

WAVES Swim Team and

The COMPETITION

The Waves swimming staff does not see the person who places first in an event as the only winner. We' would rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: concentration, good listening skills, and a willingness to work toward goals.

Swimming, as in all sports, is not an end in itself, but rather a vehicle we use to teach children life skills – and inevitably how to reach their potential. We use sport as organized play to demonstrate and measure ones abilities. Seen in that light, winning without learning is far from our desired intention. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most seconds. The real critical measure is who learned the most from the competitive experience.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records, and other material benefits. They will however consistently demonstrate the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and will have an enhanced self- image. These are the things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential, and possess the ability to make a significant contribution to the world they live in.

The coaches, an integral part of the whole experience, dedicate their unpaid time toward coaching the swimmers. How fortunate we are to have coaches who care enough to take their own time to help develop these skills in our children.

SWIM SEASONS

The swim year is divided into three seasons. The Fall season runs from late-August to mid-November. The Winter season begins in March and goes through mid-June. The summer season runs form mid-June to mid-August. There are generally several swim meets during each season and participation is optional.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

Waves Swimming engages in a multi-level competition program with United States Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

1. We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance to improved performance. All the coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has both a "good" and a "bad" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other

- competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the coaching staff.
3. A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.
 4. Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging, goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.
 5. Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Very often a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

Swim Meet Basics



Swimmers begin their events by diving off "blocks," or platforms at the end of the pool. Many blocks have a handle at the bottom where swimmers hang on before they start backstroke events.

Have you ever been to a swim meet? It's usually a full day but events move quickly. Crowds yell and cheer on their favorite swimmers. Here are some of the things you might see at a swim meet.

Events and heats

An event features a certain stroke over a set distance. For example, a swimmer might swim a 100-yard freestyle. If there are more swimmers than there are lanes in the pool, there will be "heats." If there are 12 swimmers in the 100-yard

freestyle but only 10 lanes, there might be two heats of six swimmers.

The competition

Swimmers may swim in order based on their "seed times." This means that swimmers with similar times in an event will compete against each other. At some meets, swimmers are grouped by age.

What do swimmers wear?

Boys usually wear tight-fitting, short racing suits, or "jammers," which are a little longer. Girls wear one-piece suits.

Some swimmers wear caps to control their hair. This also helps them to move through the water faster. We require our swimmers to wear the 'Waves' swim cap for meets. Swimmers also wear goggles to protect their eyes from the chemicals in the pool.

The officials

At a swim meet, you may see:

- a Head Referee, who enforces the rules and makes sure all the other officials are being fair;
- a Head Starter, who sounds a horn or shoots a cap gun to start a race;
- a Stroke and Turn judge, who watches to make sure the stroke is being done correctly; and who makes sure the swimmers start, finish and turn correctly at the end of the lane.
- a Meet Marshall, a person that watches to insure everyone is safe on deck and in the pool

What does a coach do?

A Waves coach – or sometimes more than one – is present at a meet not only to provide moral support and keep swimmers apprised of the meet's schedule, the coach also is there to remind swimmers how to maximize their potential both physically and mentally as they compete. The coach is present to help swimmers understand how to maximize meet performance.

Because many coaches recognize that the time just before a swim and just after a swim are prime moments for effective teaching. The athlete's attention can be focused on the task at hand and the learning moment is right. A meet coach helps give the swimmer confidence, strength, and determination.

So what are some of the elements of the great meet coach?

#1. Confidence. A meet coach is "comfortable" in the atmosphere of the meet. When the swimmers see this, they will also be comfortable.

#2. The ability to communicate simply and clearly. Every swim should have a single, solitary purpose. "We want you to swim this in a negative split fashion, that is, swim the back half of the race faster than the first half. Do that by picking up your arm tempo and your kick to change gears." A good meet coach expresses a clear, concise, measurable, and objective look at what to do in the swim.

Second, it tells the athlete the PROCESS to use to accomplish the task. "Pick up arm tempo and your kick." It asks the athlete to focus on process rather than just result.

Third, it is entirely in the ability of the athlete, not depending on his competition doing anything in particular or not doing anything.

Before the swim, the athlete "stops by" the coach on the way to the blocks for the last minute reminder. Sometimes a question "OK, now what did we say you wanted to do on this one?" is the best way to handle this.

This step is crucial at all ages from 6 years of age through very capable seniors. It teaches the child to be focused on process rather than results, and it helps focus the swimmer.

