



## Westchester Dolphins Swim Team

### Swim Meet Basics

### 2015

---

#### 1. WHAT TO EXPECT

- a. How long is a swim meet?
  - i. Most swim meets last 3 to 5 hours or more. Prelims/Finals (championship) meets can last even longer. It is a long, hot day-- but very rewarding for you and your children!
- b. What is the basic procedure of a swim meet?
  - i. Most meets are dual meets, meaning there is a home and visiting team competing for points against one another. Tri meets include three competing teams. Swimmers earn points for placing in their events. At the end of the season, awards are given to swimmers and teams based on point totals.
- c. League: Westchester is a member of the Bayou Swim League (BSL). The BSL's teams include the Westchester Dolphins, Briargrove Park Stars, Briar Village Flyers, Spring Valley Dolphins, and the Walnut Bend Sharks. BSL is an open league, meaning swimmers of many abilities—novice to USA Swimming members—may compete.
- d. Ages of swimmers:
  - i. There are several age group designations within the league: 6 & under; 7 & 8; 9 & 10; 11 & 12; 13 & 14; Open (any age through 18)
  - ii. The eligibility of a swimmer to compete in a particular age group is determined by his or her age at 11:59 p.m. on May 31 of that swim season, except:
    1. He or she may be moved to a higher (older) age group temporarily to complete a relay team, provided no other eligible swimmer in the higher age group is available *and* that no void is created in the lower age group.
  - iii. To compete in the League Championship meet, the swimmer must have participated in at least two BSL approved meets, including a team's Official Time Trials Meet.
  - iv. To compete in the Relay Invitational Meet, the swimmer must have participated in at least one other BSL approved meet this season.
- e. Why can't I pick my child's events?
  - i. Your team's coaches will choose the events he or she feels are in the best interest not only for your swimmer, but also for the team. Your child may not swim the same stroke or the same event at every meet. Your child may be asked to swim his or her worst stroke—just remember the coach knows what is best for your child and team!
  - ii. A swimmer may swim up to 3 individual and 2 relay events per day.
- f. What are heats?
  - i. A heat is a division of an event. For example, if 16 swimmers are signed up for the 25 backstroke, and the pool has 6 lanes, that event will have 3 heats.
- g. What is seeding?

- i. Seeding is distributing swimmers among their heat/lane depending on their submitted time for that event. All Bayou Swim League-approved meets will use modified deck seeding which will be done by computer. Heats will be seeded slowest to fastest.
- h. What types of meets are there?
  - i. Dual Meet: A competition between two teams
  - ii. Relay Invitational Meet: A competition where each team member swims a particular leg or legs of a relay event
  - iii. Preliminaries Meet: A competition in which a number of heats are swum for each event, to qualify the fastest swimmers for the Finals
  - iv. Finals Meet: A competition consisting of events in which compete the top twelve individual qualifiers from preliminaries and top six qualifiers for relays
- i. When are the results announced?
  - i. Meet results are usually posted as events are finalized. Final results and ribbons are given by the coaches and Reps, typically within a few days after the meet.
- j. Weather
  - i. Swim meets are held rain or shine.
  - ii. In the case of inclement weather, all pools will be cleared upon the first sounding of thunder or sighting of lightning, and swimmers will not be allowed to re-enter the water until 20 minutes after the last sound of thunder or sighting of lightning.
  - iii. For all BSL meets, the delay will be no longer than 2 hours. Postponement or cancellation shall be decided by the officials of the teams.
- k. How can I get a better view of my swimmer?
  - i. VOLUNTEER!
    - 1. We are always most in need of judges and timers (see "Officials," below). Each family will be required to volunteer in some capacity at every meet. Being a judge requires simple yet formal training. See a Rep or our website for details.
  - ii. Etiquette dictates that the deck area not become overcrowded. Watch your swimmer's race, and then leave the area for other parents to view their athlete.

## 2. BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

- a. What to bring
  - i. Swimsuit, goggles, and team cap
    - 1. A cap is recommended for **all** swimmers, particularly those with long hair (male or female!). Not only does this make your swimmer faster (less drag!), it also is much more sanitary for other swimmers (no loose hair in the pool—yuck!).
  - ii. At least 2 towels (they go through them quickly!)
  - iii. Sunscreen & mosquito repellent
  - iv. LOTS OF FLUIDS- enough for all family members for 4 hours
    - 1. Please avoid sodas for your athletes!
    - 2. WATER and sports drinks should be the primary fluids used
  - v. Snacks
  - vi. Cash for concessions
  - vii. A Sharpie or similar marker to record events (see below)

