



## **Race Day Info for Swimmers & Nervous Parents**

### **Equipment**

Swimmers should be encouraged to pack their own equipment for meets, including a costume (and a spare), racing costume (if required), Chirk Dragons Hat, two pairs of goggles, poolside shoes, two towels (one for poolside), poolside top and bottoms (optional), plenty of drinks and healthy snacks (cereal/energy bars, jelly cubes etc). For lunch, non-meat sandwiches or wraps, pasta are recommended.

Meets can be pretty long affairs, so you should take something to keep you occupied (a book, music etc)

### **On Arrival**

Swimmers should be well rested – go to bed early the night before – and nutritionally well-prepared and hydrated. Swimmers should also know what races they will be swimming, and make themselves familiar with the programme of events.

Meets start early so if you are due at the first session then make sure you set your alarm to make sure you don't oversleep. Make sure you know how to get to the venue and allow plenty of time for the trip. Arrive early before the start of the pool warm-up session.

It is unlikely that you'll be the only person at the meet from the club – so when you arrive let the Coaches know you've arrived and they will direct you to where your team will be located.

### **Supervision during the Meet**

Coaches or Team Managers will attend all club supported meets. They will ensure the swimmers are at the right place at the right time and will be with swimmers in between warm ups and their events.

If for any reason, you decide to leave poolside you **MUST** inform the Coach or Team Manager.



## **Meet Types**

Previously meets used to have a card system but these have now been replaced with start sheets. Sometimes, swimmers are required to register on arrival for certain events. The coaches will know the format and will provide guidance before and during the meet. Any withdrawals on the day must be discussed with the coach immediately upon arrival at the meet, and then made accordingly to the meet procedure.

## **Warm-Ups**

Warm-ups are essential and are intended to protect from injury and improve the swimmer's performance at the meet by increasing body temperature, heart rate, blood pressure and energy producing enzyme activity. They also give swimmers the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the diving blocks, water temperature and depths, position of the turn flags and feel of the end walls.

Warm-ups are strictly organised and swimmers must follow the instructions from the Chirk Dragons coaches and meet officials.

When instructed to leave the pool, swimmers should immediately dry off, go to the toilet if necessary, change into their racing costume (if you have one), t-shirt and bottoms and keep warm. If possible, DON'T warm up in your race suit, it defeats its purpose.

Swimmers remain on poolside with their teammates throughout the meet session which helps facilitate team building and develops team spirit. Parents, remain in the spectator area, supporting and socialising, and giving their swimmers encouraging smiles and supportive gestures!

## **Race Preparation**

Prior to racing, swimmers should listen carefully to any instruction from their coach who is there to help them swim their race well. Swimmers must also listen out for instructions to report to the poolside marshals, the officials responsible



for gathering swimmers together and organising them into the correct heats and lanes. The marshals will check you off their list and tell you which heat and lane you are swimming in.

### **Race Starts for Beginners**

Competitors should leave their poolside t-shirts and bottoms on until just before a race. It's a good idea to put on your hat and prepare your goggles just before the marshal sends you to the blocks, or for those who can't put these on themselves, put them on before you go to the marshalling area. Once you get to behind the blocks its warm clothing off and into the box provided. The referee blows a short series of whistles to signal that the swimmers should stand behind the starting block, and everyone else should be quiet.

When the referee blows a long blast on the whistle you should either: stand on the block, stand near the edge of the pool if you are starting in the water, or drop into the water if it's a backstroke race.

When the starter gives the command, "Take your marks", you must quickly take up the position you have adapted to in training and remain completely still until the start signal is given. You would have rehearsed this during training and therefore you will already be familiar with the process.

Ensure you know what that signal is! If a swimmer starts before, or has moving at the time the signal is given, it is deemed a false start. Most meets have a "one start rule" which means swimmers do not have a second chance – one false start and you are immediately disqualified.

At the end of the race, swimmers must remain in the water until asked to leave by an official, usually the referee.

### **Disqualification**

Swimmers can be disqualified for a number of reasons. If you are disqualified don't be too upset. It happens to everyone at some point, even world champions!!



Find out why you were disqualified and discuss it with your Coach. Once you understand what went wrong, try not to make the same mistake again.

Swimmers who are disqualified do not have a time recorded for their swim.

### **After the Event**

Congratulations, job done! When the event is over, collect your things from behind the block and return to your coach for feedback about your swim. Feedback will help you to improve your technique and race tactics. If you feel you've had a bad race, find out if your Coach agrees (they may not) and if so, why; its important to learn from the experience, stay positive, and move on. Depending on facilities and when your next event is, you may be told to swim down, or to dry off and get your warm clothes back on.

### **Finals**

Some or all events, especially the longer ones, may be heat declared (with results based solely on times achieved in the heats) but others have finals, with the fastest swimmers from the heats going forward.

Finals are normally held at the end of the session, but do check. Swimmers are spearheaded, with the fastest swimmers in the centre lanes and the slowest in the outside lanes. In an 8-lane pool the swimmers will occupy the lanes as follows: 4,5,3,6,2,7,1,8, in fastest to slowest order.

### **Advice for New Parents!**

Preparation is the key. Get everything possible ready the night before. Most families take a cool bag with a plentiful supply of drinks, snacks and healthy high carbohydrate lunch items. Don't rely on suitable food being available at the venue.

Take a pen to record times/splits etc. and something (a book, ipod, newspaper) to occupy you – there can be long waits between events. Dress for a summer's day, even on a freezing weekend in January – pools get hot and humid...

Watching your child swim in a competition is exciting but it can also be very nerve wracking, and everyone reacts to the situation differently.



Once the race is underway some parents shout hysterically, much to the amusement of others. Enthusiasm is great but your child is likely to thank you more if you stay calm. Give them a reassuring hug and wish them luck prior to the meet, but offer no technical or tactical advice; congratulate them after their swim, and console them if they are disappointed with their performance, without any analysis.

Enjoy yourself and help them to appreciate the highs and occasional lows of this great sport. Don't expect them to achieve a personal best every time they race, and don't set them targets or offer rewards.

**Finally**

Good Luck and enjoy the meet.....