

## A GUIDE FOR SWIMMERS ATTENDING A SWIM MEET

We asked the Scotia Swimmers for all their tips for going to swim meets. These are all their recommendations:

### What do I need to take?

- Swimming costumes and spare swimming costumes. Please note that swimmers aged 13 and under are no longer allowed to wear technical suits.  
<https://ocs-sport.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/scotswim-full/2022/06/Technical-swimsuit-poster2022.pdf>
- Goggles and spare goggles
- Swimming hat and spare swimming hats
- T shirt to wear poolside in between races
- Towel and a spare towel to dry off between races
- Snacks
- Water
- Entertainment
- A range of coins (if you want to use a locker)
- Pen and paper
- Some swimmers like to take sliders or flipflops to wear poolside.

### What don't I need to take?

- Training items, like fins, kick board, pull buoy etc.

### When should I turn up?

You are advised to aim to be at the pool half an hour before the start of warm-up. If you arrive late and haven't let someone know in advance, you may be withdrawn from your race.

### Why do I need to warm up?

It's not just for warming up your body (although that helps too!). It's about getting a feel for the pool, counting your strokes from the flags, trying turns in pools of a different depth, and practising diving from unfamiliar blocks.

The warm-up is usually, but not always, split into girls and boys, and there is a period for lane swimming and then some lanes will be used for dives. Warm-ups are often very busy with many more swimmers in a lane than you would be used to. If there are timing boards in place, try not to climb over them, and be really aware of other swimmers in your lane.

Your coach can help you with what to do in your warmup, but always try to cover the strokes you will be using in that session's races. Make sure you have practised your turns and the starts for the races you are doing.

### But I'm soooooo nervous!!!

Most swimmers are nervous about competing, but you can use those feelings to your advantage by turning them into 'swim faster vibes'. Although you feel like EVERYONE's eyes are on you, there are a huge amount of swimmers taking part in each race, and no one can really remember individual performances. Your coach, fellow swimmers, and maybe your supporter will be watching you, but they are just proud of you, so don't put too much pressure on yourself. Listen to some music on the way to the meet that calms you down, and enjoy chatting with your fellow swimmers. Tell your coach how you are feeling because they may be able to reassure you.

### When is my race?



When you first start competing, your coach or a team manager will help you follow the heat sheet (programme) and guide you as to when you need to join marshalling. Have your goggles and hat ready to take to marshalling, and make sure you have been to the toilet. Marshalling is where you meet your fellow racers and you will be put in an order, according to what lane number you are. There are often a few marshalling points and you will gradually be moved closer to the blocks. They often have printed lane numbers above them. Make sure you listen to the marshals and ask any questions if you are unsure.

### **What happens next?**

Eventually you and your fellow racers will be behind the blocks and the swimmers before you will start their race. Listen to the sequence of whistles which tell you that it is time to get on the blocks. Put your goggles on before you get on the blocks so that you don't forget. Also make sure you have remembered what race you are about to do. Many swimmers like to put their hat on over their goggles because it helps to keep goggles in place when diving. The starter will say 'take your marks' and then there will be a buzzer which means GO! Try not to start before you hear the buzzer.

And then swim as fast as you can. 🏊

### **But what if something goes wrong?**

Goggles can come off (but if they do, just swim anyway). Sometimes, swimmers forget which stroke they are doing in the heat of the moment, or just dive in too early, but just keep going and try to finish your race.

DO NOT WORRY... there will be other races, so try not to replay what happened. Everyone makes mistakes. Even Olympic swimmers do false starts. Usually, you can learn from a mistake so that it doesn't happen again.

### **But what if I get disqualified?**

Again, while this may be disappointing, find out from your coach why you were disqualified and come back stronger. Sometimes, judges will not disqualify you but they may warn you so that you can be careful in the future. They are trying to help you so listen and take on board their comments.

### **Did I win?**

Often, races are separated into heats, so that you can race against others who may be a different age from you but have similar times. At the end, the times are listed in age category starting with the fastest, and the top three may receive a medal (or be asked to swim again in a final). So you may win your heat, but not receive a medal. This also means you may be last in your heat, but may win a medal because the other swimmers are a different age. The results are usually put up on the wall as the meet progresses and are also sometimes recorded in an app.

Winning a medal is great, but success comes in many ways. You may be aiming for a PB (or a personal best) or your measure of success may not be related to your time, eg. Good wall touches or correct breathing. Aim high, but make sure you have realistic expectations. Always check-in with your coach after your race and they will give you some feedback.

### **What now?**

There is a lot of waiting around at meets, and electronic devices are sometimes banned, so make sure you take things to do, like a book or some card games. Healthy snacks and lots of water are also needed. Use this time to get to know your fellow swimmers.

### **After the meet**

When you've finished your last race you can leave or stay to support your fellow swimmers. Please let your coach know if you decide to leave (or any time in the meet that you leave poolside). Enjoy your success and reflect on any improvement you can make. If your school has a way to celebrate wider achievements, don't forget to let them know about your swimming successes.

**ENJOY YOURSELF, HAVE FUN AND SWIM FAST!**

## A GUIDE FOR PARENTS ATTENDING A SWIM MEET

We asked scotia parents for their top tips for attending swim meets, and this is what they said...

- Parking is often limited at meets, so it helps to scout out extra places to park beforehand.
- Spectators usually have to pay to watch meets, and often they only accept cash.
- Programmes can also be bought... more cash!
- On a programme, it may say Scotia next to our swimmers' names, but often our club code is used which is WSAX.
- There is often a raffle or tombola... more cash! 😊
- Spectating at a swim meet is always very hot – dress accordingly!
- Seating is sometimes limited at meets so arriving early can be beneficial.
- Some people think spectating is also boring... bring entertainment.
- If you think swim meets are boring, getting involved is a great way to make the day go faster. (Shameless plug... we always need more time keepers, judges, team managers etc...)
- You may not be allowed to accompany your child into the changing room, so make sure they have everything they need, and arrange where to meet them afterwards.
- Spectators are encouraged to support their swimmers as raucously as they see fit, but must be quiet from the whistles to the start buzzer.
- If you decide to incentivize your swimmers PBs, choose something you can maintain.
- Sometimes results are posted on the Meet Mobile app, which has an annual fee.
- For a glossary of swimming terms (so that you have the lingo to chat to the other 'swim-parents') please refer to the Members' Area, Swimmers Guide, Guide to Competitions which is available on the Scotia ASC website.