

WINDER YMCA BARRACUDAS

Introduction to Swim Meets

Every member of the Barracudas Swim Team was new to meets at some point or another. The first thing to remember before you even arrive is to relax! Swim meets, no matter what the level of competition, are meant to be fun as much as they are meant to be an opportunity push your swimmer to their limit and test their skills. Ready to dive in?

TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

DUAL AND TRI MEETS

Dual meets and tri meets are held against one or two other teams from our league (NGSL) and are generally the most laid back meets we will compete in during the summer season. These meets provide a great opportunity to get to know the swim community or to get a handle on the way meets are run if you are unfamiliar with the swim meet format. Volunteers standing at the ends of the lanes will time the swimmers with stopwatches. Ribbons will be awarded after every heat, from 1st to 8th place.

SANCTIONED MEETS

Sanctioned meets are those that are officially endorsed by the North Georgia Swim League. Timing at these meets is done through the use of touch pads or plungers to ensure timing accuracy. Due to their accuracy, the electronic timing systems used at sanctioned meets allow swimmers to qualify for All-Star times.

The sanctioned meets we swim every summer are:

Pentathlon

Advanced swimmers who can swim all strokes legally compete in this aquatic version of an "Iron Man." Swimmers must swim all five events (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle, and I.M.) for times that will be totaled together for an overall time and then scored accordingly.

Rosettes will be awarded to the overall fastest 10 swimmers in their age and gender groups. Ribbons will be awarded to the top 10 swimmers for individual events as well.

Splash Meet

The Splash meet is a fun event that includes kickboard or silly races for 10&Under swimmers and 25's for 11&Up swimmers along with all regularly incorporated events.

Invitational

A meet for novice swimmers. All swimmers who do not attend the Pentathlon will attend the Invitational. Each swimmer may swim three individual events, one medley relay, and one freestyle relay.

District 7 Championship

The District 7 Championship is the qualifying meet for those hoping to attend the State Meet in Tifton. At the District Meet, the top three swimmers in each event are selected to attend the GRPA State Meet.

NGSL Championship

At this meet, as well as earning ribbons for high placement, swimmers who place highly earn points for their team, determining the overall NGSL Champion Team as the team with the most points accumulated during the meet. Swimmers earning most individual points will be awarded a High Point trophy at the end of the meet as well.

During the meet, anonymous judges will be appointed to survey the general spirit and attitude of each team's swimmers in order to award a Spirit Award at the end of the meet.

This meet marks the pinnacle of our swim season and is, for all not attending the state meet, the last chance for swimmers to strive for All-Stars.

GRPA B/C State Meet

Barracudas who placed top three in their events at the District 7 Championship will go on to Tifton to compete in the GRPA B/C State Meet with the top swimmers from all the other districts in Georgia.

LONG COURSE MEETS

If you choose to swim with the long course option, you may attend the long course meets scheduled this summer. Long course pools are 50 meters long instead of 25 yards long, as with our pools at the YMCA, and so swimming one lap in a long course pool is the equivalent of swimming a little more than two laps in a normal pool. Long course meets also include events that are longer distances than those swam in typical NGSL sanctioned meets and are held under the direction of USA Swimming. At a long course meet, for example, instead of swimming the 25 yard freestyle event, your child would swim the 50 meter freestyle, and it would still be one lap with no flipturns.

BEFORE THE MEET

SET UP

When you arrive at the meet, go ahead and stake out your space. Place your chairs, towels, umbrellas, tents, coolers, etc. in a small area for your family and make sure your swimmers know where you will be for the duration of the meet. We like to encourage families from the team to sit together so swimmers and parents will get to know one another more closely throughout the season, but it is by no means compulsory.

CHECK-IN

As soon as you have set up your space, swimmers should check-in with the coaches. It is very important for the coaches to know whether your swimmer is in attendance. Please note, at a sanctioned meet, a relay team may be eliminated or disqualified for a “No Show” swimmer. On a related note, please do not leave a meet early without notifying a coach as this affects other swimmers, overall team score and can result in unnecessary expense to the team. If swimmer availability changes before a swim meet and your swimmer will no longer be able to attend, please let one of the coaches know so they can make the necessary substitutions in advance.

MARKING SWIMMERS

The time in between check-in and warm-ups provides a good opportunity to mark your swimmer with their events listed in the heat sheet. Swimmers in the bullpens and behind the blocks have limited access to heat sheets while they are preparing to swim their race. In order to stave off confusion or nervousness about where to go and when to be there, swimmers can refer to their events marked on their arm/leg in order to make sure they are in the right place at the right time.

WARM-UP

Just as before any sporting event, swimmers also need the opportunity to warm-up before they compete. Warm-ups are important for getting swimmers loose and focused on what the need to accomplish during the meet. If competing in an unfamiliar pool, warm-ups are particularly critical in order for swimmers to also get acclimated to the change in pool environment (i.e. flags, starting blocks, touch pads, pool markings, pool depth, etc.). Warm-ups typically last anywhere from 20-30 minutes and may be swam in shifts with other teams or at the same time as other teams depending on how many teams are present or how many the meet encompasses.

