



## **BARTLETT ELECTRIX SWIM TEAM SWIM MEET SURVIVAL GUIDE**

While swimmers put forth relentless preparation during practices in order to compete in swim meets, it is also very important for parents and swimmers alike to prepare outside of the pool in order to make the meets rewarding for all.

### **Before you leave**

- **Be informed** – secure the meet information. Meet details will be distributed through the swimmers' mailboxes and will also be posted on-line at [www.bartlettelectrix.com](http://www.bartlettelectrix.com). Find out the basics such as:
  - **Where is the meet?** – not all meets will be swum at the meet hosts' pools. If available, driving directions to the pool location can be downloaded from *BEST's* website on the Meet Info page.
  - **What events is your swimmer competing in?** – team entries will be emailed to each family and posted on *BEST's* website on the Meet Info page.
  - **What is the first thing to do upon arrival at the pool?** – arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of warm-ups. **POSITIVE CHECK-IN...** all swimmers must sign-in prior to and/or no later than twenty (20) minutes after warm-ups begin in order to compete in the respective meet session. Failure to check-in will forfeit your opportunity to swim.
  - **When do warm-ups start?** – usually one hour prior to the session start time. This information will be indicated on the respective meet sign-up forms.
- **Pack all the necessities** – taking the right amount of supplies can make or break the meet experience.
  - **Gear** – pack a swim bag with everything your swimmer will need to compete:
    - **Warm-up swimsuit** – some swimmers will warm-up in their practice suits and change into their competition suits before the start of the meet.
    - **Competition swimsuit** – take your *BEST* team suit or other good quality blue suit. Competition suits should fit snug in order to prevent drag in the water.
    - **Back-up swimsuit** – you never know when a tear or seam will split. While swim apparel is usually for sale during swim meets, it can be costly and sizes and styles may be limited.

- **Goggles** – bring a good pair that you may want to reserve for racing only. Check the straps for tears or other imperfections, as chlorine will take its toll on just about everything. Having your goggles break just before an event can add to the pressure of swimming a race.
- **Backup goggles** – in addition to equipment failure, swimmers tend to lose goggles. Having a spare readily available, and also pre-adjusted, can ease the panic attack.
- **Cap** – use a team cap that can be purchased from the team apparel coordinator. Team caps identify you as a *BEST* swimmer and promote team unity.
- **Backup cap** – similar to goggles, caps can tear and be misplaced.
- **Towels** – calculate bringing at least one dry towel for every event your swimmer is competing in, plus an additional towel to be used after warm-ups. Swimmers need to be dry and warm when out of the pool. Cold swimmers using cold, damp towels will affect their performance.
- **Extra clothes** – take a change of clothes for your swimmer to wear between events. Again, cold swimmers do not perform well. These clothes should be water absorbent and not easily damaged by chlorine. Team sweats, old sweats, or old loose fitting clothes work best. Tight fitting clothes can be hard to get on and off if the swimmer or the clothes are wet. These clothes will be wet by the end of the meet, so make sure your swimmer has dry clothes to wear home.
- **Food** – pack nutritious snacks that are high in carbohydrates and complex sugars, including bagels, fruit, granola bars, etc. Simple sugars/candy should be avoided. Bring plenty of drinks (water, Gatorade, etc.), as swimmers do get dehydrated. Avoid carbonated beverages. Food concessions are usually also available during meets.
- **Entertainment** – there can be long periods of time between your swimmer's events depending upon what they are swimming and how many swimmers are at the meet. Take something for them to do, including books/magazines to read, electronic games, portable DVD, etc. This is also a good time to get homework completed.
- **Camping gear** – if there is camping (which will be discussed later) take a blanket, large towels, folding chairs, and sleeping bags.
- **LABEL EVERYTHING AND HAVE AN INVENTORY OF EVERYTHING YOU BRING!!**

- **Prepare your swimmer** – if your swimmer knows what to expect and what is expected of them, the better they will feel about going to the meet.
  - **Events** – using a water proof pen, write the events your swimmer will be swimming that day on the back of their hand. Include the event number, stroke and distance. Leave room to write down the heat and lane of each event. This information will be available at the pool after warm-ups.
  - **Discussion** – brief your swimmer to put them at ease. Go over their events. If the meet has no Clerk of Course/Bullpen (to be discussed later), remind them that they are responsible to get to the starting blocks on time. If there is a Clerk of Course/Bullpen, remind them to listen for the announcements in order to report in a timely manner. Remind them to report to their coach after each event. Remind them to dry off and get dressed between events. Tell them what food you have packed for them and how they are to eat it (spread out over the day, not all at once). Tell them when they will get their next big meal and where. Remind them to behave on deck since you won't be down there to monitor them firsthand. Remind them to keep track of their belongings in order to bring it all home at the end of the meet. Tell them to do their best and listen to the coaches. Most of all, tell them to have fun!

