A Beginner's Guide to Swim Meets

"Believe that YOU have it, and YOU HAVE IT!"

CONNECTION, INTEGRITY, TRUST, SAFETY, GROWTH

EMAC Green Swarm SWIMMING	On Deck App for Parents (also download MeetMobile App) USA Swimming 2024-2028 Motivational Time Standards EMAC Meet Preparation Plan

USA Swimming Meets

- EMAC typically competes in one U.S. swim meet per month.
- U.S. meets are often multi-day events that could require a hotel stay.
- Times achieved by swimmers are maintained in a national database and are used to determine eligibility for meets from the local level up to the Olympic Trials.
- US meets are either short-course meets (25-yard pools) or long-course meets (50-meter pools)
- Short-course meets occur in the fall and winter and conclude in March with championship meets.
- Long-course meets occur in the spring and summer and conclude in July with championship meets.
- All US meets charge a fee per event for swimmers, which is typically $10.00 per short course event and $15.00 for long course events or champs events.

Types of USA Meets

- **Age Group / ABBC** Meets for swimmers ages 9 and over; may be local or travel meets, and do not require previous times.
- **Developmental/ Mini** Meets for younger swimmers ages 10 and under.
- **Distance** Meets that have only longer distance races, generally 200 yards and above.
- **IM - USA Swimming Plan to encourage kids to swim everything and not specialize in events that one only "likes" to swim.**
  IM Ready is the first step in the IMX Challenge: IM Ready (or IMR). To get "IM Ready," swimmers compete in a series of five events at shorter distances. • 9 & Under; 10-year-olds: 100 Free, 50 Back, 50 Breast, 50 Fly, 100 IM (SC) or 200 IM (LC) • 11-year-olds; 12-year-olds: 200 Free, 50 Back, 50 Breast, 50 Fly, 100 IM (SC) or 200 IM (LC) • 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18-year-olds: 200 free, 100 back, 100 breast, 100 fly, and 200 IM
  IM Xtreme is a program that allows USA Swimming members to track their times against swimmers all across the nation. Just by swimming a specific program of events, you can see where you rank against your teammates, your region, and even across the USA. Qualifying for an IMX meet involves athletes swimming events in all strokes within a qualifying period.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS ...BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK!

Before the Meet Starts: EMAC SWIM MEET PREPARATION

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up begins. This time will be listed in the meet information.

2. Upon arrival, look for your teammates and find a place to put your swim bag. The team should sit together.

3. Your swimmer should report to the meet coach and get ready to swim by putting on their cap and goggles and waiting for warm-up instructions from the coach. All swimmers need to warm up with the team.

4. After the warm-up, your swimmer will return to the team area and should wait there until their event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or gets settled in. Your swimmer should stay seated with the team, so the meet coaches know where to find them! If they need to leave the team area, they should let a coach know!!!

5. According to USA Swimming rules, parents are not allowed on deck unless they serve in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter.

6. Heat Sheets give heat and lane assignments for all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time." When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event are listed. If the swimmer is swimming in an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT." A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. Heat sheets are often available on the Meet Mobile app and sometimes for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for around $5.

7. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events, he/she and their parents can go home. Make sure, however, that your swimmer checks with the coach before leaving. This allows your swimmer to say thank you and ensure they are not leaving before their events are complete for the session.

What To Take To The Meet

1. Most important: swimsuit, team swim cap, and goggles.

2. Towels: US Meet sessions can be 4-5 hours long, so swimmers likely need more than 1 towel!

3. Something to sit on (if desired), ie., a blanket or beach towel, or deck chairs (if permitted).

4. Warm-Ups: Sweatshirt and pants. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.

5. Team T-shirt that matches the team.

6. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.

7. Food: Swimmers should bring healthy snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but sometimes they have limited healthy options. Suggestions: Nutrition for Swimmers Info & Links

Once you have attended one or two meets, this will all become routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other EMAC parent or staff member for help or information!

Special Parents Note

The pool area is usually hot. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes time pass very slowly!

SWIM MEET RULES & TERMINOLOGY

Basic Rules: The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer. Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules, a disqualification (DQ) will result.

