



## SWIM MEETS WITH HSA

Welcome to the world of swim meets! Swim meets are an excellent opportunity to learn good sportsmanship and self-discipline while developing athleticism and competitiveness. They allow our swimmers to gauge their improvements by completing in events, dropping their times, and competing against all levels of swimmers within HSA and from other clubs.

If this is your first experience with meets, you will find that they can be fun, exciting, and perhaps a bit overwhelming at first. If you have swum in summer league meets, you will find that there are differences in summer league and USA Swimming sanctioned meets. This meet packet is designed to introduce you to swimming meets with HSA. The information from this packet comes from HSA and USA Swimming. If you have additional questions, please ask your coach. HSA parents will also be happy to help you.

### General Information, Rules, and Responsibilities

- Swimmers, coaches, parents, and guests are expected to display good sportsmanship at all times.
- Support and encouragement for HSA swimmers is appreciated! Please cheer on all of the HSA swimmers.
- HSA's meet schedule is posted on the team's web site ([www.swimhsa.org](http://www.swimhsa.org)) as soon as Coach Matt Webber sets it. Meets sponsored by HSA ("home meets") are competed at the Brahan Springs Natatorium. Meets sponsored by other clubs ("away meets" or "team travel meets") are competed at the sponsoring club's pool of choice. Each swimmer is responsible for getting to the meets, and for securing lodging for team travel meets. Travel information such as directions and team hotels is provided on HSA's web site.
- Generally, USA Swimming sanctioned meets are quite different from summer meets. Individual swimmers can swim 5 individual events each day. In addition, most meets do not give team awards, even though we participate as a team. Therefore, individual points are scored, but team points are not.
- In meets that are run in two sessions, swimmers who are 12 and under **USUALLY BUT NOT ALWAYS** swim in the morning and swimmers who are 13 and older swim in the afternoon. Check the order of events on the meet invitation (which is always posted on the web site) to find the session in which you are swimming.
- **For home meets, HSA parents are REQUIRED to volunteer to work one session for every day the family has a swimmer entered in the meet.** If you are unable to volunteer, a buy-out of your commitment for \$50 per session is available. It is each family's responsibility to SIGN UP to volunteer or BUY-OUT prior to the meet. No experience? No problem! There are many jobs, and we will happily train you! Please contact the meet director through HSA's web site or check the bulletin board for volunteer sign up. Remember – when everyone does his/her part, our meets run smoothly, our swim club is successful, and this benefits ALL of the swimmers.
- Flash photography is **NOT** allowed during the meet. Events are started with a horn and a strobe. A flash from a camera can cause swimmers to false start. Non-flash photography is allowed at any time.
- According to USA Swimming rules, parents and guests **ARE NOT** allowed on the pool deck during the meet for insurance purposes. HSA can be sanctioned for allowing parents on the deck. In addition, people crowded around the pool make it harder for the coaches to watch their swimmers, officials to officiate the meet, and swimmers to get to the blocks for their events. Yes, you will see parents ignoring this rule, but for the sake of a safe, fun, well-run meet, please don't be one of them. For most pools, it is obvious where the off-limits spaces are.

In general, parents should stay away from the starting block area, away from the turn end of the pool, away from the meet officials, and at least three feet away from the side of the pool. At the Nat, it's a little tricky because the starting blocks for events that are 25 yards in distance are near the bleachers. In this case, do not go inside or crowd the ropes. The kids need space, and the stroke and turn judges need to be able to see.

- Parents and swimmers, if you have a question about a time, placement, or disqualification, DO NOT approach a meet official with the question; talk to your coach. Only the coach can inquire, ask for clarification, or protest a time or referee's decision.

### **What to Bring to a Meet**

- Swim suit, goggles, and HSA swim cap. If you wear a swim cap, it must be an HSA cap. If you do not have an HSA cap, you may get one at the meet from your coach. You will be billed \$5 for the cap.
- Towels, at least two per swimmer. Three is better. Keep one dry until the end of the day's events.
- Clothes to put on over swim suit between events. Swimmers can easily become chilled. Good choices (depending on the season) include warm-up suits, flannel pants, sweat shirts, shorts, T-shirts, and jackets.

**NOTE:** Parents, although swimmers can get chilled, you will probably get hot. It is typically warm and humid in the pool area no matter where the meet is or what season it is. If it is cool or cold outside, dress in layers.

- Blanket or sleeping bag for swimmers to sit on.
- Chairs for parents not wishing to sit in the bleachers.
- Food. Swimmers will be at the meet for several hours. They will expend a lot of energy. There is no magic list as to what to eat. Carbohydrates for energy are suggested for fast swimming; heavy, fatty, or rich foods are not. Examples of good snacks are pretzels, crackers, dry cereal, fruit, granola bars, trail mix, and sports drinks like Gatorade. Snacks must fit inside of a swim bag. **Coolers ARE NOT allowed in the Nat.** There is always a concession stand at each meet where you may buy food and beverages.
- Water. Swimmers need to stay hydrated. Although it is hard to tell that they are sweating, they are losing water. Bring a water bottle filled with water, and drink water throughout the meet.
- Games/music. Bring something to occupy your time when not swimming. Examples of things to bring are electronic games, cards, travel games, coloring books, personal CD or MP3 players with headphones and upbeat music.
- Sharpie marker to write event and heat numbers on the swimmers' arms.
- Highlighter to mark your swimmer's events in the heat sheet.
- Money. You may wish to buy something from the concession stand. Meet apparel is also available for sale. Vendors selling swim supplies are usually at the meet. All America Swim Supply will be at HSA meets. Heat sheets are also available at meets. They typically cost between \$5 and \$15, depending on the size of the meet.

