



# Newsletter for Novice/Bronze Swimmers and Their Parents

Volume 1, No. 3

## What's the Deal with Meets? Part II

Meets are an exciting part of competitive swimming, but they are also a major source of questions and anxiety. The previous Novice/Bronze Newsletter explained the different types of swim meets. This edition explains more about what goes on at meets. *Previous newsletters are available on the Novice or Bronze level page of our website ([www.blackdogswimming.org](http://www.blackdogswimming.org)).*

### Before the Meet:

- **Entries** – Turn in your entries on time. Sometimes we can add late entries, but it is best not to count on it.
- **Pack for the meet** – The night before the meet, pack your swim bag with everything that you might need (and extras just in case). A basic packing list is on the next page.

### During the Meet:

- **Arrive Early** – Plan to arrive at the pool about 10 minutes before warm-ups start. This will give you time to find the locker rooms, change, and find where the team is sitting.
- **Warm-Up is Important** – The amount of warm-up depends on the individual, but it is generally around 400-600 yards for novice swimmers, and 800-1200 yards for bronze swimmers. *You should feel a bit tired* and warm at the end of warm-up. It is better to do too much warm-up than to do too little.
- **Stay Warm** – Bring warm clothes (e.g., sweatshirt and sweatpants) and a couple of towels. Immediately after warm-up and after each event, dry off and put on your warm clothes. Your clothes *will get wet* from your suit (one reason why you bring more than one towel). After warm-up, we often hear the excuse, “But I’m not cold.” That is the *best* time to put warm clothes on, because they help *keep* the swimmer warm. If you wait until you feel cool, much of the benefit of the warm-up is lost. Worse, some swimmers insist they are not cold, even when they have goose bumps and blue lips. PARENTS – Please help to reinforce the importance of staying warm. Swimmers should feel a little bit *too* warm, not just merely comfortable.
- **Talk to the Coaches** – It is crucial to talk to the coaches after *every* race, as soon as you get out of the pool (before talking to parents, before going to the concession stand, before running around with your friends, etc.). Races are valuable learning experiences when swimmers talk with their coach immediately. This is true for *any* race, even the bad ones (maybe *especially* the bad ones). PARENTS – Please help reinforce this. When your child comes to you after a race, before talking with them, ask if they have talked to their coach yet.

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- **Fuel for Performance** – swim meets can be long, and you may have a long wait between races. Besides staying warm, you also need to eat to keep your energy level up. Food will be available at the concession stand, but many swimmers prefer to bring their own snacks. Choose balanced, healthy snacks, such as a bagel with peanut butter, granola bar, or a turkey sandwich. Although some young swimmers prefer Skittles or other candy, they are not good options. Candy may give a brief surge of energy, but then your energy levels drop rapidly.

### After the Meet:

- Times are important in swimming. Although Black Dog Swimming maintains a database of times, swimmers also need to keep track of their times. Before leaving a meet, check the official results (they should be posted in a hallway somewhere outside the pool), and write down your times. If any times seem wrong, tell your coach right away. To track your times, you can develop your own system, or you can try the Best Times Log, an Excel file that tracks your times and indicates which time standards you have met. You can find the file on our website (on the team level pages, or the meets page).
- Help clean up our team area, then check and double-check to make sure that you don't forget anything (swimmers often forget their cap or goggles, but we have also picked up sweatshirts, jackets, shoes, parkas, necklaces, and other items).

### What to Pack for a Meet

The following items should be packed for *every* swim meet:

- Swim suit (and maybe an extra)
- Goggles (2 pair)
- Swim cap (and maybe an extra)
- Towels (2 or more)
- Parka and/or sweatshirt/sweatpants
- Shorts and T-shirt
- Sandals or slippers
- Healthy snacks and water
- Street clothes to wear home (pack in a plastic bag to keep dry)

Other items are optional, or depend on the weather (for outdoor meets), **BUT you should prepare for the worst** – you can always leave extra gear in your bag or in the car. At an outdoor travel meet a few years ago, the forecast was for hot, sunny weather all weekend. When the weather turned cold, many swimmers were unprepared, and spent the weekend cold and miserable. Meets like this occur frequently, and if you are not prepared, you will feel miserable and swim poorly.

- Sunscreen
- Gloves or mittens
- Warm socks
- Shoes or boots
- Warm hat (e.g., stocking hat)
- Blanket and/or sleeping bag
- Raingear
- Book, cards, or games