- viii. Reading materials, tablets, toys, games, etc. to entertain adults and siblings between events
  - ix. Lawn chairs, blankets
  - x. Portable tents/pop-ups (team Reps will let you know if these are not allowed)
- b. Your swimmer should arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the meet or before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the team calendar or in the information sent out to all swimmers.
- c. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's towels, swim bags and other gear. The team may sit in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
- d. Make sure your swimmer checks in with his or her coach right away! Check for special posted instructions in the check-in area.
  - i. Parents of younger swimmers may accompany them as needed. Older swimmers should check in by themselves to avoid crowding the deck area.
- e. Event, heat and lane assignments will be posted before the meet starts. Be sure to locate these documents.
- f. **If your swimmer is in a relay, it is very important that they show for the event**, or the entire relay team will be disqualified!
- g. Once checked in, **write or have the swimmers write** each event, heat, and lane number on his or her hand or arm in ink (a Sharpie is best). This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen or watch for.
  - i. See the instructions on the last page of this document.
- h. 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 at the designated time. 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 race.
- i. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her teammates and friends are sitting, or your child can sit with you. They will wait there until their event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets sunscreen applied, gets a drink or snack, and just gets settled in.
- j. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over. Be sure to listen closely for instructions over the loudspeakers.

### 3. DURING THE MEET

- a. Parents and spectators are **not allowed on deck** unless they are serving in an official volunteer capacity (Official judge, timer, starter, runner, etc.). This includes other swimmers and children—please do not allow them on deck.
- b. Please be courteous to the officials and to other parents! The area around the pool is very crowded and cramped. Watch your child's race, then leave as promptly as possible to give room to other parents. Please do not allow children to hang on the ropes/tape around the deck.
- c. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, this is why they write the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait a while.
- d. There are generally two ways a swimmer gets to his/her lane/event:

- i. A swimmer reports directly to his/her lane for competition a number of heats before he/she actually swims. Check with your swimmer's coach for specific instructions.
    - ii. Volunteers (clerks) help gather and organize swimmers to their events and heats; ultimately, however, it is the swimmer's responsibility to show on time.
  - e. Generally, girls' events are even-numbered and boys' events are odd-numbered.
    - i. The Starter or announcer will state the event number, gender, distance and stroke.
      - 1. Example: "Event #26, 6 and Under Girls, 25 yard freestyle."
    - ii. Events or heats may combine different age groups or sexes if there are only a few competitors signed up in the respective events. If this occurs, they will still be judged per the original event (i.e. 7&8 25 free will still award boys and girls separately).
  - f. Shortly before each event, once the swim team clerks gather all the swimmers in an event, they help line the swimmers up in their respective heats and lanes. Most meets have chairs on which the swimmers may sit while waiting to swim. There are usually 1 to 3 heats in each event.
  - g. The swimmer swims his or her race.
  - h. After each swim:
    - i. He/she may ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
    - ii. He/she should return to the team area and await his/her next event.
4. AFTER THE MEET
- a. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events and relays, the swimmer and parents may go home. Make sure, however, you check with the coach and/or double check that the swimmer is not in an upcoming relay!
    - i. Help with cleaning the venue is appreciated for home meets.
  - b. As results come in, they are usually posted in the facility. It takes some time for final results from each event to be officially tallied, so they may not be available when your swimmer is finished.
  - c. Awards (ribbons or medals) are gathered for a team and given to the coach or to a team awards volunteer **after the end of the meet**. The coach or volunteer will give the awards to the swimmers at a later time, usually during a swim practice the week following the meet. The Dolphins team has a ribbons box with envelopes. Please clear out your swimmers ribbons and "speeding tickets."
  - d. All questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet should be referred to a team Rep immediately, when they are not actively on duty. The concern will then be directed to the Referee, whose decision is final. **Please do not approach a coach or an Official (Judge, Starter, Referee, Chief Timer, etc.) directly.**
5. MISCELLANEOUS
- a. PETS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON POOL GROUNDS
  - b. SMOKING IS NOT ALLOWED ON POOL GROUNDS
  - c. Spectators should avoid any behavior that may distract a swimmer and/or cause a false start, such as noisemakers, flash photography, or whistles.
  - d. Clean up after yourself and your swimmer.
  - e. Bring plenty of fresh water. Concessions are available, but Houston summers are hot!
  - f. Be respectful of other teams, including their coaches, swimmers, volunteers, and parents.

- g. Encourage all swimmers, regardless of team affiliation, age, ability or speed.
- h. **We do not tolerate any derogatory comments or persistent yelling** that would belittle, distract or embarrass swimmers. We ask that if you must yell, only yell with encouragement!
- i. **Better yet, relax, enjoy, and let the kids swim!**
  - i. Swimming is supposed to be fun! Use encouraging words, such as Go, Good, Great, or Nice. I.e. Good turn! Good finish! Nice stroke! Go Dolphins!
  - ii. Benefits of positive feedback: A good experience for every swimmer, no matter what their experience or ability.
  - iii. Parents and spectators should give encouragement, ignore the mistakes, and enjoy their and their child's meet experience.
  - iv. NO COACHING! That is the coach's job, not the parents'.