### **Before the Meet**

- Arrive at the meet about 15 minutes before warm-up time. Warm-up times are usually posted on the web site; you can also check with your coach. It is very important for the swimmers to warm up their bodies in preparation for racing. Please be on time.
- Find a place to put your stuff. The team usually sits together, so look for familiar faces. At home meets, HSA swimmers usually spread blankets and put their bags on the floor near the girls locker room. Some of the older kids sit in the bleaches nearest the girls' locker room.
- After dropping off their stuff, swimmers in suits with their goggles and caps should find their coaches for warm up instructions.
- While the swimmers are warming up, parents can buy heat sheets, which will be available in the concession area. The heat sheet lists each event. The events are divided into heats. Within each heat, the heat sheet lists each swimmer by lane, and his/her seedtime.
- The meet normally begins about 15 minutes after the completion of warm ups. It helps some swimmers to write their event, heat, and lane numbers on their hands or arms with a Sharpie.

## During the Meet

- Swimmers are responsible for getting to their events on time. Parents of younger swimmers need to help them determine when and where they need to be.

At some meets, younger swimmers report to the Bull Pen (or clerk of course) before their events. At home meets, HSA runs the bull pen for younger swimmers. Parents, make sure your swimmers are at the bull pen on time. Keep up with the meet, and have your swimmers to the bull pen by the beginning of the event previous to the one in which your child is swimming.

An announcement will be made as to what event should be at the bull pen. However, it can be so loud at the meets that you might miss the announcement. Again, the best thing to do is to keep up with the meet. Volunteers at the bull pen will line up the swimmers and take them to their lanes.

Older swimmers are responsible for getting to the correct block at the right time.

- After swimming the race, the swimmer must immediately report to his/her coach to discuss the swimmer's performance and to get warm down instructions.
- After any warm down, the swimmer returns to the seating area to await his/her next event.
- After a swimmer has completed all of his/her individual events for the day, he/she must report to his/her coach to find out if he/she will be swimming on a relay. **DO NOT LEAVE THE NAT UNTIL CHECKING WITH THE COACH ABOUT RELAYS!** It is unfair to your teammates if they wait to swim on a relay that you are expected to swim on, but you do not show up to swim.
- After swimming all individual events and relays for the day, the swimmer may leave.

## What is My Time, and What Place Did I Come In?

- Swimmers' times are collected in three ways: 1) on stopwatches by the volunteer timers, 2) electronically by a plunger that is pressed by the timer, and 3) by the swimmer hitting the underwater touch pad at the end of the race. The touch pad time is what is displayed digitally on the Electronic Board. **None of the individual times are official until officially posted.**

Why are so many times taken? It's the fairest way to place the meet. The touch pad time will be the most accurate way to determine time, and thereby place. However, sometimes (although rarely) the electronics will fail or a swimmer will not hit the touch pad hard enough for the pad to register the completion of the race (this happens often, especially with younger swimmers). If all three times are not within a certain range, the swimmer's official time will be determined by the predetermined method, throwing out the time that is "out of family".

The thing to keep in mind is that the official time is the posted time. HSA posts event results in the lobby of the Nat. A swimmer may ask the timer what his/her time was, but remember that it is not the official time, although it should be close. You may be certain that your swimmer won his/her event, but the Electronic Board says fifth. Your swimmer may not have hit the touch pad hard enough. If that's the case, the touch pad time will be "out of family" with the other two times, and the official time will not include the touch pad time. Check the posted results. If you disagree with the time/placement that is posted, talk with your coach.

## What if My Swimmer Has a Disappointing Event or is Disqualified?

- One of the wonderful things about swimming is that there are many ways to succeed. Swimmers need to have different types of goals. Everyone always has the goal of winning; however, placement goals are the hardest to achieve because they depend on the performance of other swimmers, which you cannot control. All swimmers should have personal performance goals, such as making a goal time, swimming a personal best time, or even completing a new event. Even with different goals, a swimmer can have a disappointing race. Parents, try to keep your race post-mortems to a minimum. Your child's coach will discuss with your child what needs to be improved. Help your child understand that he/she will not always swim his/her best race every race. Help your child focus on the next event. If your child is disqualified, please let your child know that it happens to every swimmer, even the most experienced, at some time or another. Swimmers were disqualified in the Olympics. Please do not blame the officials. The officials must judge the events according to USA Swimming rules, regardless of the age or experience of the swimmer.