



I . C . S W I M C L U B

SWIM MEET CHEAT SHEET

By Cindy Nacson-Schechter

Based on input from Orcas coaches, parents, and swimmers and is written with unending gratitude to the many people who patiently answered all of my questions over and over again.

Going to your first swim meet can be anxiety provoking and exciting at the same time. When we first started attending swim meets, I asked a million questions of very patient parents around me. It took a while for me to feel less intimidated by meets; I've put this "cheat sheet" together to help you get the lay of the land ("lay of the water?"). It is in no way complete, and, unless noted, does not necessarily reflect the views of USA Swimming, CT Swimming, the Orcas' coaches or other team parents. Any questions or comments should be directed to me at cnacson@gmail.com.

The official ORCAS Swim Meet Protocol can be found on the Orcas website: <http://www.eteamz.com/orcasswimclub1>. Please read it in conjunction with this "cheat sheet" to see exactly what your Coaches expect from your swimmers.

BASIC MEET INFO

MEETS

USA swimming meets are divided by age and gender:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| - 8 & under. | - 11-12. | - 13-14. |
| - 9-10. | - 12 & under. | - 15 & over. |

SHORT COURSE vs. LONG COURSE

Short Course

- Pools are either 25 yards or 25 meters
- Season begins in September and usually runs through March or April

Long Course

- Pools are (usually) 50 meters
- Season begins in April and runs through August

TIME STANDARDS

Time Standards can be found on the Orcas website, as well as the websites for CT Swimming and USA Swimming. When a swimmer makes the Time Standard for his/her age group, they can progress through competitions at the following levels:

AGE GROUPS, STATES, REGIONALS, NATIONALS

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

USAswimming.org is a terrific website that has a lot of resources for you to explore. In addition to general information, there are sections specifically for parents and for swimmers. Articles range from rulebooks and drills to nutrition and camps.

CTswim.org offers information relevant to the meets your swimmers will participate in. Click on "Meet Information" for directions, times, etc. Click on "Meet Announcements" for the season's schedule. "Meet Results" are usually updated quickly and you can search for your swimmer's information through that link.

Also on the CTswim website, you can click on "[Connecticut FAST](#)" in the upper right-hand corner and find out your swimmer's best times plus ~10 more other queries.

SWIM BASICS

(Adapted from USA Swimming website)

BEFORE THE MEET STARTS

- Your swimmer needs to be on the pool deck (with swimsuit, cap, and goggles on) **15 minutes** prior to the start of warm-up.
- Some parking lots are far from the actual pool. In order to be on time, allow extra time to walk from the parking area.
- Bear in mind that coaches need to hand in a "scratch sheet" prior to the start of the meet session. If you're going to be late, be sure to notify the coach or your swimmer will be scratched from the meet.
- Look for the Orcas team banner and have your swimmer bring their things over. (Parents are not usually allowed on the pool deck, so your child should be able to carry his/her belongings by him/herself.)
- Make sure your child checks in with the Coach/es! (While your child does that, look for other Orcas parents (or find another place to sit) and get yourself situated.)
- Once "checked in", Coach will usually write the swimmers' event-number and heat on his/her hand. This helps swimmers remember which events they are in and which lane they will swim in.
- Warm-ups take place before the coaches know the heat/lane assignments, as the heat sheets take some time to be produced (depending on the scratches).
- Warm-up times are assigned to each team. Coach/es will tell the team where to go and when. They will give your swimmer warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team.
- During warm-ups, timers will meet with Officials and learn their lane assignments. See section on Timers for more information on timing.
- After warm-up, swimmers go back to the area where the team is sitting and wait there until his/her first event is called. Cheering on teammates is great, but it's also a good time for bathroom breaks, getting a drink, etc.)
- The meet usually starts about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
- According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to a coach. He or she in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
- **Psych Sheet or Heat Sheets.** A psych sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time (up to the date that the entry was submitted) in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event. A Heat sheet may be available close to the start of the meet that lists the actual heat and lane a swimmer will be competing in. (Also see "How to Read a Heat Sheet.")

DURING THE MEET

- Swimmers need to pay attention to the Event numbers so that they don't miss their events! (Parents need to pay attention, too, or you'll miss your child's race!)
- Most meets are computerized, so you can see event and heat numbers on the board.
- Generally, girls events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered.
- You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event. (Divide number of swimmers by number of lanes in the pool for approximate number of heats; number will change if a lot of swimmers scratch.)
- The swimmer swims his or her race.
- After each swim:
 - He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
 - The swimmer should then go immediately to his/her coach who will discuss the swim with him/her. Some coaches may wish to talk with the swimmer before her recovery swim. (*Recovery swim* is available only at meets with the additional swim area.)
- Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - Positive comments or praise
 - Suggestions for improvement
 - Positive comments
- Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - Tell him how great he did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with him. You need to tell him how proud you are and what a great job he did.
 - Send him back to the team area and relax.
- This is another good time to hit the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
- The swimmer now waits until his next event is called and starts the procedure again.
- When a swimmer has completed all of her events she and her parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving in case your swimmer is included on a relay (usually the last events of a meet). It is not fair to other swimmers who have stayed to swim a relay that includes your swimmer and she is not there.

