

# Swim Team

## 2024-2025



## Swim Meets 101

***YMCA Mission:***

*To put Christian principles into practice through programs  
that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.*

### **HOW DO YOU DETERMINE A SWIMMER'S AGE AT A MEET?**

All YMCA meets except Nationals use December 1 of the current season to determine a swimmer's age. (June 1 is used for the summer season.)

Examples:

*A swimmer that turns 11 on December 1, will swim with the 11-12 age group through the season.*

*A swimmer that turns 11 on December 2 will swim with the 9-10 age group through the season*

### **MEET ENTRIES**

- The coaches are responsible for each swimmer's event assignment at all meets.
- Swimmers are expected to swim all events they are entered in.  
**Swimmers will not be assigned to events they are not physically ready to do.**
- Coaches are also responsible for assigning swimmers to relays.
- **The coach will make the final decision on all meet entries.**
- All dual meet entries will be posted the day of the meet.
- Invitational entries will be posted the week of the meet.

### **WHAT TO TAKE TO A MEET**

- Swimming suit, goggles, cap (if needed), extra towels, warm clothes, blanket or sleeping bag, healthy snacks, cards, books or quiet games.
- Make sure all personal possessions are labeled with the swimmer's name!

### **OTHER MEET INFO**

- Swimmers should check in with their coaches when they arrive at the pool.
- Swimmers should remain in the designated team area.
- If you leave before the meet is over, check out with a coach.
- Swimmers should be aware of which event is currently "in the water".  
**(Swimmers should NEVER miss an event they are scheduled to swim.)**
- Questions regarding an Official's call or conduct of the meet should be referred to a coach. Coaches will explain or pursue the matter through the proper channels.
- Swimmers or parents are not to scratch from an event without first consulting a coach.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before warm-ups start.
- Transportation to & from meets is the responsibility of the swimmer and his/her family.

- Swimmers must see their coach immediately after they swim.
- Swimmers are to warm up with their team.
- Swimmers should rest and stay warm between events.
- Swimmers and parents must remember that their conduct at meets and team activities should reflect the philosophy, mission and goals of the YMCA and the Williams County Family swim team.

### **PARENTS' HELP AT HOME SWIM MEETS**

Parents are essential to run a home swim meet! The following positions need to be filled at all home meets.

- Officials
- Computer
- Colorado Timing System
- Timers
- Announcer
- Clerk of Course
- Scorers
- Runners
- Concessions
- Set up & take down

## **How to Survive a Swim Meet**

### **The Swim Bag**

- Sleeping bag or soft blanket (No Dad this is not for you!)
- Swimsuit, two pair of goggles
- Towels, two is better than one
- Between event wear- Remember these are wet people, so loose and comfortable clothing works. Sweatshirts and pants are great for this!
- Slippers, flip-flops, aqua-socks...you know something for cold toes, Cold feet make for cold children! Being cold is not only uncomfortable; it wastes a lot of energy too! Keep your swimmer WARM between their events!
- ...and a spare pair of underwear is always handy if your swimmer wears his/her suit to the meet and, "Oops, I left them at home!"

### **The “Other” Bag**

Do NOT underestimate the importance of “The Other Bag”. This is the activity bag to keep your children happy and busy while they wait for their events to be called. Rest is important, particularly at the long invitational meets, so here are some suggestions for quiet, yet fun activities: (Remember to keep an eye on your things!)

- Paper and crayons
- Electronic handheld games
- Cards, Books
- tablet or other device (watch these carefully)
- Travel games
- Homework??? (We can try!)

### **What Parents Need**

While some folks enjoy watching the competitors and spend nearly all of their time in the pool area, other folks prefer to relax with their children in-between their events. You may want to consider bringing some of the following creative comforts and optional items:

- A comfortable folding chair (rock hard gymnasium floors and unforgiving bleacher seats will get uncomfortable as the day progresses!)
- Ballpoint pen, magic marker, or combination marker/highlighter pen
- Book, Paper, Magazine or other reading material\*
- Paper work, or small handiwork\*

\*If it is a home meet that we’re hosting, you will likely be busy helping with one of the many volunteer positions and won’t need to bring these kinds of things.

Remember if you are dressed for cold weather, it gets VERY warm in the pool area! Be sure to dress in layers, or bring some lightweight cool clothing to change into.

### **The Cooler**

This is optional. If you opt to pack some food/drinks, here are some good and bad swim meet food choices:

#### **Good:**

- Gatorade, Powerade, 100% fruit juices, and water (fluids are VERY important)
- Bagels (hold the cream cheese)
- Carrot and celery sticks
- Fruit- grapes, bananas, and apples (oranges are too messy unless peeled)

Consider natural energy. Easily digestible, portable foods are your best choices.

