



## SWIM TEAM 101

### Everything (and we mean everything!) You Wanted to Know About Swim Meets

In the past, we have received many questions regarding what to expect at swim meets, what the officials are doing, what my swimmer did to get disqualified and other mysteries of competitive swimming. This is intended as an overview of what happens at swim meets. We will also review information that may help you know what to bring and what to expect once you get there. Some of this will probably not be new information for many of our families, but hopefully, everyone will learn something new. If you have questions not addressed here, or don't understand something, please ask a coach or board member.

### THE STROKES

There are four recognized strokes in competitive swimming. They are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. There are specific rules governing the way each stroke must be performed. The coaches will work with your swimmers to teach them the proper way to swim each stroke. Please remember that to properly learn some of the strokes takes not only practice, but also strength and endurance. If you are using most of your energy to stay afloat and move forward, it may not be possible to perform the stroke correctly. Be patient, it will get easier.

#### Freestyle

In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke (except in the freestyle leg of the Medley Relay and Individual Medley). The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the surface of the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer, must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn, although this is not required.



#### Backstroke

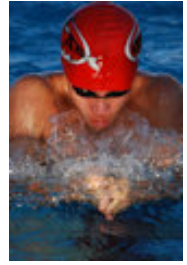


Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and

perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Again, this is not required. The swimmer must finish on the back.

## Breaststroke

The breaststroke, which is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.



## Butterfly



Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.

Adapted from USA Swimming

## SWIM MEETS

Dual meets (meets between two teams) are held on Tuesday and Thursdays. If you aren't sure where a particular pool is, click on the SAAA link on our website and go to the Meet the Teams section. Most teams have websites with maps to their location. Google maps can also help get you where you are going. Your swimmer may also swim one Saturday Invitational; these are held at the Amphitheater High School Pool. The coach will let your swimmer know which Invitational they are qualified for. Finally, we have Championships at the end of the season at Amphi. Our meet schedule will be posted on our team website: [www.orcaswimteam.com](http://www.orcaswimteam.com).

## Events

Swimmers will swim a minimum of one individual event (usually more) and one relay event at each meet. Swimmers ages 4-8 swim one lap or 25 yards for their events. Swimmers ages 9-18 will swim 50-yard events or two laps. The 6 and under backstroke and freestyle events are held during the first half of home meets so that those without older siblings can get home a little earlier, if they are not in any other events.

There are two types of relays. The Freestyle Relay consists of four swimmers each doing a leg (one lap for swimmers under 9, two for 9 and up) of freestyle. At the completion of each leg the next swimmer must start after the finishing swimmer touches the wall. Their feet must not leave the blocks or deck before the touch. In the medley relay, each of the four swimmers does one of the four strokes in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

During some Invitationals, swimmers have a chance to experience another event called the Individual Medley. In this event the swimmer performs each of the four strokes (usually one lap each) in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle. This is the longest event offered in SAAA. USA Swim meets offer events of many different distances, including the 1650-yard freestyle.

## 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.

## Officials



Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming so the competition is fair and equitable. When an official sees an action that violates a rule for a particular stroke, they will note the disqualification or DQ. The swimmer will be notified at the end of the race. A record will be kept of what the DQ was so the coach can help the swimmer to address the problem. Please help your swimmer understand that being DQ'ed is part of mastering strokes. Even Olympic level swimmers make mistakes and are sometimes DQ'ed. If you have questions regarding a DQ, the proper procedure is to bring your question to the coach.

## Volunteers

Putting on a swim meet requires the entire team to work together. Families are expected to volunteer in various jobs to help us make the meet a positive experience for all attending. Our volunteer coordinator contacts each family with the meet schedule and list of positions to be filled. Assignments are coordinated online using SignUpGenius.com. Positions range from working with the awards ribbons, to serving as a timer or working the snack bar. Each job is vital to making the home meet work. The good news is that you can sit back and relax at our away meets. Once you have worked with our coordinator to schedule your volunteer times, it is your responsibility to find coverage for your slot if you are unable to fulfill your commitment.

