of your energy playing around at the meet. Save it for your race.
 - 3) Make sure you eat properly and hydrate.
 - 4) Cheer for your teammates.
- Swimmers Attitude:
It is very important that swimmers have a good attitude at the meet. Your attitude affects your swimming and your teammate's swimming. It is alright to get upset after a poor race, it's natural, but you need to get over it quickly and move on. A good way to deal with it is the "5 minute rule". You can get upset about your race for 5 minutes but after that be finished with it. I have seen swimmers who had a bad swim their first race of a meet and were done for the weekend because they couldn't get over it. Don't be "one and done". If you need help dealing with a race, talk to your coach.
I have always felt that good swims are contagious. If a swimmer has a good swim and gets excited then other swimmers see that and get excited and

they swim fast and pretty soon the whole team is swimming fast! Poor swims can also be contagious so it's important to have a positive attitude not only for yourself but also for your teammates.

- Parents:

A parents role at a swim meet is very important. Parents need to monitor the following:

- 1) Make sure your swimmer gets enough sleep.
- 2) Make sure your swimmer packs the proper equipment.
- 3) Make sure your swimmer gets to the meet on time.
- 4) Make sure your swimmer is eating properly and is hydrated.
- 5) Monitor your swimmer's behavior in the team area.
- 6) Help your swimmer monitor the timeline of the meet so they can start their pre race routine on time.

- Parents Behavior:

Parent's behavior at swim meets is vital to the success of their swimmer. It is important for the success of their career. It is also important for the success of the team.

- 1) Don't Coach. Leave the coaching to the coaches. This includes pre race strategy, psyching, and motivating. This also includes post race critiquing and setting goals...
- 2) Support the Coach. They need your support for everyone to "win".
- 3) Be Your Swimmer's Best Fan. Support your child unconditionally. Do not get upset and withdraw love if your child performs poorly. Your child should not have to perform well to win your love.
- 4) Support and cheer for all swimmers on the team.
- 5) Take your concerns directly to the coach in an appropriate manner. Do not go to parents to discuss concerns.

If you have any questions about swim meets please talk to your coach. Thanks.