



A Parent's Guide to Understanding and Surviving Swim Meets - Marlins Style

This guide has been put together by a few parents who have spent much fun, exciting hours supporting our swimmers. We thought by sharing our knowledge with you, that you will be better prepared at meets both for yourself and for your swimmer.

1. Swim Meet Notice Comes Out

- a. Your swim club will send out a notice to you, asking if your child is going to participate in the swim meet.
- b. After you have made the decision to attend the meet, and responded back to both the coach and transportation member, the coaches decide what swim events the kids will swim.
- c. You will receive an email with your fee's that are due. Each swimmer has to pay per race they are swimming, plus a deck fee. This is standard at all meets
- d. You will receive an email approximately one week prior to the meet, with the meet package. This package is prepared by the hosting team and contains information such as location of the pool, warm up times, schedule of events.

2. Swimmer Preparation Prior to Meet

- a. A well-rested swimmer is better prepared to swim in competition. The coaches usually recommend that bed-time is backed up 1/2 hour for the week prior to the meet.
- b. Prepare early in the week, talk about what your swimmer needs, such as extra suits, dry clothes, goggles, caps that need to be put into swimmers bag.
- c. Start gathering the food/drink items you need to bring for yourself and your swimmer. Trust me...the night before is not a good time to run around the house gathering all that you need to bring!
- d. While healthy eating is recommended all of the time, it is especially important prior to and during meets. It's never wrong to follow the Canada Food Guide making sure that carbs (to provide energy) and protein (for growth, maintenance and repair) are included. Pick foods that are easy to digest and nutritious making sure to include all of the food groups in all meals.

3. Swim Meet Details

- a. Understand where the meet is and how to get there ahead of time. Know what time the meet begins and when the warm up starts.
- b. For certain swim meets, there is a "psych sheet" – this is put together by the hosting swim club, and is found on the hosting clubs website. It shows all the swimmers in the swim meet by swim event and times. Often you have to google the hosting swim club's website, find the meet section to get this psych sheet.
- c. There is also an app called "Meet Mobile" that can used on your phone/ipad etc. This app is free however to obtain results you must purchase. Most clubs are now using this app to post results. It can be purchased monthly or yearly and is



rather inexpensive. This app is very detail and easy to use. Highly recommended!!

- d. When the swimmers arrive at the pool for the warm up, they will go off to the change room to change or go meet their team on deck. It is a little daunting, when your child leaves you, to go change or find their team on deck, as there are many swimmers all doing the same thing! You may be concerned if they will they find their team etc. Have no fear, they will!!! The team will have an area on deck where they meet and stay for the entire meet. The swimmers do need to stay on deck with their team and coach. Therefore make sure they have all that they will need for that session in their bag.
- e. The coaches have the event/heat/lane listing of their clubs swimmers. It is the most up to date listing. After the warm up the coach will have a session with all swimmers to talk about details of the meet. It is very important that all swimmer stay on deck after their warm up and prior to the meet beginning to hear what the coach has to say. Coaches will tell the swimmers what event/heat and lane they are in. If I know the events ahead of time, I put a piece of paper in my swimmers bag that shows what events, heats, lane they are in – however...make sure the swimmer checks with the coach, as sometimes this changes the day of the event!
- f. Generally meets have multiple sessions which is decided by age. For example you can have 12 and under, then 13 and over. Each session has it own warmups so finding out which session your child is in prior to arriving to the pool is important.
- g. Swim meets aren't like most sports, you don't have your round robin then finals. Only bigger meets that you must qualify for work that way. Most meets the swimming will race the specific race only once. Meets that span over 2 days will have the races divided over both days.

