



Swim Meets – Some Things You Should Know...

If you have ever wondered what happens at a swim meet, please keep reading this document. It is designed to manage your expectations and ensure you are adequately prepared for a good time.

Why do we have Swim Meets?

Competitive swim meets help to teach the children good sportsmanship and discipline while helping to develop their athleticism and competitiveness. These characteristics combined together result in TEAM SPIRIT; working together for a common goal. Parental support through active participation in the Summer Swim League meets and events helps to reinforce those life skills that the children are learning.

Rules and Responsibilities (Swimmers and Families)

- Every swimmer is required to attend swim meets!
 - YMCA rules require swimmers to attend meets and miss no more than two meets.
 - If a swimmer is going to miss a meet, notify the coach and Board at least a week in advance.
- Each swimmer is responsible for getting to the meets. Carpooling is encouraged.
- Swimmers should arrive at a meet at the arrival time posted on the Manta-Ray web site (www.manta-ray.org).
- Be aware that at meets you will not be allowed to use a flash to photograph your child during an event. This is because the timers at the event use a strobe light to start their stopwatches.
- Good sportsmanship is expected from Swimmers, Parents and Guests.
- Summer swim parents and friends are required to help (volunteer) during the meets. This is an absolute necessity for the swim meet to work effectively. Please share this among parents and friends equally during the swim meet season.



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Before the meet:

- At the absolute minimum, check your racing equipment and make sure you have your team suit, team cap(s), 2 pairs of goggles, and T-shirt and shorts ready to go to the meet. Be sure to check the “What to Bring” section below for more information.

Volunteers

Meets are divided into halves, with volunteers changing at the half way point. For the Cumberland YMCA pool, 12 timers are needed at all times (two timers per lane). These duties will be split between the five teams participating this summer. Meets are usually no longer than four (4) hours in length. This will require each half timers to time for approximately two hours. Volunteers should replace their own team’s volunteers. The meet may be delayed if we do not have enough timers to cover all six lanes during the meet. A timers meeting will be held prior to each meet’s start. Encourage your parents and friends to volunteer; it is the best seat in the house and a good way to closely watch your child swim. The Manta Rays have a sign up sheet going around for timers. We must supply 6 timers per half, 12 timers total. Please see the Timer Coordinator for more details. Lastly, if you are timing the second half of the swim meet, you **MUST** remain until the end of the meet. Please share this responsibility with all parents during the season.

What to Bring

- Getting ready for a swim meet can seem like you'll be camping for a week. Write your name on absolutely everything you bring. The checklist below might help you pack:
 - Swim Suit
 - Water & Juice
 - Swim Cap
 - Healthy Snacks (Nutritious snacks and plenty of liquids will keep your swimmer fueled, there is usually a snack bar which is a fundraiser by the hosting team)
 - Goggles (an extra pair just in case)
 - Towels (3 or more per swimmer)
 - Sleeping bag or blanket
 - T-Shirt & shorts
 - Sweatpants, Sweatshirt, Coats (Swimmers get cold, bundle them up!)
 - Sharpie Marker (put event #s on swimmer's hand)
 - Money for Concessions, Heat Sheets and Meet T-Shirts/Sweatshirts



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- Bring warm clothes to wear between race's including shoes and socks and even gloves if necessary. These items need to be climate appropriate, in the winter sweats but in the summer shorts and a T-shirt. The shoes, socks, and gloves are important because your body heat flows out of your extremities; if it is cool enough a hat is also important. The more body heat you lose the more energy you are wasting. It takes energy to shiver and makes your muscles very tight. Please note that the YMCA gym is cool, but generally not to the point hats and gloves are needed.
- Bring a water bottle to stay hydrated. Drinking three full (32 oz) water bottles during the course of one session of a meet is not too much. Remember, no glass containers of any kind allowed!
- If you like music to get you pumped up before your race, bring some good positive music not music that makes you sleepy. Bring headphones to listen to this music so you don't disturb others.
- Bring something to sit or lay down on to keep you relaxed and comfortable. This is not a nap mat. Do not sleep during the meet. Your body needs to be awake to perform at your best.
- Bring something to keep you occupied between events. This can include: a deck of cards, board games, electronic games, books, etc. Do not bring anything that makes excessive noise or involves throwing (footballs, etc.).
- Bring snacks that will lead to fast swimming; not candy bars and fast food. No food is allowed on the pool deck.

Things to do the morning/day of a meet:

- Wake up at least 2 hours and 30 minutes before your race.
- Eat a good breakfast, mostly carbohydrates and fruit. You do not want anything very heavy to eat before you race.
- Get to the YMCA at the appointed arrival time (www.manta-ray.org) and prepare to get in the pool. Longer warm up is especially necessary if you have just gotten out of the car from a long drive, 40 miles or more.
- Do not leave without the coach's permission.