## **The Meet**

- **Before the meet starts**
  - **Leave on time** – take into consideration any possible traffic congestion, road construction, and unfamiliarity with where you are going. Include additional travel time for parking and dressing in the locker room.
  - **Parking** – most venues provide free parking. Parking restrictions and fees may be enforced at certain pools (i.e. UIC).
  - **Sign-in** – most meets require swimmers to confirm their attendance through POSITIVE CHECK-IN prior to each session. If you do not sign in within the timeframe allowed, fifteen (15) minutes prior to warm-ups through twenty (20) minutes after warm-ups have begun, you will not be able to swim. Positive check-in tables are usually located in the hallways that lead to the pool deck. Find the sheets that are specific to your swimmer's age group and gender and circle or highlight their name and all events. If you do not highlight all events, you may be scratched from those events not highlighted. If you want to scratch an event, you must cross-out that specific event number that will be listed after the swimmer's name. If the swimmer's events listed on the check-in sheet differ from what they have been previously entered to swim, tell the coach immediately. If your swimmer is swimming events in two different age groups, they will most likely have to highlight their names on different check-in sheets.
  - **Camping** – when deck space is limited, some venues allow swimmers to "campout" in gymnasiums, hallways, or other areas within their facilities.

- **Report to the *BEST* area** – swimmers are strongly encouraged to sit with their teammates. Not only does this provide team unity, it also helps the coaching staff keep a watch of the swimmers. When there is no camping, your swimmer should locate and situate themselves with their *BEST* teammates on the pool deck. Have your swimmer keep their gear in this area. **Parents are not allowed on the pool deck.**
- **Get ready** – have your swimmer get in their suit, goggles and cap and report to their coach.
- **Buy a psyche sheet** – also known as the program, the psyche sheet will list all of the swimmers with their seed times in their respective events.
- **Find a comfortable seat** – it's now time to cheer for your swimmer and his/her teammates. Most meets will charge an admission fee to sit in the stands. Look for other *BEST* parents, as sitting with an experienced swim parent will help you understand the meet process and etiquette. If you are one of the first parents to arrive, try to save seats for other *BEST* parents that will follow.

➤ **During the meet**

- **Heat sheets** – in addition to the psyche sheets, actual heat sheets will be available/posted soon after positive check-in has closed. These heat sheets will list the swimmer's heat and lane for the respective events he/she will be swimming that session. Heat sheets will also be posted on the pool deck for the swimmers to reference. Swimmers should write their heat and lane assignments on their hands using a waterproof marker. First-time and younger swimmers should ask their coaches for help.
- **Clerk of Course** – because most meets are now seeded via computer systems, the clerk of course is usually not found at ISI meets. Therefore, it is the swimmer's responsibility to report directly to the starting blocks prior to their race. Swimmers should report to the timers in their lane to affirm their presence and confirm that their name appears on their timing sheets. On certain occasions, and based on younger age groups, a clerk of course may be used to expedite swimmers to the blocks. An event card will not be issued for the swimmer to carry in either situation.
- **Swimming in the meet** – at all times, your swimmer needs to be aware of which event and heat are in the pool and when their next event will occur. While announcements are usually made over the PA system, they may not always be audible, particularly if you are in a "camping" area. Scoreboards in most venues will also list the current event and heat that are swimming in the water. If there is no Clerk of Course, swimmers will have to get to the starting blocks for the correct event, heat, and lane by themselves. The coaches will assist but cannot always be responsible for swimmers that stray away from the group.

- **After each swim** – your swimmer should report to their coach to discuss their swim. They should dry off, get dressed, and prepare for their next event. They should not report to you or any other person before reporting to their coach.
- **Cheer for the team** – bring a highlighter to identify all of the *BEST* swimmers in your psyche sheet. As there will be long periods of time between your own swimmer's events, cheering for all of the *BEST* swimmers will help pass the time. Check to see if each swimmer has bettered their seed times, and cheer them on for a job well done. This will have the added benefit of familiarizing yourself with other swimmers on the team and the sport of swimming in general.
- **Cheer for your swimmer** – be proud of their efforts. How they placed is not important. The goal is to improve their strength and stroke techniques, which will foster faster times.
- **Time standards** – there are national and state time standards to be used as goals for your swimmer's improvement. These motivational time standards from slowest to fastest are B, BB, A, AA, AAA, and AAAA. In addition to achieving these motivational time standards, Regional, State, Zone, Sectional, and National time standards have also been established by ISI and USA Swimming to compete in the end of season championship meets.
- **Bad meets, swims, and disqualifications** – it is inevitable that your swimmer will have a bad swim and possibly be disqualified for an illegal stroke or turn. While this can be devastating at the time, being able to overcome such adversity is the real lesson that is being learned through swimming. Be supportive and keep everything in perspective, as there will be another race and/or meet for your swimmer to prove themselves.
- **Food** – most venues will have a concession stand. Prices vary from reasonable to expensive. Choices are usually limited and entrees usually include hot dogs, pizza, nachos, etc.

➤ **After the meet**

- **Check their swim bag** – use the inventory of what you packed to make sure you are going home with everything you brought. If they have lost something, wait. After all of the other swimmers have gone home, the pool deck and/or camping area will be littered with lost gear. Finding your things amongst the mess will be a relatively easy task. If you do not find it, inquire at the lost and found. You will be amazed at what others have left behind.
- **Congratulate them on a great effort and a great meet!**

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Erica Alvi at home (630) 483-0742 or via cell (630) 772-2072.