

Competition Strategies for Meets

A. Physical/Mental Preparations

1. Sleep – take care of yourself during and before meet time
2. Act like a pro. Take yourself seriously. Make sure you remain focused on your goals. This doesn't mean that you have to achieve them – we are human. We just need to focus on what it is we want and put ourselves in the best possible situation to achieve our goals and then go for it!
3. Stay positive – enjoy the experience and be sure to talk to yourself in a positive upbeat way. Don't allow negative self talk. Drown it out with what it is that you want to achieve and the process oriented goals that go with them.
4. Respect your needs and ask others to do the same. If your roommate is keeping you awake when you need to be sleeping – let them know that it is important that you sleep and they need to get off the phone/turn off the tv/lights.... If you need to be left alone during a competition, tell anyone who is trying to invade your physical and mental space to please wait until after you are finished to socialize.
5. Wake up at least 4-5 hours before your contest to be fully awake for your big event.

What kind of person are you?

- a. Affiliation
- b. Power
- c. Achievement

Which one of these things drives you the most? Which one when you focus on it helps you perform the best? It may not be the one that is the most comfortable or fun for you. You need to be brutally honest with yourself – we can't all 'be like Mike'

Should you watch the scoreboard?

Should you watch the contest?

Should you watch/cheer for your teammates?

Do you fidget on the board? – should you stop?

Everyone is different. There is no magic formula that works for everyone and that is why you must pay attention to what you do so that you can revise it if it is not working. Keep a journal if you have to – especially after particularly good or bad performances. Keep the premise that you will always 'win or learn' and if you learn you win as well because you will be better next time.

Find your best state of arousal. It may not be comfortable – you may feel too nervous or too low – if it works for you that is the key. If you find you are having a hard time getting up for a contest or controlling your nerves, use predetermined strategies to combat these issues. Here are some suggestions

Too nervous – listen to calm music. Lie down and relax every muscle in your body. Use square breathing. (in for 5 sec, hold for 5 sec, out for 5 sec, hold 5sec) Think of process oriented goals (step strong, kick tight on my spot...) instead of outcome oriented goals (I want to win – I want an 8 on this dive). Use progressive muscle relaxation.

Too low – run around – listen to upbeat music, quick deep breaths – drink a cup of coffee.

Warm up and Practice at a meet

Realize that warm up is just to get your body moving and warm. You already know how to dive. Training and warm up at a meet is to get used to the facility and to get moving and ready for a competition – it is not for learning new techniques or for training.

‘The hay is in the barn!’ 10 reverse 2 ½’s on the day of the meet is not going to help – it will just wear you out physically and mentally.

Competition

Camp Out

1. Find a spot to put all of your stuff and lay out a towel
2. Pick a cue diver – a diver earlier in the start list that is approximately 10 divers before you to cue your preparation for your dive that round.
 - If it is a duel meet you will have a much shorter time. Plan ahead what you need to do in your short time and how to focus and not feel rushed
3. Stretch, get wet, see coach....
4. Stick to your pattern, at least loosely (not superstitiously). This will give you consistency that you can control and will keep you more level.
5. Act like a pro good or bad.
6. Be prepared with snacks, warm clothes, team uniform/apparel, favorite suit/team suit, music, something to read or watch...

1. Process thinking vs. Results thinking
2. Don’t let a good or bad warm up freak you out. It really means nothing
3. Think about the things you can effect (your dives) and not about what you can not (judges scores, your place, someone else’s scores or place)
4. Don’t watch competition – visualize yourself doing what you want to do the way you want to do it. Others may do things differently or may do things wrong that you do not want to watch.
5. Use a cue diver so you are on time and prepared for your turn
6. Re-prepare for each dive in a similar way – stretch, get wet (to wake up or to get the right tackiness for spinners), see coach, model your dives while incorporating your key thoughts for each particular dive that are important for you – execute.
7. Stay level – good or bad, have a ‘predetermined mood’ that will not be affected by your performance. It is the sign of a true champion when he doesn’t get to high or low no matter how good or bad the dive was. If it was great – you expected it. If it was horrible – you’re confident you can recover – and it shows.
8. Never give up. Do whatever you need to do to stay in it mentally until the end because you never know what might happen.

General

We will warm up as a team always! There is nothing more intimidating than a team that comes in, is unified and looks like they have experience and confidence!

Even if you are not confident, fake it! Stand up on the board with confidence and pride. Judges will score you better if you look like you are a great diver than if you just have a lucky dive.

Be professional in your appearance. Tie your hair up so it's not flying around. Make sure your team gear is clean and fits properly.

Be respectful of all officials and judges, no matter how bad or unfair you think they are. If you are having a real problem, come see me about it and let me handle it or help you put things in perspective. Otherwise just ignore the judging – it's hard to ever feel good about it because it's usually bad.

Don't cry on the deck. Don't throw a fit on the deck. Don't show weakness on the deck (coddle injuries, pout...ect...be professional and handle adversity with your chin up and a stiff upper lip) If it ever gets too bad, come see me and we'll pull you out and do it in a way in which you can still respect yourself.

Support your teammates. A unified team is intimidating! Be the team everyone else wishes they were on...win or lose.

Be respectful of your teammates and their needs.

Be mindful of what you say after a meet. Never make your teammates feel worse about a bad performance. Always come away feeling positive about something and feeling like you learned something from your competition.

Get behind the swimmers whenever possible.

Be on time for all vans/buses/breakfasts – whatever times are put forth for you. Don't make everyone/me late/nervous about missing warm-ups or events.

GOOD LUCK

GO FOR IT

GO BOBCATS!!!