AWARDS:

In many meets, swimmers may receive a rubber duck (or other token) for placing first in his/her heat. Ribbons/medals are usually given to the coach at the end of the meet and are then handed out to the swimmers at practice during the week.

AFTER THE MEET:

- Results are usually posted on somewhere in the facility. Later, results can be found at CTswim.org and on the Orcas website. They are posted on the Orcas bulletin board a day or two after the meet.
- You can go on CTswim.org and click on "**Connecticut FAST**" in the upper right-hand corner and find out your swimmer's best times (plus ~10 more other queries).

WHAT TO BRING

FOR SWIMMERS:

Per the team protocol, your swimmer needs to bring:

- ORCAS bathing suit
- 2 team caps
- 2 pairs of goggles
- 2 full water bottles
- 2 towels
- A light, healthy snack
- Dry clothes to wear home

As parents, we also suggest that s/he bring a chair, something to do or read, and flip-flops/shower shoes. Team areas are not under direct supervision, so we advise against bringing anything valuable (iPods, video games, etc.).

Remember that parents are not allowed on the pool deck during a meet (unless timing or working in another official capacity), so be sure your swimmer can carry his/her belongings by him/herself!

FOR YOURSELF:

Bring chair(s) to sit on. Some venues do have bleachers, but they can fill up quickly (and they aren't always comfortable!). We often leave our chairs in the car if we're parked nearby, so that we can easily get them if needed.

Wear layers – it is usually warm, if not hot, inside. Dress for it!

Water & snacks – There is always food to be found during meets. Since the IC is so small, we cannot generally host meets; purchasing snacks at a meet helps support the team that is hosting. That said, you should always feel free to bring your own snacks and drinks.

Bring something to do - book/magazine/knitting/Sudoku/etc. Even short meets will have downtime.

Something for young siblings to do – Some venues offer very little room for little ones to be active. Bring something to keep them occupied. And remember to dress little ones in layers, too.

Money and pen/highlighter – Heat sheets are available for purchase (anywhere from \$3-10) and it's helpful to highlight your swimmer's events. (Info about Heat Sheets is below.)

ABOUT TIMING

At some point you will be asked to time during one or more meets. Depending on the meet, two or three timers will be needed in each lane for the duration of the meet. We usually try to split timing during a given meet so that nobody is standing around for hours upon end. Depending on how many meets your swimmer attends, be prepared to time at least twice during swim season.

What do timers do?

- Timers sign in at the beginning of warm-up to ensure that the meet organizer is aware of all the volunteers.
- Prior to the start of the meet, Timers will be asked to attend a meeting. At the meeting, you will be given a stopwatch and shown how to use it. You will then be assigned to a lane and a head timer for that lane will be selected.
- The head timer writes down the times from all the timers for his/her lane and submits them to Runners.
- “Runners” collect the written times and deliver them to be recorded.
- If your timer malfunctions, you hit the wrong button, or you forget to hit the stop button, there are backup timers who can be called over to finish timing in your place for that heat.
- When the meet begins, pay close attention to the Starter in order to begin timing. Watch for the flash from the strobe-light (starting-light) to immediately start your watch. If there's no flash, listen for the starting beep instead.
- Lean over the end wall to stop your timing immediately you see the swimmer touch the wall. Then report that time to the Head Timer.
- If there are touch pads in use, you may also have a separate Button in your other hand that you simultaneously press but only for the finishing touch.
- Again, all this will be explained to you during the Timers Meeting.

VOLUNTEERS

A great way to volunteer is to become a CT Swim Official and officiate at the meets. Officials are always in demand! You can become an Official by attending training sessions during the season. See Ausra or Kate DeSimone for more details.

In addition to providing timers during meets, there are other ways to participate in a swim meet. Speak to Ausra about other ways you can help out.

The **Orcas Parents Association** works to support the Coaches and the swimmers. Organizing pizza for the team, handing out swimsuits, helping with spiritwear, and planning the end-of-year dinner are just some of the ways you can volunteer. Get involved!!!

