

Parents Guide to a Home Swim Meet (And a Home Invitational Meet)



Many of us are wondering: “What happens at a home swim meet?”
The following will hopefully help in understanding what to expect-and
how you can help the meet run optimally.

A. QUICK SUMMARY

It takes 34 volunteers on the pool deck, and at least another 20 volunteers to handle concession (and 50/50) sales to run a YMCA swim meet. We take great pride in how our meets operate. *Every parent can help with something.* Those that wish to be on deck can help by operating a stop watch (no experience necessary). All others can help in the concession area on a rotating basis so that no helper misses seeing a child’s swim event. We also need help setting up and dismantling the concession area and pool deck. If just one parent can help from each family, then we should have plenty of volunteers to make everything go smoothly. Please help.

B. WHAT TO BRING

- Be sure your **swimmer** brings their: A) Team suit (if you have one); B) Goggles (a backup pair helps, too); C) Cap; D) Flip Flops; and E) extra towels. Swimmers often bring a blanket or sleeping bag to lay on during the meet while waiting to swim. Also give the swimmer some money for food and drinks at the concession stand.
- **Parents should bring two 6 packs of pop, water, or sports drinks plus at least one food item.** These items will be sold at the concession stand. Please check the food item sign up sheet in the hallway by the swim office. Food items can include ice or paper products (plates, napkins, forks, etc.). Items can be homemade or store bought. Yes, you may be buying back your own donation. Sorry, about that. But, the concession stand provides up to \$800 of income per meet that we use to pay for transportation to away meets.

C. BEFORE MEET DETAILS

- Please arrive with your swimmer at least 1 hour and 15 minutes before the meet start time. Bring concession donations (see detail above) with your swimmer so that we can have those items ready for sale when the away team arrives.
- As home team, we have a 30 minute warm up that starts one hour before the scheduled meet start time. **Please be sure your swimmer is ready to be in the water 1 hour before meet start time**
- The concession area needs volunteers to stock everything during our team warm up session. Please help in this area when you arrive.
- The pool deck is usually prepared prior to our home warm up session. Help is needed gathering chairs, placing papers on clip boards, and setting up the timing system.
- All volunteers that are timers and officials should check in on deck as soon as possible. This helps in the placement of timers into lanes and officials into positions well in advance of meet start. This also includes the card “runners” that

collect cards from timers after each heat is swum. ALL VOLUNTEER TIMERS AND OFFICIALS SHOULD BE IN POSITION ON THE POOL DECK 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE MEET START TIME (or earlier).

- The National Anthem will be sung 5 minutes prior to meet start time. All on deck volunteers must be in position and ready for the National Anthem.
- Swimmers should get their scheduled events from a coach and/or from the posted event list. Usually, the swimmers will write the event numbers to be swum that day on their hand with an ink pen. This will help them remember when to be prepared to swim.
- Swimmers in early events should get their “event card” (a blue or pink card that shows the swimmers name and event on it for each heat they will swim) from the designated “card lady”. Coaches will point out the “card lady” to the swimmers after warm up. The “card lady” will have the swimmers’ event cards for the duration of the meet.
- The meet will start on time

D. THE MEET BEGINS

- The current event number will be posted on the scoreboard or on another board in the pool area. Swimmers and parents can refer to the current event number to know when they have to swim.
- Swimmers should be behind the blocks preparing to swim at least 2 events prior to their scheduled event. We often have “seeding areas” where an adult will have the swimmers wait until it is their turn to swim.
- The swimmer must have an event card to give the timer for their heat. Swimmers get their event card from the “card lady”. Usually, one “card lady” handles the boys cards, and another handles the girls cards. Cards are used by the timer in each lane to record the stop watch times for the swimmer.
- Each event is at least one heat (race). Swimmers in the first heat of each event are swimming for times *and* places/points. Swimmers in subsequent “Exhibition Heats” are swimming for times only. All heats are important to the individual swimmers as they should always strive to improve their times-regardless of whether the heat counts in the team points or not.
- Heats are run very quickly. The starter will begin the next heat/event immediately after the previous heat/event is completed. This helps to get through the 88 events as quickly as possible. There is no intermission or break during the meet.
- **Swimmers should be ready to start when the starter gives the command to “step up”.** Their event card should be given to the lane timer. Their goggles, cap, and suit should be on and secure BEFORE stepping on the block.
- The meet is scored by age group and by sex. An age group total score is the sum of the points scored in the first heat of each event in that age group. Individual points for each event are 5 for first place, 3 for second place, and 1 for third place. No team can sweep all 3 places in an event. Relays are scored 7-0. The team that wins an age group receives 2 points in the Team Score. A tied age group is worth 1 point in the Team Score. So, if the 11-12 Girls have a total age group score of 48-42, then the winning team receives 2 Team Score points. Since there are 10 age groups, the Team Score will be something like 12-8, or 14-6 (a number that

sums to 20). This is true even if the score in a single age group is 60-0. The score within each age group is only relevant in determining that age group's Team Score Points. The margin of victory in an age group is not relevant to the Team Score Points. (Note that we formerly awarded 1 point per age group won, so the Team Score might be 6-4 or 7 ½ -3 ½. This single point scoring is still referred to by most people-even though the league adopted a 2 point per age group system last year.)

- Swimmers (and parents) are expected to adhere to the core values of the YMCA at all times during the meet. HONESTY, CARING, RESPECT, and RESPONSIBILITY is expected as a rule. Teammates, fans, opponents, officials, and coaches should all be treated in a way that makes us proud to be part of MVWYST.
- The opposing team generally has around 70 to 80 swimmers. This means we will have about 150 kids in and around the pool for about 5 hours. Please make sure your swimmer is not roaming the halls or in a place that they should not be in during the meet. Parents should not be afraid of reprimanding ANY child (see core values above) if necessary.

