

Smoky Mountain Invitational (aka SMI or Smoky)

Smoky is a 2-day swim meet involving 27 summer swim teams from east Tennessee. It is held over two days, July 13 & 14, at Springbrook Pool in Alcoa. Saturday is for swimmers 11 and up, while Sunday is for swimmers 10 and under. We gather around 7:00 each morning, and the day begins with a warm-up for all swimmers. Events run all day, usually ending sometime between 3:00 and 5:00 unless there are delays for storms. For each event, swimmers are arranged in heats with swimmers of similar ability level from all the other participating teams. All swimmers go to a clerk of course to get lined up and then head to the pool as a group to swim their event. When all heats of an event have been swum, places are determined by times, and awards are given to those at the top of the rankings. We also score points for our team by where our swimmers place. Team rankings are determined by the points our swimmers score over the two days. As always, parents are needed to fill volunteer shifts to help run the meet.

This meet is different from the end of the season City Championship meet in that it is only for summer league and school league swimmers, not for those who swim year-round with teams like ACAC, Prime, or TNAQ. Why does it matter? It gives our summer swimmers more of a chance to place in their events. Also, there is not a finals day at Smoky. All races are final events, and placement is determined strictly by times.

Why should you take your kids to SMI? While the day can seem long, the swimmers and their families have a lot of fun with their teammates all day.

- SMI gives our swimmers a chance to see and compete with swimmers from all leagues of GKAIISA, not just League 2. We run into friends from school and cousins who live across town.
- Smoky and City include a 100yd freestyle for 10&unders, a 100yd freestyle for 11&ups, and a co-ed free relay. These two meets are the only times your summer swimmer can experience these events.
- It is a good practice for City Meet, as these two are the only GKAIISA-wide meets of the summer. Just like our Blue & White meet helps new swimmers prepare for our dual meets, Smoky gives kids a chance to experience the ins and outs of a big meet before getting to our grand finale of City meet, where our kids hope to achieve their best times of the season.
- We have a large team tent that serves as our home base where we spend most of our down time between events.
- Parents enjoy getting to know each other better, little siblings make friends with each other, and the swimmers busy themselves with cards, travel games, reading, etc.
- You have the opportunity to buy a wristband pass to swim between events in the pool with a big slide. Parents and kids enjoy cooling off in the water. Wristbands are sold by session or as a whole day pass. Those parents who work volunteer shifts will get a free wristband.

Our team traditionally finishes well at City Meet, but we have not been as competitive at SMI. Why? We don't usually have as much participation from our swimmers at Smoky. I'm not sure why our team hasn't been as enthusiastic about this meet. The percentage of Piranhas that goes to the meet is significantly less than those of most teams in our area, such as Sugarwood and Village Green. Let's change that! For the first time this year, our coaches will have to set up their tent in the second row, where they are not directly poolside for the events because we JUST missed the cutoff of the top 14 finishing teams at last year's SMI. Can we rally to bring more swimmers and get us back into that top tier? Of course we can with everyone's help!

As we do with our dual meets, we will send out more details the week of the meet to help with what to bring, where to go, and how to prepare. In the meantime, email us at swimconcordhills@gmail.com, message us on Facebook, or ask a veteran parent at practice if you have questions. Let's have a great turn-out for Smoky this year! I hope you'll join us!