The coach's manner during this brief conversation is critical as well, though it may be very different based on coaching and personality styles.

#3. Evaluation. Immediately after the swim, the athlete should return to the coach first, and review their swim and results. The coach may ask "how was that?" (an open ended invitation to speak or vent). The coach may ask specific questions... "how did you feel on that last 25, and did you know why you felt that way?"

A good meet coach is positive in feedback and uses language carefully. Finally, the coach will finish with: "Ok, that's over, what's the next event?" This establishes the fact that one "experiment" is now concluded, and it's time to focus on the next one.

ATTENDING A SWIM MEET

What parents and swimmers need to know when attending a swim meet

Attending a swim meet should be fun and exciting for swimmers since it is a chance to see the progress they have made at practice. Meets are a team activity where everyone rallies together to cheer each other on.

Meets are inevitably an all day event and parents should be prepared for a full day. Families normally show up early and plan to stay the duration. When swimmers are not swimming, they can cheer on fellow teammates, watch other swimmers swim, or bring a book/s, games whatever is needed to get them through until their event. The team will generally set up a Waves tent at the meet as a gathering point.

Suggested Items to Bring to a Meet

Aside from your swimmer and lots of enthusiasm, here is a list of recommended items to bring to the meets. This may vary depending on weather, but a general motto for meets is "more is better."

1. Extra towels – one towel is often not enough
2. Sunscreen
3. Warm clothing to change in and out of between events. Some pools have showers so that a swimmer can change into dry clothes for the trip home.
4. Warm shoes, socks, slippers.
5. Sleeping bags and/or blankets are a good idea to help swimmers keep warm. As the year progresses it gets colder and colder so warmth is a key.
6. Chair/chairs to sit on. (It can be long day and you may not want to sit on the ground or bleachers for the full time.)
7. A cooler with food/drinks. It is a good idea to pack a lunch and small healthy snacks to munch on between events. Water and sport drinks are good too. In addition, you can always buy food and drinks at the meet but you have less control of what is available. The home team always sets up a snack bar with warm and cold food, as well as drinks and Coffee/tea – so a little extra cash is always a good idea as well.

8. Games, reading material, and homework. Be certain to bring whatever your child needs to pass the time between events – and for yourself as well. Children tend to always have a good time being there together.
9. Goggles and cap. Bring your goggles and team cap. If you forget, we always have caps at the meet. For goggles, Norcal usually has a stand where they sell most anything you could need/want for the swimmer.

Timing duties at a Meet

We ask that parents volunteer for timing duties for some portion of the day. Cecelia is the person to contact in order to sign up for a timing slot. Timing is a relatively easy job and a good way to meet other parents from our team and other teams. It also serves to reinforce your commitment to the team – your children and their teammates. It is often one of the best seats in the house and timers are very well looked after by the host team with drinks, snacks, lunch, more snacks, etc. Timers are crucial to the event. Without them the meet could not be run successfully so they are treated well!

Timers should ideally know the shift they are working before the day of the meet.

Emergencies – when a swimmer is unable to attend a meet:

In the event of an emergency or illness, it is important to call either the coaches or Cecilia. If you are having trouble getting your child to a meet, there are always families who would be willing to carpool and/or Coach Kevin is happy to take swimmers with him though he leaves very early. Coaches expect swimmers who sign up for a meet to attend unless notice has otherwise been given to the coach.

Telephone Numbers to call if your child cannot attend a meet he/she is scheduled for:

Kevin Twohey 953-0771 (cell)

Cecilia Raffo 967-9260 (home)

When to Arrive

There's usually about 60 minutes of warm-up before each meet. It's a good idea to get there for warm-up so you can find out what you're swimming, meet other swimmers on your relay teams, and familiarize yourself with the pool. Plan on practicing a few 'starts' off the blocks at a pool. Each set of 'blocks' are different and may 'feel' different than the ones at your home pool.

Important: It is also a good idea for a swimmer to check in at a meet a minimum of one hour before their registered event. If a swimmer checks in at a meet and misses an event, he/she is disqualified for the next event and/or the rest of the events that day.

The coaches are usually pretty busy during warm-up, so it's best to find out ahead of time what sort of warm-up they want you to do.

Results can always be found on www.usaswimming.com – type in your child's name to see their meet results. Also, results should be posted on www.pacswim.org A profile is normally entered for each swim team participant so that progress can easily be tracked.