4. Swim Meet Sessions

- a. There are a few different types of meets, and depending upon the sessions, you may have to be there early for the morning session, 7am warm up for example. Or, you may have to be there for an afternoon or evening session. Using the Psyc guide, you will know what sessions you need to be at and be able to plan accordingly.
- b. Meals – if you are at an afternoon session, you will find that they end late, and by time you get out of the pool, it might be close to 6pm. Again, be prepared. The last thing you want is to take your swimmer and rest of family out for a late supper and not get back to your hotel until 10pm. Everyone will be tired and crabby. Not to mention, your swimmer needs to eat well, and rest to be in their best shape, mentally and physically to compete for the next day. I have done premade stews/lasagne in my crock pot and had ready in hotel for when we got back to save time/\$\$, just don't forget bowls/utensils. Other options might include picking up a roasted chicken at the grocery store or pre ordered pasta on route back to hotel. Point is, be aware....and be prepared.



5. Swimmer preparation

- a. If you have any concerns about what to bring for your swimmer, please converse with their coach. The bathing suits the kids wear during practice is good to wear during the swim meet (unless it is a 2 piece, this is not allowed). As your swimmer grows and becomes more and more competitive, there are different competition suits that can be purchased but for now the practice suit is just fine. The kids need their goggles and TMSC swim caps.
- b. Each session is roughly 4 hrs long, and there can be two to three sessions in a day. The pool is very hot & humid, so ensuring there is water, pure fruit juices or Gatorade in your swimmers bag is important for hydration. Other items to make sure is with your swimmer are light snacks. I know some favorites are: fruit (strawberries/grapes/oranges/bananas), goldfish, pretzels, arrowroot cookies, raisons, rice krispies squares, cheese strings. As your swimmer grows and competes more, you will know what snacks work best for your swimmer. Try to avoid foods that are harder to digest like raw vegetables. Your swimmers coach can always provide some guidance so check with them if you aren't sure.
- c. Between swims it is very important that the swimmer stays warm....to limit the muscle cramping etc. Therefore make sure that there is a dry t-shirt in their bag for them to wear. Some swimmers may want shorts too.
- d. Bring extra swimsuits, goggles and swim caps! Trust me; swimsuits want to tear during swim meets, not during practices at your home pool!
- e. It is good practice to bring at least 2 towels. They do get very wet so it is nice to have that extra one on hand. Depending of the hotel room, sometimes they do not dry very well.
- f. Swimmers cannot leave the deck and have very clear rules for the swimmers, both swimmers and parents need to follow this. Some of the little ones may want to go see parents between swims to get a hug, or get some food, or show you what swimsuit/goggles they want from the kiosks set up. Make sure they talk to their coach to get permission and if they are leaving the deck, they should take a buddy with them. Safety first.

6. Parents Guidance at Pool

- a. As a parent, dress for a hot & humid pool. Layers work well! Tank tops, crop pants, t- shirts are highly suggested. Most pools have hard bleachers, so a small pillow or something to sit on is nice. Bring water and snacks with you. Each session is around 4 hrs in length. Depending upon your swimmer, you might be done early, or you might be around for the entire 4 hrs!!! Host meet clubs often have an area, where light snacks can be purchased. Make sure you bring cash as you cannot use debit. You will see some families bring small thermal coolers with them with their snacks/drinks.
- b. Once you get to the pool, the host meet club will have a swim program for sale. Usually they are around 10\$ a program. It is cash only. The program shows all the clubs, the events (style/distance), the heat (if you have 15 swimmers you will



need 3 heats – 6 swimmers per heat), and the swimmers names. Bring a pen/highlighter with you. Races run quickly, you will want to highlight your swimmer and their events to make sure you don't miss a thing!! This can be done during the warmup session.

- c. Bring your camera – however – there is NO flash photography allowed. They are very serious about this. Reason being, when the swimmers are at the start...the start involves both a noise and a flash of light to signal the start of the race. We do not want flashes from cameras causing false starts. You do not want to be “that parent” in the stands!
- d. Equipment kiosk sales – at some larger meets you will find local swimwear stores are in attendance to sell equipment, swim suits etc. These groups often will have a debit/visa machine available.

You are at pool, you have your guide, you bought the program and have highlighted your swimmers swims, you have a bag for yourself of water and light snacks – now sit back, watch and cheer on our Marlin Swimmers achieve their personal goals!