**Bad:**

- Pop (any carbonated beverage)
- Candy and sweets (anything with heavy sugar content)
- Dairy foods (takes too long to digest)
- Greasy, heavy foods (no nutritional value)

**FLUIDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT!** Even slight dehydration can cause cramping and fatigue and a bad swim meet experience. Encourage your swimmer to sip, sip, sip all day long. Don't let them slap down a box of juice and think they're all set. This can cause cramping too. Don't worry about too much fluid; they know what to do when that happens!

Moderate your child's food intake and remember less is better. Some kids think they're hungry when really they're bored and looking for something to do (visit "the other bag"). There are some excellent nutritional tips for swimmers on this page.

**NOW THAT YOU'RE ALL PACKED...** tuck the kids in bed (all our swimmers need EXTRA sleep before a meet) and put the sleeping bag, swim bag, and "the other bag" near the front door. (You'll be glad you did this tomorrow morning!) This will help to reduce last minute rushing around and you can concentrate on getting everyone loaded in the car (take a pillow for the longer rides). You have, of course, already checked at swim practice to make sure you know the warm-up times and have planned to arrive at least 15 minutes prior.

**In the Morning...**

Scoop up your swimmer, throw the duffels in the back of the car, grab the cooler (or your wallet) and allow plenty of time to get there! Oh yeah, COFFEE, don't forget your coffee! If it's an hour drive or more, allow time for the kids to have a good breakfast (but skip the milk)

OK, --head 'em up and move 'em out!

**What do I do FIRST?**

When you first arrive, have your children go to the designated locker area and change into their swimsuit. They should take their cap, goggles, and towel and immediately report to their coach in the pool area. Now, You have a few things to do....

If this is an invitational swim meet, heat sheets should be available. Purchase one and put your name on it. Tuck it under your arm and head for the "teams area". Look for the WCY Campout Area. Here's where the sleeping bag, chairs, and "the other bag" comes into play. Lay claim to some spaces and spread your stuff out. (By the end of the day, we'll be sharing everything and stepping over each other's stuff!)

**Ok, I've got my spot, now what?:**

Don't worry about your swimmer in the pool; they'll be joining you soon. Before that chilly swimmer returns it's a good time to get out the heat sheet (see below for how to read a heat sheet) and a marker. Highlight all your swimmer's events. If there isn't a heat sheet, just look around, the events will be posted. You will find your child's name and event list listed on the WCY roster. Each child will be entered (by the coach) in 3 to 5 events and may also be participating in a relay with fellow team members. Once you find your child's event, write them down, making sure you double-check the posted event sheet so that you and your child know which events to report to.

You've probably noticed it's a bit chilly in the gym, sometimes real chilly, OK, it's freezing!! This is where those slippers or aqua socks are going to be really important!

Is your swimmer back, warmed up, and sipping a drink? Now make sure they know their events too. A very convenient place to write them down is on the back, leg, or your child's hand- Yes, this is what we do; he/she can't lose his/her hand! Remember to use a waterproof marker or pen! You will see most 10 and under kids looking like this – some of them even have added decorations! It's the one time we DO allow our kids to write on themselves! Here is an example of how we write things:

**#4, H1 L3 25 Breast**  
**(this means event 4, heat 1, lane 3 and**  
**they're swimming the 25 breast)**

**Another way to write it:**

<b>E</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>S</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25 breast</b>

**(Event 4, heat 1, lane 3, stroke - 25 breast)**

<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>50 FLY</b>
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**(Event 16, Heat 2, Lane 6, stroke - 50 fly)**

This tells your child the event number, length, and stroke he/she will be swimming. (R denotes a relay). If we have more than one relay team, the relays will be designated by the letters A, B, C, etc. Don't worry too much; your child will get a helpful reminder in the clerk of course and also on deck before they jump in the water. The important thing is that your child remains in the team area and listens for announcements as the clerk of course and workers call the event numbers.

# The Meet

## **Your swimmer is back, warm, and hydrated: you know his/her events, now what?**

If this is a meet we are hosting, head to your volunteer post. Just keep an eye on your child's event numbers so you have plenty of time to pop in the pool area and watch their heat! Don't worry, your volunteer co-workers all have the same idea – we work together to make sure we don't miss our child's events.

