

Benton Harbor- Saint Joseph YMCA Family Center

SWIM MEET TIPS

Swim meets can be both exciting and confusing for new as well as more experienced swimmers. Follow the tips below to help make your swim meet as successful as it can be.

~~✍~~ **Know your events.** The week before a meet, you will receive a sheet with everyone's events listed. Before you come out onto the pool deck for warm-ups, have a parent write your events on your hand, preferably with a marker so it doesn't come off during the meet. Your hand might look like this:

#23 – 100 I.M.

#43 – 50 fly

#67 – 50 back

#87 – 200 free relay (4th)

For relays, we will also list what position you will swim in (1st – 4th). For the freestyle relays, each position swims the same thing (in the 200 free relay, each swimmer swims a 50 free). In the medley relay, the order is as follows: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle.

~~✍~~ **Pay attention for your event to be called.** It is each swimmer's responsibility to make his or her events. At most swim meets, they will "marshal" events, by event number. This is normally done by posting the numbers at the marshalling table. Be sure you find out where the marshalling table is before your first event by asking the coach or a fellow swimmer. For example, when #23 is posted, everyone in that event will go to the marshalling table. From there, you will be handed a card that says your name, team, age, and event number. Hold onto this card until right before you swim. The people at the marshalling table will make sure you get to the right lane at the right time to swim your event. Before you swim, give your card to your timer so he or she can record your time when you're finished.

~~✍~~ **Be early.** If warm-ups start at 8:00, be on deck in your suit with everything you need a little before 8:00 so that you can be sure of the warm-up procedure for this meet. At bigger meets, coaches have to let the meet officials know who is missing from their team shortly after warm-ups begin so that they can be "scratched" from their events.

~~✍~~ **Warm up.** Be sure you do the warm-up your coach asks you to. At dual meets, we will try to post sheets behind our three warm-up lanes that list the swimmers that should warm up in that lane and what their warm-up will be. When you are given the okay to get in the pool for warm-ups, find your name on these sheets. Enter that lane **feet first (do not dive)** and do the warm-up posted there. When everyone is done with their warm-ups, we will line up behind the blocks and do 25s (1-length) sprints off the blocks as a team. Do not dive off the blocks without your coach's permission, and only in the lane(s) he or she tells you to. Check your events on your hand to see what strokes you are doing. You should do at least one 25 of each of those strokes off the blocks. If you are swimming the 100 I.M., 50 back, and 50 breast, you would do at least one 25 butterfly (because it's the first stroke done in the 100 I.M.), one 25 backstroke and one 25 breaststroke. Concentrate on the things you want to do right in your race (for example, an underwater pull in breaststroke) and make sure you do those things. When you get to the other end of the pool, get out of the water and walk back. **Do not swim back.** These are one-way sprint lanes and you will run into other

swimmers. After each start, come back to your coach and see if she has any advice for improving your start or stroke. After you have done at least one start of each stroke you will be doing, ask your coach before you go back to our team area.

Team area. Before the start of the meet, we will designate a space on the pool deck for our team. This is where you will put your bags, and this is where you will sit when you are not swimming.

Cheer for your teammates. When you are not swimming, be sure to support your teammates by cheering for them when they are swimming. This can be done along the side of the pool or at the end of his or her lane. At dual meets, please remain on deck until the meet is over to continue cheering for your team.

The officials' jobs. The officials' jobs are to make sure that each swimmer does the correct start, pull, kick, turn, and finish for each event they swim, in order to keep the competition fair for all the swimmers. If an official notices a swimmer doing something incorrect, he will disqualify the swimmer. Most officials will try to talk to both the coach and swimmer to let them know why they were disqualified. Almost every swimmer gets disqualified at some point in their career. A disqualification highlights what you should work on in practice, and gives you a goal to shoot for.

New start procedure. There will be a new start procedure this year. When the starter is ready to begin the next race, she will blow a whistle once. This means "step up on the block" and set your feet. Then the starter will blow two whistles, which means "take your marks." The starting sound will be the same as previously (a beep or a starters' gun, etc.).

What should I bring to a swim meet? Team or meet suit, two pair of goggles (in case one pair breaks), swim cap (if needed), water or Gatorade, a small snack that won't make a mess, two towels (one with them on deck to dry off with during the meet and one for after the meet), t-shirt and shorts or sweat suit to keep warm between events.

Talk to your coach. After each event, come see your coach. She will tell you what you did well, and what you can improve on.

What are parents' responsibilities? A parent's most important responsibility at a swim meet is making sure his or her child is on time and prepared for the meet. Go over these tips with your swimmer before the meet so that he or she knows what to expect. Make sure your swimmer has his events written on his hand before you leave for the meet. Coaches don't have enough time to write events on 30 swimmers hands. If it is a home meet, please volunteer to help. For each home meet, we need: timers (12), people to run the concession stand, help setting up before and cleaning up after, and someone to do scoring and ribbons. If this is your first year as a swim parent, other parents can help you learn what needs to be done. Parents are not allowed on the deck unless they are volunteers.

The most important job a parent has is being supportive regardless of how your swimmer did. No swimmer can get best times at every swim meet, no matter how hard they practice.