E. AFTER THE MEET

- It is common to have no clue about the Total Team Score of the meet until well after the meet is complete. It is virtually impossible to keep score of 10 age groups in one's head. So, don't be alarmed if we don't play the total score. It may be that we just aren't completely sure of the score. The score keepers and coaches know the score. The coaches will determine the appropriate time to tell the kids the Total Team Score.
- It takes about an hour to clean up and dismantle the pool deck and concession stand. This goes faster, of course, with many helpers. Please stay after the meet to help with the tear down.

F. OTHER COMMENTS

- We are a tenant of the Canon McMillan School District. Our goal is to be a perfect tenant. Please help us achieve this goal by treating the facility with respect. We want to make the custodians and security guards happy at all times. Please make sure your swimmer(s) helps us achieve this goal as well.
- Swimmers MUST clean up their "camp out" area. This includes throwing away all trash and left over food. See "perfect tenant" above.
- Please allow the coaches to coach during the meet. A parent's most important job during a swim meet is to provide unconditional support for their child. Remember that your swimmer is trained to do the following after each swim: 1) Congratulate the swimmer on both sides of them for swimming well; 2) Discuss the swim with a coach; and 3) Come to a parent for encouragement and a hug.
- A well run meet will be complete in about 4 hours. Throwing in 90 minutes before the meet for set up, and 60 minutes after the meet for dismantling gives us... *Well, it's a long day.* But, oddly, running a meet can be a lot of fun. It is more fun when EVERYONE HELPS. Thanks in advance for doing your part.

PRESIDENTS INVITATIONAL

All of the above apply for the Presidents Invitational that we host. There are a few additional changes during this much larger meet, however.



A-PI. QUICK SUMMARY

The Presidents Invitational is our annual multiple-team-meet. We Invite swimmers from all of the local YMCA teams to come to the meet. Generally, we'll see at least a few swimmers from each team. Many teams will bring big crowds of swimmers. We have had as many as 475 swimmers at this meet in the past. The 2005 version will have a relatively low number (250) of swimmers. This is our largest single fund raising tool for the season. We hope to net at least \$7,000 from all of the meet activities.

B-PI. WHAT TO BRING

- Bring the same things as noted in section A above. However, we **NEED MORE** of everything. The meet is longer and includes many more swimmers and parents than a regular dual meet. So, concession donations should be doubled from that provided at the dual meets.
- Swimmers should bring even more towels. And, they should bring some playing cards, reading material, or other diversion to have on hand while waiting to swim. This is a longer day for the kids. The kids will need some activities while waiting to swim.

C-PI. BEFORE THE MEET DETAILS

- We set up everything immediately after practice ends on the **Friday evening before the meet**. Please come and help with the set up.
- All swimmers and volunteers should arrive at 7 AM. Warm up sessions are by age group and run from 7:20 AM to 8:30 AM. The meet starts promptly at 8:30 AM.
- Parking is a little more crazy than normal during the Invitational. This is another reason to arrive early.

D-PI. THE MEET BEGINS

- The major change in the Invitational is that all swimmers are “seeded” prior to the meet. We print (and sell) a **Heat Sheet Program** that lists each swimmer’s event and heat number. Swimmers and parents must refer to this book to see when they should swim.
- There is no “card lady” during the Invitational. Instead, the swimmers report to a “**seeding area**” located in the gym. An adult will announce the event that is being seeded. Then, the swimmers will find the seat that has their card on it for the event. An adult then will lead the swimmers to the pool deck in heat and lane order. The swimmers still give their event card to the timer in their lane as usual.

- Each event typically has several heats. The order of finish for an event is based on the times swum by all participants in all heats of that event. The computer system will determine the places. There are no exhibition heats. All heats count toward the place points.
- The swimmer that wins his or her heat is awarded a **Sarris Candy Medallion**. This is true regardless of which heat, or the overall place of the swimmer in the event. Every heat winner receives a Medallion.
- Points are received for the swimmers that finish in 1st through 9th place for events. Medals, Rosettes, and Ribbons are awarded to swimmers that place during the meet. Relays result in team points only-and only for 1st through 3rd place.
- Results are printed and posted during the meet.
- Trophies are awarded to the swimmers that finish in the top 3 points in their age group. Team trophies are awarded to the top 3 teams. We do **NOT** accept a team trophy as the host.
- We have some great Chinese Auction and 50/50 opportunities happening during the meet. Please partake. There will also be vendors on site selling t-shirts and swim gear. The team receives a cut of the sales by these vendors.

E-PI. AFTER THE MEET

- Dismantling everything is simply a bigger chore after the meet. Many hands make light work. Please help.
- The presentation of trophies will be after the meet on the pool deck.
- Individual medals and ribbons can be received from coaches at the completion of the meet.

F-PI. OTHER COMMENTS

- All MVWYST volunteers are asked to wear a name tag that we provide during the meet. This helps our visitors to know who is able to help them if they have any questions. The name tags also help us to get to know each other. Please wear the name tag.
- The meet should be completed around 3 PM if the electronics work as they should. Given enough help, we should be able to be out of the building by 5 PM. **CROSS YOUR FINGERS!**

Please share the important parts of this guide with your swimmers. Don't hesitate to ask a "veteran" parent about anything that is confusing or requires more clarification.

Check out the team web site at: www.wyst.org

Thanks in advance.