TEAM MEETING

Directly following warm-ups, the swimmers are expected to gather with the coaches for a brief team meeting before the meet begins. Coaches may use this time to pray, discuss last minute changes to meet protocol, pump up the team with words of focus and encouragement, or instigate the team cheer. Parents are welcome to listen in.

DURING THE MEET

TALKING WITH COACHES

Before *and* after each race, swimmers should stop by the coaches' table in order to receive instruction or feedback on their race while it is still fresh in the coaches' minds. If there is a bullpen present, swimmers should visit coaches before entering the bullpen.

BULLPEN

The bullpen is the holding area for swimmers before they swim their event. The bullpen is usually composed of rows of numbered chairs or bleachers on which swimmers will sit when the bullpen director instructs them it is time to do so. Once swimmers are in the bullpen, they are on track to be moved forward into position behind the blocks in their respective lanes, ready to swim their race.

EVENTS

The events available to swimmers are the Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, I.M. (Individual Medley), Long Free, and Freestyle and Medley Relays.

We encourage all swimmers to swim all events. Dual meets are a great place to try new or difficult strokes. You cannot succeed where you do not try. Please try to keep this in mind when attending swim meets if you are signed up for events that aren't your favorite.

If your swimmer is 8 years old or younger, they sometimes may have the option of doing a kickboard race and sometimes may not have the option of choosing to swim breaststroke, butterfly, or I.M. depending on which meet they are attending. They are allowed, however, to swim up an age group with older swimmers if these events are not offered to them at a particular meet and they want to swim them.

DOWNTIME

In between the events your swimmer swims, there will often be some downtime. Bringing books, games, cards, and light snacks are all acceptable ways to pass this time as well as cheering for teammates or conferring with coaches. If you bring snacks, please make sure they are healthy (i.e. fruit, water, trail mix) and avoid sodas and sugary items.

We love all our swimmers, but we do ask that during this downtime swimmers do not approach the coaches' table unless they are preparing to swim their next event or have just swam an event. No one wants their coach to miss their race. As your coaches, we want to be able to provide the best assessment of everyone's skills and then plan our practices accordingly in order to progress as much as we can throughout the season. We will have plenty of time for socialization before or after the meet, but during the meet we like to give 100% of our focus to swimmers in the water, swimmers about to be in the water, or swimmers most recently removed from the water.

AFTER THE MEET

RESULTS

At sanctioned meets, results from each event will be posted for reference and review as quickly as possible following the event. All results will be posted by the end of the meet. As events are separated by age group and gender, please be sure to check for the correct results postings. If you think you see an error, please report it to the coaches and let us take care of reporting any mistakes that may have been made in the timing system to the appropriate officials.

AWARDS

Depending on which meet you are attending, awards will vary. Some meets, swimmers will receive ribbons directly after every race they swim, at the very end of the meet, or only if they placed in the top ten swimmers for their gender and age group. Sometimes medals will be awarded for the top three swimmers and the rest will receive ribbons. Some swimmers will receive heat winner ribbons or beads if they place first in their heat.

All-Star times are standards agreed upon by the NGSL board that denote a swimmer of significant achievement. They are calculated using the top 20 percent of times from the top 10 percent of swimmers in the NGSL. If a swimmer achieves an All-Star time, this is a significant achievement deserving of being recognized by its own award, the All-Star ribbon. All-Star ribbons are not handed out at meets, but will be handed out by coaches following the meet.

REHYDRATION

Even after you have completed your last race and you are ready to be done thinking about swimming for the evening, make sure to rehydrate your body or you will regret it in the morning. It's hard to tell when you are in the pool, but you are still exerting a great amount of energy and sweating, especially if the meet is outdoors in the hot sun. Drink water or sports drinks and avoid energy drinks or sodas as they do little to nothing to replenish what nutrients your body needs.

PACKING CHECKLIST

SWIMMERS:

- ☐ Swim suit
- ☐ Goggles
- ☐ Swim cap (for anyone with shoulder length hair or longer)
- ☐ Towel
- ☐ WATER
- ☐ Footwear (make sure you don't mind them getting wet)
- ☐ Dry clothes to change into after the meet
- ☐ Entertainment for downtime: Books, games, cards, etc.

PARENTS:

- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Sharpie: For marking swimmers with events
- ☐ Highlighter: For highlighting your swimmer's events in your heat sheet
- ☐ Foldout chair(s): There may not always be deck seating. Be prepared.
- ☐ Healthy snacks: Avoid sugary foods and drinks, if possible. "Sugar rush" is not a sustainable plan for gaining and retaining the kind of energy required for optimal performance at swim meets.
- ☐ Money for a heat sheet (usually around \$5) and concessions
- ☐ Blankets, towels, etc.