## 6. OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS

- a. Please see the training resource, the Guide to Officiating Swimming, for more in-depth information. It is located on our website.
- b. "Officials" include the Referee, Judges, Starter, and Timers. "Reps" are the team Representatives.
- c. **Remember that all Officials and Reps are volunteers—fellow parents, friends, and colleagues!**
  - i. They have chosen to volunteer for the love of the sport, team, and children
  - ii. They have undergone intensive specific training and must abide by BSL rules
  - iii. BSL rules follow USA Swimming rules with a few, specific exceptions
- d. Meet volunteers include those who are runners, help with concessions, perform timing and results, and parents who help gather and organize the swimmers
- e. Judges
  - i. Judging is an opportunity to help swimmers improve their technique, times and success in the sport.
  - ii. Disqualifications (DQs): On any potential issue, a judge may only call what they see. If a judge does not see infraction when it happens, but suspects something was wrong, the swimmer will get the benefit of the doubt.
    - 1. For relay take-off DQs, both take-off judges must have seen the infraction for a disqualification (DQ) to stand
  - iii. One stroke judge will be located on both sides of the pool (1 from each team per shift). Two turn judges will be located on each end of the pool (2 from each team).
  - iv. Judges will be scanning their jurisdiction (1 to 3 lanes); they may not focus on one swimmer the entire race.
  - v. Judges may not call false starts—only the Starter may do so. A swimmer is DQ'd after two false starts per event.
  - vi. Judges either stand or walk during their entire shift. Because it is their responsibility to position themselves so that the swimmer(s) is/are in clear view, it is imperative they are free from distractions, such as energetic spectators, cell phones, children, and any item that may block their view. Please respect judges and give them ample room to ensure fair judging.
- f. Referee
  - i. Is assigned by the Team Representatives ("Reps").

- ii. Shall work with the Team Reps and Head Judge in assigning and instructing judges, timers, and other volunteers.
  - iii. Shall insure that all swimmers shall have fair, equitable, and uniform conditions of judging.
  - iv. Shall determine the jurisdiction of the stroke and turn judges
  - v. Shall enforce all applicable rules and shall decide all questions relating to the actual conduct of the meet, the final settlement of which is not otherwise assigned by said rules; can overrule any meet official on a point of rule interpretation, or on a judgment decision pertaining to an action which the Referee has personally observed.
  - vi. Has the authority to disqualify a swimmer(s) for any violation of the rules that the Referee personally observes and, except for false starts, shall record the infraction.
  - vii. Shall signal the Starter before each race or session that all officials are in position, that the course is clear, and that the competition can begin.
  - viii. Shall give a decision on any point where the opinions of the judges differ; and shall have authority to intercede in a competition at any stage, to ensure that the appropriate racing conditions are observed.
  - ix. May prohibit the use of any device that disrupts or interferes with the meet, such as a laser pointing device, flash photography, or artificial noisemaker.
  - x. May modify any rule for a competitive swimmer who has a disability. Any such modification shall be in accordance with Article 105 of the 2014 USA Swimming Rules and Regulations, shall affect only the current meet, and shall not set a precedent.
- g. Starter
- i. The Starter stands on the side of the pool within approximately five meters of the starting end of the pool and, upon signal from the designated official, assumes control of the swimmers until a fair start has been achieved.
  - ii. On the Starter's command "take your mark", the swimmers shall immediately assume their starting position. When all swimmers are stationary, the Starter shall give the starting signal.
  - iii. When a swimmer does not respond promptly to the command "take your mark," the Starter will release all swimmers with the command "stand up" upon which the swimmers may stand up or step back.
  - iv. Enforcement of the correct starting position is the responsibility of the Starter.
  - v. The Starter may:
    - 1. Announce the event and heat.
    - 2. Give other pertinent meet announcements.
    - 3. For backstroke starts, give the command, "Place your feet."
- h. Timers
- i. Timers have one of the most important jobs at a swim meet!
  - ii. The most important part of a swimmer's race is knowing with confidence how long she/he took to swim that event-- their official time.
  - iii. The swimmer's time could meet the qualification standards for future competition, set a record, or it could simply be that swimmer's Personal Best.
  - iv. Therefore, our responsibility as timing officials is to provide each swimmer with an accurate, valid, official time.
- v. Other Official Volunteers: Marshals, Clerks, Runners

**HAVE FUN AND GO DOLPHINS!!!**

# Writing Events on Your Swimmer's Arm

---

Your swimmer may be entered in several events, so it is important for them to be able to keep track of which events, heats, and lanes they will be in. The way we do this is to write their event number, heat number, lane number, and the stroke/distance on their forearm or hand.

Referring to your heat sheet, and using a permanent marker (such as a Sharpie®) in a dark color, create a simple table. Across the top, write "E" "H" and "L" for event, heat, lane. Then, fill in the details. It is best to write on your swimmer's arm and allow it to thoroughly dry prior to applying any sunscreen.

For example, the swimmer in the image below is entered in three events. In Event 6, the 50 freestyle, he will be in heat 4, lane 4.

For relays, you can also indicate which leg your athlete will be swimming (i.e. "100 Fr Relay #2").