If we are at another team's host meet, this is a great time to scope out the facilities. Make sure you know where the clerk of course is, the restrooms and the pool area, and finally how to get back to home base – the team area (Some Y's are huge and tricky to get around)

Meanwhile back at the team camp, check in on your swimmer, keep them warm. The body uses energy trying to warm itself up and energy is something to conserve before their events! There's nothing more nerve wracking than searching for caps or goggles seconds before its time to report. If they keep their caps on, and their goggles pulled down like a necklace, they're less likely to lose these things!

Your main job at this point is to make sure your child stays in the team area between events as opposed to wandering the facility.

## **Clerk of Course, I've heard of this term, but what is it?**

Basically, the Clerk of Course is a staging area where children are gathered and put in an orderly fashion to enter the pool area. This is critical to making certain kids are lined up for the right heat and right event. The Clerk of Course is staffed by parent volunteers from the host team. Clerk of Course are only usually available at big invitationals, and for 10 and under. The staging area may be in the team area, pool bleachers or could be in another location. It will consist of several rows of chairs and some very haggard looking parents standing or sitting at a table with no voices left. **\*\*Your swimmer needs to pay attention to all announcements\*\***. Clerk of Course workers will continually announce the next event. When your child hears "FIRST Call" for the event number, he/she should check his/her hand to see if he/she is swimming in this event. This is a skill swimmers should be taught early on in their career, and one he/she should be encouraged to be responsible for on their own. If your child is not paying attention to the calls, he/she could miss an event and will be extremely disappointed. When your child's event is called, he/she should march over to the Clerk of Course and listen for his/her name. Your swimmer will be shown to a seat that marks the swimming order. Once a child is seated in Clerk of Course, he/she should remain there until escorted into the pool area.

**Ok, I know what Clerk of Course is, my child is sitting there now, where do I go?**

Head for the pool to finally see what you came here for – your “fish” in the water! People are constantly moving in and out of the pool area and you will notice there is a lot of activity going on. There generally aren’t any reserved “team” sections, but there will be a viewing area for spectators. Find a seat where you’re comfortable and resist the temptation to go see your child (you aren’t allowed behind the starting blocks anyway). After your child finishes his/her event, they are to report to their coach on deck. This allows the coach an opportunity to give your child feedback. After that they will head back to the gym, where you can meet him/her and give those much-deserved kudos! Remember that the primary focus is to have FUN! Your child will constantly learn and improve some aspect of their swimming.

**What is the purpose of swimmer disqualifications (DQ’s)?**

It takes time and lots of practice to master the technical aspects of competitive swimming. All throughout your child’s swimming career, he/she will increase his/her knowledge and improve his/her starts, strokes, turns and finishes. During a sanctioned swim meet, officials and judges monitor the competition to ensure that starts, strokes, turns, and finishes are done in accordance with rule requirements. Some latitude is granted to your younger swimmers, but it is important that proper stroke technique be learned early in a swimmer’s career.

ALL kids will, at some time in their career, experience the disappointment of being disqualified (DQ’d) in an event. Remember that this is a learning opportunity and the DQ is an excellent tool to help your child. (Children rarely repeat the same error.) Your child’s mistake will be explained and he/she will be encouraged to correct their technique. Though it may be disappointing, you can help your child by offering support and encouragement to always do their best.

**HEY, my child did pretty well!**

Of course your child did well, after all these little fish have been practicing for weeks, months, and years!

Ribbons and medals are awarded at many meets. Typically, they are awarded for the 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> place finishers in each event. If your child swam very well in his/her event, he/she may have qualified to receive an award. You’ve probably gathered that parent volunteers are extremely important to a successful swim team. Here’s another example. During the swim meet one of the many behind the scenes jobs is the Award Committee. As events are finished and scored (by parent volunteers), the place finishers are recorded on labels and delivered to more parent volunteers. (These volunteers are probably hidden behind closed doors somewhere to allow for peace and quiet as they sort through the hundreds of ribbons and/or medals.) Depending on the size of the meet, this process can take 2-4 hours to complete. Once the committee finishes the task of applying the labels, the awards are delivered



to the team head coaches for presentation to the swimmers. (Typically 2-4 days after the conclusion of the meet.) Our team distributes dual meet awards during the season. Coaches will give these to the kids at practice or look for them in the Family Folders. We will save the awards from Championships and present those at the end of the season banquet.

## **After the Meet**

### **You made it!**

Give yourself a pat on the back! YOU survived a swim meet!! The day was long, the races are over, and everyone was a winner! You made some new friends and learned more about the sport of swimming. While your swimmer is in the shower changing, gather up your stuff making sure that you've got everything you came with.

Drive home safely!

**See you next time at the pool!**