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If you've never attended a swim meet before, here are a couple of things you can expect:

- Blankets, sleeping bags, chairs, towels, and kids everywhere! Chilly gymnasium (keep your swimmer warm), Lots of Cheering, New friends and a great time (especially if you get involved with the team and volunteer)
- Plan to arrive at the arrival time (see web-site www.manta-ray.org). This way you can check in, stake your area out, find your goggles, and report to the coaches when the announcer calls for warm-ups. Shortly after teams have warmed up, the meet should begin.

Hand Marking – E H L (Event Heat Lane)

(e.g. E H L)
12 2 4

*Event 12, Heat 2, Lane 4

Make sure you know your event numbers. You can get the event numbers from the heat sheets that are sold at the meet and also are usually posted in the pool area. The coaches will have Sharpie Markers and will be writing the EHLs on the swimmers hands or arms. If you think you have a relay but don't know for sure, double check with your coach. When you hear your event called over the loudspeaker, report to the "Clerk of Course." This is the person who gets the swimmers in order for their event. There is usually a first call and final call for each event, so you must listen closely - it can be very loud around the pool and in the gym.

Younger swimmers must be supervised at all times by parents. Please help your swimmers report to the Clerk of Course when their events are called. PARENTS: It's important to allow your child to remain at the Clerk of Course staging area alone. Parent volunteers can do their job best if they don't have to contend with extra moms and dads!

During the meet:

See your coach before and after every race to make sure you understand strategy and technique issues.

As swimmers get older warm up and warm down become more and more important. Unfortunately, during Summer Swim League, warm downs (a.k.a. – cool downs) are not permitted. Stretching and staying warm after an event is strongly encouraged.



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Check the results posted.

Heat Sheets are usually sold at meets at the concession stand or nearby for a few dollars each. They will include the individual events, the swimmers entered in each event, and their fastest time.

Relays in heat sheets sometimes list swimmers names, be aware that relay team members change due to who shows up for a meet and other considerations by the coaching staff. If you are on a relay your coach will let you know.

What's My Time?

Swimmers times are collected multiple ways, at the Cumberland YMCA, swimmer times are recorded by our timers on stopwatches, a plunger pressed by the timers and by the swimmer touching the pads in the water at the end of their event. If your swimmer asks a timer for their time, be aware that time is NOT official. Once all the times for a heat are collected, the swimmer must wait for the official results to be posted. The official event results (which include the swimmers' names, their times, and event placing) are usually posted about a half hour after completion of the event (For YMCA Summer Swim League meets results are posted in the hallway). All event results are computerized and retained for each swimmer all season.

The Manta-Rays also post the meet results on the team web site as soon as practical after the meet. The results must be given to the team from the meet organizers. As a result, it could take some time (several days) for the results to be posted. Please be patient while the process works.

Leaving the meet:

Swimmers and their parents can leave the meet early if and only if all swimmer's events are completed AND all volunteer duties are finished.

Check with the coach before you leave to make sure you are not on a relay or you are in a swim off of some kind.

Parents: Be sure to complete any of your 'volunteer' duties before you leave. Specifically, if you are timing the second half of the meet, you MUST remain until the end of the meet. Since we must supply timers for both halves of the meet, this means some parents may have to stay longer than wanted. Please share and rotate this responsibility among other parents.

Lastly, go get a great meal because you have done a great job.



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After the meet:

Ribbons and awards are given to the coaches at the very end of the meet, last thing. As a result, Ribbons and awards will be placed in the MRST “Mail Box” at swim practice the week following the meet.

Other Meet Questions

- What is Disqualification (DQ)? Our team complies with United States Swimming (USS) rules - the same rules used at the Olympic Time Trials and the Olympics. To ensure fair competition for all swimmers, these rules are equally applied to all swimmers, regardless of age or experience. During competition, if a swimmer fails to comply with the stroke and turn rules, a Stroke & Turn Judge (dressed in white) will raise his/her hand, write up a disqualification (DQ) slip, and present it to the referee for approval. A swimmer is not disqualified until the referee accepts the report. Judges always try to reach the swimmer to explain the reason he/she disqualified him/herself, but this is not always possible. Being disqualified is not the end of the world. Almost all swimmers have been DQ'd at some time. This should be viewed as a learning experience and not a failure. Swimmers should discuss this with their coach after the race, and together they will formulate a plan to correct the mistake.

Lastly, DQ also stands for Dairy Queen...it can help soften the blow...