## Before the Meet Starts

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time can be found on our website, but is usually 5pm for home meets and 5:30pm for away meets to warm up with the meet starting at 6pm.
2. When you get to the pool, look for familiar faces and set up with the rest of the team. You will probably want to bring chairs and maybe a blanket for younger swimmers to hang out on. The coaches like the age groups to sit together. This accomplishes two things; it gives the kids a chance to get to know each other better and helps the coaches and relay members find them before their events. Get your swimmer ready for warm up swim.
3. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. A swimmer's body is just like a car on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.
4. Your swimmer will probably know what they are swimming before they arrive at the pool. What they won't know is their lane assignment. Some teams sell programs, also called heat sheets (usually at the snack bar) that will have this information. All teams will post the meet line-ups for swimmers to check. It's a good idea to check this information when you get to the pool, even if you have been told heat and lane assignments earlier. It isn't uncommon to have last minutes changes.
5. Once you have identified what events, heats and lanes your swimmer will be swimming, write or have the swimmer write each event (stroke) on his or her hand in ink along with the heat and lane numbers. For example "Fly H2L3" or Butterfly, Heat 2, Lane 3. This helps the swimmer remember where and when to report.
6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where their age group is sitting and wait there until their first event is called. This is a good time to make sure younger swimmers go to the bathroom if necessary, get a drink, or just get settled in.
7. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.



## During the Swim Meet

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers they are swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). They may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

2. Swimmers should report to the area behind their lane several heats before they actually swim. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions. The coaches and helpers will help the younger swimmers get to their events on time. Older swimmers should keep track of the meet and report in a timely manner. The area behind the start end of the deck should be reserved for swimmers in the next several heats. It is not a place for spectators.



3. The swimmer will hear the event announced and then a series of whistles. These whistles instruct the swimmer what to do. The first series of 4 or more short tweets means to get ready (cap and goggles on). The next long whistle signals the swimmer to approach the pool edge or get up on the block. They will then hear the starter say, "Take your mark." The swimmer should promptly assume their starting position. Once they are in this position, they should not move (adjust goggles, replant their feet). They will then hear an electronic beep signaling the start of the race. If there is movement prior to the start they may be asked to "stand" and then take their mark again.

4. The swimmer swims his or her race. Remind your swimmer that they should shake hands at the end of the race with the swimmer on either side. All meet officials, coaches, teammates and members of the other team should be treated with courtesy. Our team mission emphasizes sportsmanship. Please model this behavior for your swimmer and provide positive feedback when you see them demonstrating this virtue.



5. After each swim your swimmer should ask the timer (people with stop watches at the end of each lane) their time and then thank them.

6. The swimmer should then go immediately to his or her coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.

7. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

- Tell them how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him how proud you are and what a great job they did.
- Take him/her back to the team area and relax.

- Remind them that this is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.



8. The swimmer now waits until his next event and starts the procedure again. These are the times to cheer for teammates and contribute to team spirit.

9. When your swimmers have completed all of their events you *may* all get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. One swimmer can scratch a relay for the other three swimmers. In addition to disappointing other swimmers, relay are weighted more heavily than individual events in the team scoring. If you can, stay until the end to cheer for all of our swimmers. At some of our meets special events such as races between alumni, coaches and parents happen at the end.



10. Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility. Ribbons are gathered for the team and given to the coach at the end of the meet. Ribbons will be available at the next practice in the family files. Swims that have been disqualified do not get a ribbon. On the back of each ribbon are the event and your swimmers time. This is an easy way for your swimmer to track their improvement. Remember, personal bests are much more important than blue ribbons!

11. Before you leave, clean up the area where you and your swimmers were sitting. Throw away any empty water bottles, wrappers, etc. and leave the area the way it was when you got there. We ask that each swimmer pick up at least 5 pieces of trash before leaving any meet.

### What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim?

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling badly, acknowledge their disappointment, but then go on and talk about the good things the child did. Don't talk about the negative things and don't keep talking about the race. Focus on what your swimmer did right and provide reassurance that they are making progress. Then drop it and get your child to focus on the next race or something enjoyable coming up after the meet!

### What To Take To The Meet

1. Most important: Swim Suit, Goggles, and Team Cap
2. Towels—your swimmer will swim multiple events, so pack at least two.

3. Something to sit on for you and your swimmers—folding chairs, a sleeping bag, an old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on.
4. Team T-shirts (if they have one). Spirit is one of our core values!
5. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.



6. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler (except at Ventana Canyon). Suggestions for items to bring:
  - Drinks: Hi-C, Fruit juice, Gatorade and water, water, water. Swimmers should drink at least 8 oz of water for each event they swim.
  - Snacks: Granola bars, crackers, goldfish, fruits, yogurt, cereal, sandwiches for swimmers. Please avoid bringing foods containing peanuts, peanut butter and/or nuts. We have several swimmers with significant allergies and need your help to keep them safe.
  - Support our snack bar! We try to offer a range of choices for those attending our meets at reasonable prices. Money raised this way helps to keep our registration fees down.

Finally, the most important things to bring to a meet are your good sportsmanship, team spirit and a sense of fun!