Disqualification (DQ): The swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. Disqualifications may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, advancing themselves by walking on or pushing off the bottom of the pool, pulling on the lane lines, or unsportsmanlike conduct. Disqualifications should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. Disqualifications are also a result of technical rule violations. They include, but are not limited to:

- Freestyle: Walking on the bottom, Pulling on the lane rope, Not touching the wall on a turn, Not completing the distance
- Backstroke: Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned past the vertical onto the breast, turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.
- Breaststroke: Illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissor (sidestroke), Shoulders not level, Alternating movements of the arms, Taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is underwater, Touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

- Butterfly: Alternating movements of the arms or legs, pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (Underwater recovery), A breaststroke style of kick, touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

Officials: Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test, and work meets before being certified. Officials may be Timers, Turn Judges, Stroke Judges, Relay Takeoff Judges, Clerk of Course, Starter, or Referee. All parents are encouraged to get involved!

Swimming Terms

Age Group Swimming: Provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. *Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and 15-18. Local meets may include events for 8 and under, and single age categories.*

Block: The starting platform

Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-yard courses.

Circle Swimming: Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

Code of Conduct: An agreement signed by a swimmer/coach/parent stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

Cool Down: SEE WARM DOWN

Cut: Slang for qualifying time (QT), a time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

Distance Events: Events over 400 meters/500 yards.

DQ: Disqualified. This occurs when a swimmer has committed a stroke infraction. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time. Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules.

Drill: An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke used to improve technique.

Dryland Training: Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics, and/or weight training.

Entry Form: Form on which a swimmer enters a competition. Usually includes USA Swimming number, age, sex, event numbers, and entry times.

False Start: This occurs when a swimmer is moving before the start of the race is sounded. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in disqualification.

Final: The championship heat(s) of an event where the top swimmers from the preliminaries compete.

Finish: The final phase of the race; the touch at the end.

Flags: Backstroke flags are placed 5 yards (short course) or 5 meters (long course) from the end of the pool. The flags enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated through the filtration system.

I.M.: Slang for Individual Medley, an event in which an individual swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Junior Nationals: National-level meets held in both short-course and long-course seasons, one of each in the East and the West, limited to swimmers aged 18 and under. There are qualifying standards, and swimmers are limited to four individual events and three relays.

Lap Counter: A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. (Also, the person who counts for the swimmer is stationed at the opposite end from the start.)

Long Course: a pool 50 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its summer competitions in long-course pools.

Long Distance: Term used to refer to events of 800 meters/1000 yards to 1500 meters/1650 yards in length

LSC: Local Swimming Committee. Governing body for swimming at the local level. There are 59 LSCs in the country. PWAC is part of the Mid-Atlantic (MA) LSC.

Meet: Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer tests himself against the clock to see how he is improving.

Middle Distance: Events of 200 yards/meters to 400 meters/500 yards in length.

National Age Group Time Standards: Time standards derived from the previous years' results that are broken down by age and sex, as well as C, B, A, Champ, and Zone. The designations are National and should be used as motivational times.

National Reportable Times/Top 16: Time standards set for both short and long courses based on previous years' achievements. Only times meeting these standards may be submitted for consideration each year. The Top 16 submitted times in each event are recognized.

Negative Split: Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

Officials: A judge on the pool's deck at a sanctioned competition who enforces USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

Open Water Swims: A freestyle event conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or ocean.

Pace Clock: Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice; may also be digital.

Prelims: slang for preliminaries, also called Trials. Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in the events.

Q-time: Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

Relay: An event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event in the competition.

Short Course: A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short-course yards.

Split: A time recorded from the official start to the completion of an initial distance within a longer event. Also, the time for one of the four individuals in a relay. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times, for example, the lead-off swim in a relay or the lead-off portion of an event.

Sprint: describes the shorter events (50 and 100)

Streamline: The position swimmers use when starting or pushing off the walls is designed to reduce water resistance.

Taper: The final preparation phase, sometimes referred to as “rest,” occurs before major competitions for more advanced swimmers.

Time Trial: A time–only swim, which is not part of a regular meet.

TouchPad: A large, sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer’s finish is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

USA Swimming ID: A number assigned to a swimmer upon joining USA Swimming. A membership card with this number may be required at any given competition.

Warm Down (Cool Down): Low-intensity swimming is used by swimmers after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

Warm Up: Low-intensity swimming is used by swimmers before a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm. Warm-up gradually increases heart rate and respiration and helps to prevent injury.

Watches: Stopwatches are used to time swimmers during competition. When automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a backup method.