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For swimmers to perform at their best it is important to establish some proven procedures to be followed by everyone at each meet. Competition is what we train for. Every practice is devoted to some aspect of meet preparation. For the 'plan' to work everyone, parent, swimmer and coach should be on the same page.

1. Arrive early. Each meet has a warm-up period. At USS meets there is an hour and a half warm-up before the meet starts. Swimmers should be on the deck at the beginning of this period. Swimmers should find out where the team is sitting, and get 'stretched'.
2. Warm-up for our swimmers is directed by the coaches. We like swimmers to be familiar with the warm-up as well as events they will swim. Parents should be sure swimmers arrive in time to properly warm-up. Swimmers do not perform well unless sufficient time is devoted to this important process.
3. All swimmers are expected to be in a Swim Florida team suit. Acceptable colors are either navy blue or black. Save the 'pretty' suits for practice. If a swim cap is worn, it should be a **SWIM FLORIDA** team cap. Please do not use "Cape Coral" caps or practice caps. We have to look like a team to perform like a team. Except in league meets, we are not representing "Cape Coral".
4. Snacks consumed at a meet should be nutritious, and digestible. Swimmers should refrain from eating candy. Beverages should be either water or an acceptable sports drink.
5. Under no circumstances should parents give **ANY** advice to their swimmer(s) regarding how to swim an event. Coaching should be left to the coach who prepared the swimmer for competition. Additional instructions tend to confuse swimmers, who become torn between pleasing a parent or coach. Swimmers are under significant stress before a swim, and they don't need any additional pressure or instruction before going to the blocks. All swimmers should see their coach ten minutes before their race, and again after their swim down. Parents should restrict their comments to wishing their swimmer 'Good Luck' before, and a 'Well Done!' afterward. Parents should not speak to their swimmer before they have a chance to speak to the coach. Feedback from the coach is essential in the learning process. Please don't critique your child's performance. Coaches don't tell your child how to brush their teeth; please don't tell them how to swim. They need you to be there for support only.
6. Please have your swimmer sit with the team. If you choose to sit in another area, don't have your child with you. They should be with team members during the meet.
7. All swimmers should check with a coach before leaving. They should make sure they are not in a relay, or have to come back for finals.
8. All families should purchase a heat sheet, and keep track of the flow of the meet. The coaches rely on parents to have the swimmers up and ready on time. Many swimmers tend to 'Zone Out' during a meet. This is a good way to relax, but can lead to missed events. Girls events are odd numbers and boys are even. Some meets they alternate, while at others they swim at the same time, but in different 'pools'. At some meets all odd heats are at one end, and all even heats are at the other. This should be explained by the coaches at the beginning of the session.
9. The breakdown of a meet is as follows. A meet consists of sessions. Each session has a set of events. Each event is then broken down into heats. There are girl/female events (odd numbers) and

boy/male events (even numbers). In each heat swimmers are assigned to a specific lane. A swimmer needs to know their Event number, Heat and Lane. Often swimmers prefer to have this information jotted down on some part of their anatomy. The most important numbers are their heat and lane. The swimmer is responsible for know when to get up on the blocks. Parents should not be behind the blocks. A swimmer's heat and lane are determined by their entry time. The fastest swimmers for each heat should be in the middle of the pool. The slowest swimmers are assigned to the outside. In a timed final event (no finals) the fastest swimmers in the event are in the last heat, while the slowest are in the first heat. Swimmers with no time (NT) are seeded randomly in the first few heats. When there are finals, the last three heats are 'circle seeded'. This is a process of seeding which places swimmers in the last three heats in a different pattern (fastest in the last heat, next fastest in the heat before that, and the next fastest in the third to last heat. The process is continued until all the lanes are filled).

10. If there are finals, a swimmer is required to come back for finals. Failure to do so usually results in being denied their next scheduled event. From a team perspective, no points are earned for the team if a swimmer fails to swim in finals. In some meets there is a ban from further competition in the meet, and some meet impose financial fines on the team. Please make sure your swimmer is not in finals before departing. Some results take time to post. Only coaches are permitted to scratch a swimmer from finals.

11. All swimmers are expected to swim-down after all events. Please don't get between them and the swim down area. We realize you want to congratulate you swimmer, but they recover better if they swim down right away. Please don't interfere with this process. Failure to properly swim down can result in a poor performance in their next event.

12. What to bring to a meet depends on the season.

a. A sleeping bag is an excellent item for both winter and summer meets. It will provide a warm shelter in cold and a good resting area for both seasons.

b. A small pillow.

c. Sun screen. Please apply before going to the pool. Applying before putting on a suit will insure more complete coverage, and allow time to seep in. Use waterproof sunscreen with at least a factor of 15. Meets are not a place to be getting a sun tan. Don't allow your swimmer to lie out in the sun. The tents are primarily for swimmers, not parents. If there is insufficient room for swimmers, parents are expected to accommodate the athletes.

d. Sneakers and socks will go a long way in insulating against cold decks in the winter months. Pack extra sweat socks. In the summer months most swimmers wear flip-flops. Decks can be cold in the winter, and hot in the summer.

e. Extra goggles are a good idea. Goggle straps should be examined periodically. They don't last forever, and seem to break at the least opportune moment. While on the subject, tinted goggles are for sunny meets/practices and clear goggles are best for night time meets/practices.

f. A team parka. We usually order these at the end of the summer. It's one of the best items for keeping warm when the sun goes down. Parkas should be packed for every meet. There's no telling what the weather will be like.

g. Extra towels.

h. A quiet time activity. A book, deck of cards, portable board games like Yahtzee or Boggle, will give a swimmer something to do between events.

i. A deck chair for parents.

j. An extra big supply of smiles, and warm hugs.

Thank you for your support of your swimmer and our team.

Swimcerely,
Your Coaching Staff