HEAT (A.K.A. PSYCH) SHEETS— WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW TO READ THEM

by Barbara Lusardi of the Hudson Area Swim Association

A heat sheet is your guide to know when and where to watch for your child in the pool. Also called a program, you will purchase a heat sheet for anywhere between \$2 and \$15 depending on the size of the meet. Heat sheets are good for the entire meet, so be sure to bring it with you on the second day!

You may want to bring your highlighters so you can highlight your child's name and the names of other swimmers from the team. A standard ink pen is also useful to write down the final times.

Below is an example of a page from a heat sheet. I've keyed a brief description to each of the colored letters.

A

Event 114 Boys 13-14 100 Yard Backstroke

B 59.49 ZONE
1:02.09 CH
1:05.39 A
1:14.69 B
1:27.19 C

C

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 Finals Starts at 01:59 PM				
3	Halseth, Gunnar	13	HASA-MN	D NT
4	Maki, Sean W	14	HOP-MN	1:29.65 slower
5	Gordeyev, Vadimir V	13	AQJT-MN	1:29.78
Heat 2 Finals Starts at 02:01 PM				
1	Mathweson, Thomas J	13	HASA-MN	1:23.21 slow
2	Schuster, Christian S	14	AQJT-MN	1:17.11 ↑
3	Bohm, John D	13	UN-AQ-MN	1:12.52
4	Youngdahl, Preston R	13	AQJT-MN	58.74 fast
5	Parvi, Sean E	14	NLA-MN	1:08.31
6	Lester, Brad C	13	HOP-MN	1:14.34
7	Haack, Collin M	13	NLA-MN	1:18.00 ↓
8	Hudson, Nick S	13	HASA-MN	1:28.64 slow

Event 115 Girls 400 Yard IM

E 4:48.09 ZONE
5:00.99 CH
5:16.19 A
6:01.39 B
7:01.49 C

Lane	Name	Age	Team	Seed Time
Heat 1 Finals Starts at 02:03 PM				
2	Jelmeland, Jordan	18	MYWO	5:59.00
3	McAvoy, Ariana P	15	HOP-MN	5:24.28
4	Beardsley, Allison S	15	MV-MN	5:00.57
5	Stanchik, Rachel, M	16	HASA-MN	5:06.55
6	Bhagyam, Chella R	12	HASA-MN	5:36.51

A. Event number, gender, age, distance, stroke

B. Qualifying times for each level

C. Listing of swimmers--
Ordered slowest to fastest in both heats and lane assignments. Slow heats at the beginning; slow swimmers in the outside lanes. Fast swimmers in later heats and in the center lanes.

Note 11 swimmers entered to swim--
3 in first heat; remaining 8 in second and final heat.
Starting time is approximate

Lane assignments on left, name, age, team, seed time

D. NT = No Time recorded for this event
Otherwise, best time is entered

E. Only 1 heat for Event 115

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RULES PRIMER

(This article is taken from the Parents page of USAswimming.org.)

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules that is observed by an official, a **disqualification (DQ)** will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event.

A disqualification may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsman-like conduct.

DQs are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

Freestyle: Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.

Backstroke: Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.

Breaststroke: An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

Butterfly: Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

For specific language on any technical rules consult the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book.

Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee. The rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for the disqualification. If your child is disqualified in an event, be supportive rather than critical.

For beginning swimmers, a disqualification should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke need to be corrected. They should be considered in the same light as an incorrect answer in schoolwork-they point out areas that need further practice.

Disqualifications are necessary to keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, coach, and parent can make a positive situation out of the disqualification.

Looking for more? Check out [USA Swimming's Rules and Regulations Page](#).

ORCAS Swim Meet Protocol (from the website)

- **Please arrive at the pool 15 minutes before the start of Warm – up.**

- This is the time for everyone to find their way to the pool, get organized, and ready to swim.

- Coaches need to hand in a “scratch sheet” prior to the start of the meet session. If swimmers arrive late (without informing their coach in advance), the swimmer will be **scratched** (def: to be scratched is to be taken out of the meet and not put back.)

- **Come Prepared! DOUBLE UP!!!**

- Be sure to pack the following in your swim bag (Label all items):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team bathing suit | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 towels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 team caps | <input type="checkbox"/> One light, healthy snack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 pair of goggles | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry clothes to wear home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 full water bottles | |

- Team Bags are to be kept by the swimmer on the pool deck, NOT in the stands or in the locker rooms.

- **NO visiting spectator stands, bathroom or Snack Bar without PERMISSION from Coach.**

- It is very important that the Coaches know where their swimmers are at all times. We do not want any swimmers missing their events simply because they left the deck without their coach knowing.

- **Parents are not allowed on the pool deck during a meet (unless volunteering to work)** - The team area is designated by an ORCAS Team banner, so it is very clear where your child is to report to.