

## **The Meet**

Meets are regulated by USA Swimming and the Ozark Local Swim Committee (LSC). Stroke and turn judges observe the swimmers. They are obligated to disqualify (DQ) any swimmer they see that is not swimming according to the stroke and turn rules governed by USA Swimming.

Some meets are designated for the slower or beginning swimmer, while others are limited to only the fastest. Coaches and parents together determine which meets a swimmer should attend. A schedule of meets for the current year is included on the UCSC website.

Swimmers in Age Group swimming are classified by their age and their fastest times in their events. Swimmers are placed in events according to their age the first day of a meet. Each age group swims different events. The events vary in length of races. The traditional age groups are 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, and Open. Anyone may swim in the Open category. An example of an event listing is as follows: an 11 year old boy who is swimming the 50 back stroke will be found on the meet program under the event "11-12 Boys, 50 Backstroke. Each event is also be given an event number.

Positive check-in 30 minutes prior to the completion of warm-ups may be required at Ozark meets. Therefore, when a swimmer arrives at a meet, they should check in before they do anything else. In positive check-in, swimmers mark through their names and events on the posted check-in sheets. proceed to the team's assigned lane for warm-ups.

Most meets are pre-seeded--When meets are pre-seeded, the swimmers refer to heat sheets (usually sold at concession stands or posted on deck) for their heat and lane numbers. The swimmers in pre-seeded meets are expected to get to the correct lane in time for their heat. Many swimmers write their event and heat numbers on their arms so they do not miss a race. Swimmers need to watch so they know when to line up for their race. Parents help for younger swimmers.

At most meets, there are adult volunteers running the "bullpen." They help ensure that the swimmers line up in the proper order by event and heat and move to the pool in an orderly fashion.

All races are swum in heats. The final results depend on the meet format. The swimmer is initially placed, or seeded, in an event according to his/her fastest previous time. The group of swimmers is then divided into heats according to speed. The first race is usually swum with the slowest swimmers and the last with the fastest.

The number of heats is determined by the number of swimmers.

The "final results" of the meet depend on the format of the meet itself. Most meets fall under the "timed final" category which means that whatever time the swimmer achieves for the race swum is then evaluated against the other swimmers for the whole event and placed in a final result. Faster meets trend to be of the "prelim-final" variety where the swimmers swim a "preliminary" race from which the best times are

selected to fill two final heats, which are swum at a later time. The two final heats are divided into the "consolation" final and the final. The rest of the swimmers are ranked in order after the winning two heats.

Meets are generally split into sessions with certain swimmers designated to a given session. (e.g. Session I could be 13-14 Boys and Girls, and Open Boys and Girls, Session II 10 & Under Boys and Girls and 11-12 Boys and Girls). Parents of swimmers in different age groups may want to car pool if their swimmers are not in the same session.

### **Time Standards**

There are currently two sets of time standards that are used: those set by USA Swimming and those set by our LSC (Ozark). Each year USA Swimming determines the time standards for the coming year based on the times swum the year before. Standards range from "C" (slowest) to "AAAA" (fastest). The standards are different for each age group. There are different standards for boys and girls as well as for yard pools and meter pools. These time standards are now used primarily for regional and national meets.

USA Swimming requires each LSC to develop and use its own time standards. Ozark uses Bronze (slowest), Silver, and Gold (fastest). As with USA Swimming time standards, the Ozark time standards are based on an average of times swum in previous years. Neither USA Swimming nor Ozark has official standards for swimmers eight years of age and under. However, some clubs will set standards for this age group for specific meets. Time standards for USA Swimming are published annually in Swimming World magazine and the USA Handbook of Rules and Regulations. They are also on the USA Swimming website. Ozark time standards are generally published in the heat sheet for individual Ozark swim meets. Coaches have these standards available, also, and they are available on the Ozark Swimming website.

### **Meet Entry Fees, Procedures, Etc.**

A list of meets that the coaches feel our swimmers should attend are included with the registration materials and on the UCSC website. Based on interest indicated by parents, the coaches complete meet entry forms for each meet. UCSC pays the meet fees in one check to the host club. In return the parents are billed. **There can be no refund to a family once the meet entries are submitted to the host team.**

Meet fees range from \$2.00 to \$3.50 per individual event. There is also a surcharge per swimmer that goes to the Ozark travel fund. This surcharge can range from \$2.00 per swimmer to \$10.00 per swimmer depending on the location of the meet. Meet fees are due at registration and will be placed in an escrow account. Fees vary according to the team. For example, swimmers who cannot participate in their events for whatever reason are still accountable for their fees.

A meet invitation will be emailed to all families. It is important that you read this information as it relays the time, place, and session events for each meet.

### **Overachieving**

A swimmer has "overachieved" when the swimmer's time for an event is faster than the fastest time set for their classification (i.e., Gold, Silver or Bronze) in a classified

meet. The swimmer is then awarded an Overachiever's Certificate rather than the usual meet award.

Once a swimmer betters the cutoff time for an event, the swimmer may no longer swim that event in a meet of that classification.

If a swimmer overachieved in an event and has already been entered in that event in a future meet of the same classification, the parent may check the upcoming notice the next day to see what stipulations the host club has put on that occurrence. Most clubs will offer the swimmer the chance to swim another event or will give a refund. There is usually a time limit for taking care of this business. SECURING SUCH REFUNDS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SWIMMER'S PARENT.

### **Equipment for the Meet**

- Team suit - swimmers furnish their own team suits (not required) Suits may be ordered from Agon Swim.
- Caps - the equipment manager and coaches have an inventory of team caps and practice caps for sale.
- Goggles
- Several towels
- Heavy sweatshirt and T-shirt
- Sweatpants
- Sleeping bag (or blanket), pillow
- Healthy snacks
- Juice and/or water – no glass containers
- Diversions - books, games, cards, etc.

Typically, there is a concession stand with snacks and drinks, and equipment vendor(s) to replace the seemingly inevitable lost or broken goggles, etc.

### **Survival at the Swim Meet**

A swim meet can be viewed as parental abuse or as a positive experience! Here are some tips to help keep your vision in the realm of the latter.

Have your swimmer arrive in time for the warm-up session. Swimmers need this time to limber up and to accustom themselves to the starting blocks, walls, and pool in which they will be competing.

#### **Needs of the Swimmer:**

To minimize whining or crankiness, you ought to properly equip your swimmer to handle the long waits between races.

#### **Needs of the Parent:**

You are going to be sitting around for a long time waiting for your swimmer to compete. Here are some suggestions to make this time more enjoyable:

- Bring something comfortable to sit on
- Dress appropriately. Indoor pools are like August in St. Louis, while holding areas are arctic during the winter. Dress in layers and peel away as the need arises.

- Bring books, paper work, needlepoint, knitting, etc.
- Leave the young ones at home if possible. Meets can last upward of five hours, long enough to try anyone's patience.
- Volunteer to assist with timing. No experience is necessary. You provide a valuable service, you may meet interesting people, you see your own child up close, and the host team provides your food and drink. The meet goes faster when you are more engaged.
- Volunteer to become a stroke and turn official. You'll be kept busy during the meet and provide a valuable service.
- Form a car pool with other families, especially when you have two or more kids swimming in different halves of a split session meet. One can take the morning bunch and the other can take the afternoon crowd.

**IMPORTANT - UCSC IS NOT RESPONSIBLE** for any swimmer attending meets without parental supervision. If you cannot attend, please make adequate arrangements with someone else to be responsible for your child(ren) before rooms are reserved for away meets and one week in advance if the meet is not a travel meet.

We welcome you to UCSC and look forward to getting to know you. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask!