

# What to Expect at an NWAL Swim Meet

## 2015 Raveneaux Racers

<http://www.RVXracers.com>

### I. NWAL (Northwest Aquatic League)

- The Raveneaux Racers are a part of the Northwest Aquatic League (NWAL), which has become the second largest summer league program in the nation with almost 100 teams and over 15,000 swimmers from ages 4 to 18. The core area of the league is located in the northwest Harris County from Cypress to Humble but stretch as far west as Giddings, north to Bryan, and east to Crosby.
- The NWAL season begins in early May and runs until the end of June. Teams are divided into a division with 6 teams and those divisions are in one of three regions. Some teams have as many as 350 swimmers while others only have 45 to 50 swimmers. Normally each team has five dual meets and then a divisional meet on week 6. The season concludes with several invitational meets.
- We are in division C4 this summer with Greenwood Forest, Cypresswood, Ponderosa, Oak Ridge North, and Shenandoah. Each year we are placed in NWAL divisions according to your team size, success the year before, and geographic location.
- The website for NWAL can be found at <http://www.NWAL.org>

### II. Age Groups and Events

- Competition age groups are as follows and split by gender:
  - 6 & Under
  - 7-8
  - 9-10
  - 11-12
  - 13-14
  - 15 & Over
- All swimmers aged 10 and under swim 25 yard (or meter) events and swimmers aged 11+ swim 50 yard (or meter) events.
- Swimmers compete in the group determined by their age as of 05/31/15.
- There are four competitive strokes that are involved in swim team: freestyle; backstroke; breaststroke and butterfly. Each stroke must be performed legally by the swimmer (as determined by the officials) to achieve a NWAL time.
- Our goal as a team is to have all of our 6 & under swimmers competent in freestyle and backstroke and to begin teaching the breaststroke and butterfly as soon as possible so that they can compete in more than two events at a meet.

- Swimmers are allowed to swim in 3 individual events and 2 relays per meet (freestyle and medley –depending on their age).
- Relay Teams: Coaches use best times and practice attendance to determine relay teams. At dual meets we are allowed to swim 2 relay teams per relay event. Relays are fun for the kids and it is important to let coaches know if your child needs to leave a meet early as there might be 3 other swimmers depending on their participation.
- The Divisional Meet only allows 1 relay team per event and the relay team members will be based on the personal best times from the 5 dual meets.

### III. Volunteers

- NWAL swim meets are entirely run by parent volunteers, acting in various roles. Some are NWAL-trained officials ensuring fairness and consistency from one meet to the next. Without your help in volunteering, there is no way these meets can be a success.
- Volunteer positions will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis through the website for each swim meet. The volunteer positions will be open for sign-up on the Sunday night at 8 PM before a meet week, and then close on Tuesday night at 8 PM. All unfilled positions will then be assigned by Elizabeth Stephens, the Volunteer Coordinator.
- **If you only have swimmers that are ages 6 & Under, DO NOT VOLUNTEER FOR A SECOND-SHIFT POSITION!** After event #40 (out of 78 events), the 6 and under age group is done for the day, unless they are swimming a breaststroke or butterfly event (which is rare).
- The first shift for volunteers is from Event #1 to Event #40; the second shift is from Event #41 to Event #78. Shift 1 typically starts at 8:30 AM and ends at 11:30 AM; Shift 2 typically begins at 11:30 AM and ends at 2:30 PM.
- The various volunteer positions are as follows:
  - **Set-Up Crew:**
    - This crew of 4 to 5 parents will be responsible for setting up all the team tents, equipment, starting blocks, roped-off areas, etc, in order to run the meet. Typically, this crew will meet around 6:30 AM at the pool.
  - **Tent Parent:**
    - This is one of the most important jobs! Each age group and gender will have their own team tent to sit together. For the 6&Under, 7-8, 9-10 and 11-12 age groups, we will need one parent for each tent (one for boys and one per girl per age group) to be aware of what events are moving to the ready bench and specifically helps ensure that Relays (younger specifically) get to the bench in the correct order and know what stroke they are swimming.
    - Prior to the meet, you will be given a list of swimmers in your tent and what events they are swimming. Typically, these are then written on the swimmer's arm with a Sharpie to help them know what event to listen for.

- **Ready Bench:**
  - Responsible for putting swimmers in the correct order according to the lane assignments provided by the heat sheet as provided by the computer personnel.
- **Runners:**
  - Distribute meet programs to officials and lane timer sheets to scribes on deck from the computer clerk. Pick up completed lane timer sheets from scribes and return to computer clerk for entry. Also help organize lane timer sheets for entry.
- **Timers:**
  - Dads usually like this job and it also comes with the best seat in the house. Duties involved recording the times with stop watches (3 people/lane). It is important to be attentive to the starter and consistent. Number needed varies but we are required to provide half of the timers for the meet divided into 2 shifts.
- **Scribes:**
  - Record the 3 times given by the timers in their lane onto the lane timer sheet. Verifies the swimmer's name in the lane matches the information on the sheet. Will also hand out heat ribbons to swimmers in the 6&Under and 7-8 age divisions. Encouragement to the swimmers for a fast swim and relaying their times to them is an added bonus!
- **Award Ribbons:**
  - Place labels onto the ribbons for both teams, or only for Raveneaux if the other team has assigned this same position as well. Collect and sort the ribbons for distribution to our team for the next week during practices.
- **Take-Down Crew:**
  - Assist with the take-down and undoing of all the tasks performed by the set-up crew.
- **Specialized jobs include:**
  - **Computer Operations**
    - Works inside an air-conditioned space and creates documents needed for the meet and enters time into the computer.
  - **Head Timer**
    - Times every race in the event that a lane timer has a stopwatch malfunction. Will make sure all timers are ready prior to the beginning of a heat.
  - **Announcer**
    - Sound system administrator – plays music and calls swimmers to the ready bench – this person is KEY in keeping a meet running smoothly.

#### IV. Meet Sign-Out & Check-In

- If you will be missing any meet, you can sign-out for each meet on the website for the appropriate meet. Or, you can send an email to Dustin Qualls at [dustin@trafficengineers.com](mailto:dustin@trafficengineers.com).
- Please let us know ASAP if you will be missing a meet, as this helps with both the individual entries and relay entries for the meet.
- Entry lists and a scaled-down version of the heat-sheet will be emailed out to parents typically on Thursday prior to a meet on Saturday. These give the event numbers that each swimmer is swimming in at the meet.
- On Saturday morning, swimmers must “circle-in” at the pool. There will be a large board with swimmer’s names on it; simply circle your swimmers names.
- They must also check in with their tent parent at that time. Be sure to arrive early enough to do this prior to warm-up and get events written on their arm, etc.
- Swimmer scratches are performed sharply at 8 am and it is very hard to get a swimmer re-entered into the meet once they are removed.
- It is the parent’s responsibility to contact a coach or the team rep if they are sick that morning or running late.

#### V. What to Bring to a Meet

- Fold-up style outdoor chairs for swimmers and parents
- Goggles, swim caps, towels, water-proof sunscreen
- iPods, iPads, books, etc, are always good for the swimmers while waiting for their events

#### VI. Meet Procedures

- Timeline
  - **7:00-8:00 AM:**
    - Arrival and warm-up. We warm up first at home (7:15 AM) and second at away meets (7:40 AM)
  - **8:00 AM:**
    - Official and 1<sup>st</sup> Shift Volunteer Meetings and Scratch meeting for Computer Clerks.
  - **8:30 AM:**
    - Meet Begins
  - **8:30 AM to approx. 11:30 AM:**
    - Shift 1 for Volunteers (through event #40 out of 78)
  - **11:30 AM to approx. 2:30 PM:**
    - Shift 2 for Volunteers
  - **2:00 PM to 2:30 PM**
    - Approximate end of meet

- All swimmers and volunteers must listen to announcements and report to their assigned area on time. Swimmers are held in numerical order. The number posted or called out is the number that needs to report to the ready bench. It is important for swimmers, with tent parent help, to keep track and get kids to the bench on time. The faster kids report to their area – the faster the meet runs, and the faster everyone gets home in the afternoon.
- If for some reason a swimmer must leave, please notify the coach so that the swimmer can be scratched and relay changes made if necessary.
- The typical order of events in a NWAL dual meet is as follows (2 events each per stroke and distance for Girls and Boys):
  - 14 & Under 100 yard Freestyle (Events #1 and #2)
  - 15-18 100 yard Freestyle (Events #3 and #4)
  - 6 & Under Freestyle relay (Events #5 and #6)
  - Medley Relays – 8& Under; 9-10;11-12; 13-14; 15-18 (Events #13 thru #16)
  - Freestyle – 6& Under; 7-8; 9-10;11-12; 13-14; 15-18 (Events #17 thru #28)
  - Breast stroke - – 8& Under; 9-10;11-12; 13-14; 15-18 (Events #29 thru #38)
  - Backstroke – 6 & Under (**Events #39 and #40; 6 & Unders are done here**)
  - Individual Medley – 10 & Under; 11-12;13-14;15-18 (Events #41 thru #48)
  - Backstroke – 7-8;9-10;11-12;13-14;15-18 (Events #48 thru #58)
  - Butterfly - 8& Under; 9-10;11-12; 13-14; 15-18 (Events #59 thru #68)
  - Free Relay - 7-8;9-10;11-12;13-14;15-18 (Events #69 thru #78)
- At a given NWAL dual meet, **each swimmer can swim a maximum of 3 individual events and 2 relay events.** 6 and Unders typically only swim their freestyle and backstroke but can add a third event (breaststroke or butterfly) when they are ready and can swim them legally.

## VII. Certified Officials

- We are always looking to recruit new officials. The great thing is that you can be right on deck beside the pool to see all the action. Training is involved and provided by NWAL. For anyone interested in becoming a certified NWAL official, please contact Dustin Qualls at [dustin@trafficengineers.com](mailto:dustin@trafficengineers.com)
- The various official duties are:
  - **Referee:**
    - Has full authority over the swim meet. Enforces rules necessary to conduct a swim meet.
  - **Starter:**
    - Upon signal from the referee, assumes full control of the swimmers until a fair start is achieved.
  - **Stroke & Turn:**
    - Ensures that strokes and turns of swimmers are legal and correct and reports any disqualifications to the Referee.

- **Clerk of Course:**
  - Swimmers report to the clerk of Course before the meet begins. Clerk maintains official entry list.

## VIII. Awards

- **Heat Ribbons**
  - Given to swimmers in the 6&under and 7-8 age groups upon the completion of a heat. Swimmers can ask for their times and the scribes should be happy to write the time quickly on the back of the heat ribbon.
- **Meet Ribbons**
  - Given to swimmers who are among the top 6 finishers in their event(s).
- **Personal Best Ribbons**
  - After each meet, if a swimmer improved their personal best time in a given event, they will receive a personal best ribbon. These are to be proud of! At the team banquet, swimmers who receive 10\* personal best ribbons throughout the summer will earn a special award and recognition. \*6 & under swimmers need 7 personal bests.
  - A posterboard will be updated weekly at the Raveneaux pool for all personal bests by each swimmer during the summer.
- **Scoring at Meets**
  - Individual:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Place: 5 pts
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: 3 pts
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: 1 pt
  - Relays:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Place: 5 pts
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: 2 pts. (One team cannot be awarded both places in a dual meet if they have 2 relay teams)
  - Ribbons are awarded in individual events for 1<sup>st</sup> thru-6<sup>th</sup> Places and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> only in relays
  - It is important to remember that there is typically more than 1 heat of each event and even though your swimmer might win their heat, they may not be one of the top 6 finishers in the event as a whole.
  - We use the personal best ribbon system to encourage the kids to improve each week.
- **Swimmer of the Week:**
  - Each week the coaches may choose swimmers who have exhibited hard work and dedication during practice and at meets and recognize those swimmers with a “Racer of the Week” swim cap for the meet.

## IX. Time Trials, Seed Times and Yards vs. Meters Pools

- The purpose of the time trials will be to collect times for all events your swimmers are eligible to swim. These times will then become the first “seed times” for the first official dual meet.
- After the first dual meet, any times swam faster than the time trial seed times will then become their new seed time going forward. This process repeats each week. Any time swam faster than the swimmer’s listed seed time in the heat sheet is considered swimming a new “personal best” time and they will receive a personal best ribbon that week for that event. It’s a good idea to pump up your kiddos to try and drop time and get personal bests each week!
- **One of the most common questions has to do with yards vs. meters pools.** The pool at Raveneaux is a **25 meter pool**. Four of our meets are at 25 meter pools (our two home meets and the away meets at Cypresswood and Shenandoah). One of our away meets is at Oak Ridge North, who has a 25 yard pool. This is a shorter pool than a 25 meter pool, thus seed times will be adjusted by a factor of 0.90 down from the seed times in a meter pool.
- **For example:** Let’s assume your swimmer has a seed time (or personal best) time of 25.00 seconds in the 25 meter freestyle event after the first four dual meets (all swam at meter pools). When we then swim at Oak Ridge North for our last dual meet, we will convert that 25.00 personal best time to 22.50 seconds for their seed time since their pool is 25 yards in length. If the swimmer then swims this event at 23.00 seconds, it is not considered a new personal best time even though it is under their original personal best of 25.00 seconds. Because when converted back to meters, the 23.00 seconds at the yard pool would be 25.53 seconds in a meter pool (greater than the 25.00 meter seed time). Confusing, yes. But just remember that personal best times are only judged against the seed time for that swimmer for a given pool distance.
- **If you ever have any questions about anything, just let us know!**

## IX. Time Standards and Invitational Swim Meets

- Time standards will be listed at the top of each event in a typical heat sheet for a given dual meet. These time standards correspond to times that will qualify swimmers for either mid-season or post-season NWAL-sanctioned invitational swim meets.
- There are two mid-season and three post-season invitational meets that Raveneaux will participate in; and these are open to all 100+ teams of NWAL. The only criteria for entering the invitational meets is to swim an official qualified time in a NWAL dual meet.
- The mid-season invitational meets include:
  - Summer Thunder (THUN) at Klein Oak High School on Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Pentathlon Invitational at Klein Forest High School on Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The post-season invitational meets include:
  - Red, White and Blue Invitational (RWB) at Klein Forest High School on June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>
  - All-Star Invitational (AS) at Klein High School on June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>
  - Ponderosa Invitational (PI) at Klein Oak High School on June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> .

- The times standards get faster in the order of these three post-season invitationals. The Ponderosa Invitational is considered the championship meet for all of NWAL and is entering its 45<sup>th</sup> annual year of hosting NWAL's fastest swimmers.
- The abbreviations listed after the meet names above are the abbreviations you will see utilized in the heat sheets to denote the individual time standards.
- These time standards make a nice goal for swimmers to strive for during the course of the summer!
- Each week, swimmers meeting any of the invitational time standards will be recognized in an email to the team with highlights and team scoring results included.

That's about it. As you come up with any questions whatsoever, please do not hesitate to ask a Board member or any other parents for that matter. We're all here to have fun.

The meets will seem overwhelming to you at first, but there is a definite method to the madness that does work and ensures the most efficient and successful meet possible.

Thanks! See you at the pool.

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