

Invitational Swim Meet 101

What is an invitational swim meet?

An invitational swim meet is a swim meet where the individual swimmer must achieve a minimum time (qualifying time) in an event in order to swim that event at the meet.

These meets are fast-paced and fun to watch. Swimmers swim against other swimmers from throughout Houston and surrounding areas.

BEFORE the MEET:

2 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS to do before the invitational meet.

1) Declare your swimmer online through Swimtopia before the deadline.

2) PAY FEES for your swimmer's events to FAST Treasurer before the deadline.

- **Qualifying times** – given for each event by the hosting team in meters and yards and by gender and by age.
 - When you login to your Swimtopia account and pull up the Invitational Meet for your swimmer, the system will show you which events your swimmer qualifies to swim in at the invitational meet by allowing you to register online.
 - For example: The qualifying time for a 9-10 girl could be 18.49 in 25 freestyle, your 9-10 girl must swim 18.49 OR faster in order to register to swim that event. If your 9-10 girl's time is 18.50, you will not be able to sign-up for her to swim in the 25 freestyle at the invitational meet.
 - Check all times for your swimmer, they may be able to swim some individual events and not others. (And that's okay to do!)
- **Fees** - For each individual event your swimmer is going to swim at the Invitational Meet, there is a small fee - usually \$5/event.
 - **Payment MUST be received by our FAST Treasurer BEFORE your swimmer will be registered to swim at the invitational meet.**
 - If you do not pay by the due date, your swimmer will NOT be registered and therefore cannot swim in the invitational.
 - Entries are turned in the Sunday before the invitational meet, there is no way to add swimmers after the deadline or at the invitational meet.
 - FAST will pay for any relays your swimmer is put on to swim at the meet.
- **Relay teams** will be decided by the head coach after all registration is complete.

- Swimmers will be notified before the meet if they are swimming on a relay.
 - ****It is VERY important to know if your swimmer can not swim the relay at an invitational, only 1 relay team per relay event is allowed and we don't want to scratch any relays if at all possible. If your swimmer cannot swim the relay this needs to be communicated to the Head Coach ASAP!****

- **Volunteering** - The hosting team **requires** every team attending the invitational meet to provide volunteers (usually timers and scribes – FYI - the shifts are shorter than a regular dual swim meet).
 - 1 parent of a swimmer attending the meet, **MUST** sign up to work at least 1 volunteer shift.
 - These shifts **DO NOT** apply to your FAST Volunteer Commitment of 6 credits for the year.

 - *Please make sure you sign-up to volunteer the day your swimmer is swimming!!! Invitational meets are 2-day meets – younger swimmers swim only on 1 day of the meet!*

 - The number of volunteers a team provides is based on the number of swimmers attending from that team (teams attending with more swimmers will be asked to provide more volunteers).

- **Additional meet information** - The hosting team will post information the week prior to the meet about timeline, set-up, concessions, parking, timing lane assignments, etc. FAST will send information out as it is provided.

AT THE MEET:

- Most summer league invitational meets have **INDOOR set-up** at a school – usually in gym or cafeteria (yea! You don't need to bring a tent!). Suggestions on what to bring to the meet:
 - Chair for each family member & swimmer
 - Blanket(s) to sit on or wrap up in for swimmers
 - At least 2 towels per swimmer
 - Swim cover-up/jacket/sweatshirt – post-swim for swimmers
 - Coolers allowed for food – They do sell concessions also.
 - EXTRA Goggles and Swim caps – usually sold there too but good to bring extra
 - Games or activities for between events – lots of teams so it will be a long day
 - \$ to buy concessions, heat sheets, usually there are invitational t-shirts for purchase at the meet too.

- **PLAN TO GET TO THE MEET EARLY!!! (When doors open)**
 - There is **NO assigned setup per team**. FAST usually has a few families arrive early to block off an area so the team all can sit together. Be on the lookout for other FAST families.
 - **Warm-ups** – Each team is assigned a warm-up time – make sure you arrive in time for FAST’s warm-up time (there are no other make-up times to warm-up, if you are late and miss warm-ups your swimmer will not be allowed to warm-up with another team).
 - This is **super important** as the pool setup and starting blocks can be new to swimmers – every swimmer needs to know what it is like to go off the blocks at warm-ups.

- **No circle-in board** like at Dual Meets but the coaches and 1 designated volunteer will have a sheet with the swimmers attending to make sure everyone on a relay has arrived.
 - *Please note: It is the SWIMMER and their parent’s responsibility to listen to announcements and get the swimmer to the ready bench after the event is called.*
 - Once you hear the announcement for your swimmer’s event, please walk your swimmer especially younger swimmers to the Ready Bench area (the hosting team’s volunteers will take it from there).

- **Volunteering** - Please make sure you work your shift. If you do not, they will stop the meet and announce they are missing a “FAST” timer – we don’t want that!
 - You actually get one of the best seats in the house.

- A few other tips –
 - Do **not** camp-out in the natatorium; this is swim parent etiquette. There are a lot of other parents who want to watch their swimmer too so stay for your swimmer’s events or a few after to cheer on friends and then return to the team seating area.
 - Wear your FAST T-shirt and cheer on other Dolphins!
 - Plan to stay for most of the day! It is a long meet but a lot of fun!