

## **How to Survive a Swim Meet .....A Parent's Guide**

### **Chapter I – THE NIGHT BEFORE.....PACK**

#### The Swim Bag:

Perhaps you know the routine stuff....swimsuit, goggle, towel, etc. Here are a few more basics.  
Basic checklist:

- Blanket (for swimmer area)
- Chairs (for parents)
- Swimsuit, 2 pair of goggles and cap
- Towels~2 are better than 1
- Between event wear~ Remember these are going to be wet –  
loose and comfortable works best
- flip flops, aqua socks.....something to run around in between events

#### The Other Bag:

DO NOT underestimate the importance of the “other bag”. This is the activity bag to keep our children happy and busy while they wait for their events to be called. Rest is important particularly at the invitational meets (they can be long days). Here are some suggestions for quiet, yet fun activities:

- Paper and Crayons
- Electronic hand held games
- Cards
- Books
- Walkman, portable cassette, MP3 or CD player with headphones
- Travel games

Remember to label and keep an eye on all your things!!!

#### What Parents Need:

- A comfortable chair~ to set by the pool and watch the events.
- Ballpoint pen, magic or sharpie marker and highlighter
- Book, paper, magazines and other reading material
- Paperwork or small handiwork

If this is a home meet....and there are plenty of areas that we will need help...if you don't have any of the above items!!! :)

## The Cooler:

If you opt to pack food/drinks here are some good/bad swim meet food choices:

Good:

- water, juice, sports drinks (plenty of fluids are very important)
- Bagels (hold the cream cheese)
- Carrot and celery sticks
- Fruit~ grapes, bananas and apples (oranges can be messy)
- Granola bars, oatmeal
- Plain or artificially sweetened yogurt

**Think natural Energy....Easily digestible, portable foods are your best choices**

Bad:

- Candy & sweets (anything with heavy sugar content)
- Fatty foods (takes too long to digest)
- Greasy, heavy foods (no nutritional value)
- Chocolate (melts really easy)

FLUIDS ARE VERY IMPORTANT!! Even slight dehydration can cause cramping and fatigue and a bad swim meet experience. Encourage your Torpedo to sip all evening. Don't let them slam down a box of juice and think they are set. This can cause cramping, too. Don't worry about too much fluid; they know what to do when this happens!

Moderate your child's food intake and remember less is better. Some kids think they're hungry when really they are bored and looking for something to do (visit the "Other Bag")

Now that you are all packed.....take a pillow, directions and warm-up times. Make sure you plan to arrive 15 minutes early. Directions and Warm-up times are available on the website.

## **Chapter II ~ the arrival**

What to do first – Find our Torpedo area, have your child mark a spot for him/herself (with blanket and backpacks) and Find a spot at the pool for your chair (avoid the ends of the pool – for timers).

Purchase a heat sheet or find events posted in Torpedo area, write down your child's event #, stroke or on heat sheet highlight them. Then write them on your child's arm (sharpies work great and don't wash off quickly). We do allow the kids to decorate themselves (you will see that often). An example of event list for child's arm is:

(Event)#1      25-breast  
          #8        50-free  
          #48      100 – relay B

This tells your child the event number, length of event and stroke he/she will be swimming. If we have more than one relay team, they will be designated by the letters A, B, C etc. Don't worry too much your child will get a helpful reminder in the clerk of course and also on deck

before they jump in the water. **ONCE MEET STARTS, REMIND YOUR CHILD TO LISTEN FOR EVENT NUMBERS AND BE READY FOR THEIR EVENTS**

### **Chapter III ~ The Meet:**

#### **Your Torpedo is ready, hydrated and colored with event info.....Now what?**

If this is a meet at home, you are to head to your volunteer post. Just keep an eye on your child's event numbers so you have plenty of time to scoot over to the poolside and watch them swim. Don't worry your coworkers have the same idea ~ we work together to make sure we don't miss our children's events.

If we are at an away meet, this is a great time to scope out the facility. Make sure you are familiar with the clerk of course area and the restrooms.

Make sure your swimmer has their goggles and caps ready. There is nothing more nerve wracking than searching for caps and goggles seconds before its time to report to an event. If they keep their caps on and goggles pulled down like a necklace they're less likely to lose them!!

#### **Clerk of Course and Bull Pen ....I have heard the terms, but what does it mean?**

Basically, the bull pen is an staging area where our team are gathered to transport to the clerk of course which is where they are put in an orderly fashion with all other teams to enter the pool area. This is critical to make certain kids are lined up for the right heat and the right event. Clerk of course is staffed by parents and volunteers from the host team. It consists of several rows of chairs and some very haggard looking parents standing or sitting with no voice left. **\*\*Your swimmer needs to pay attention to all announcements\*\***

Clerk of Course workers will continually announce the next event. When your child hears **FIRST CALL** for an event number.....he/she should check their arm to see if they are swimming that event. This is a skill they should be taught early in their swimming career, and they should be encouraged to be responsible for their own events. If your child is not paying attention to the calls, he/she will miss their event and be extremely disappointed. When your child's event is called he/she should go over to the Bull Pen and listen for their name. He/she will then be taken to the Clerk of Course and directed to their seat that marks the event order. Once in Clerk of Course, they will be escorted to the pool area for their event.

#### **Ok, I know what Clerk of Course and Bull Pen are and my child is there, now where do I go?**

Head to your chairs/area by the pool.....this is what you have been waiting for ~ your torpedo in the water!!! There will be a lot of activity around the pool area. There isn't any reserved areas around the pool for certain teams, but there are restricted areas. **Spectators aren't allowed at the starting blocks; also if you are in the way of the starter or officials you may be asked to move.** After the events, your child will either head toward you or back to their rest area. Remember that the primary focus is to have FUN!! Your child will constantly learn and improve some aspect of their swimming.

What is the purpose of swimmer disqualifications?

It takes time and a lot of practice to master the technical aspects of competitive swimming. Throughout the swimmers career, he/she will increase their knowledge to improve their starts, turns, strokes and finishes. During a sanctioned meet, officials and judges monitor the competition to ensure meets are done in accordance with rule requirement. Some latitude is granted to younger swimmers, but it is important that proper stroke techniques be learned early in a swimmers career. All kids will at some time in their career, experience the disappointment of being disqualified (DQ'd) in an event. Please remember that this is a learning opportunity and the DQ is an excellent tool to help your child. (Children rarely repeat the same error) Your child's mistake will be explained to them and they will be encouraged to correct their technique. Though it may be disappointing, you can help your child by offering support and encouraging them to always do their best.

#### **Chapter IV ~ After the Meet:**

You made it!! (and survived) The day was long, the races are over, and everyone was a winner!! You made some new friends and learned about the sport of swimming and your child's abilities. Time to gather up your belongings....make sure you leave with everything you came with. Please throw all trash away before leaving.

Yes, we have lots of volunteers working all of the events to make it happen!! Please be respectful to our volunteers ~ we love them and couldn't do it without them!!! **Ultimately it is you and your child's responsibility for your children to be at the right place at the right time!!**

**Drive home safely!!! Refer to Chapter I for the next meet!! ☺  
Lets have a Safe and Fun 2010 Torpedo Season!!!!**