

New Parent Guide



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Preface

While this is by no means the all-inclusive guide to swimming, it will most definitely help you to understand some of the basics that your fellow seasoned parents sitting next to you in the stands may already know. We have tried to compile as much information as possible within the guide to help answer any of your questions that may come up randomly during the day.

However, you will undoubtedly have a question that can't be answered with this. This guide will provide you with information about the sport of swimming, team specific information can be found in the team handbook on the team website.

What is USA Swimming?

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States. Membership is comprised of swimmers of every age and ability, all the way up to the Olympic Team, as well as coaches, officials, and volunteers. USA Swimming is governed by a board of directors and full-time staff in Colorado Springs. As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information, and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

Website: www.usaswimming.org

How Is USA Swimming Organized?

*International - The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation

*International de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through

*United States Aquatic 5 Sports (USAS), made up of the four aquatic sports – swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

*National - USA Swimming is a National Governing Body (NGB) of the United States Olympic

*Committee (USOC) and has voting representation in the USOC House of Delegates.

*Zone - We are divided into four separate zones – central, eastern, southern, and western. Each zone elects two representatives to the national Board of Directors. SCSC is in the central zone.

*Local - Within the United States, there are fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs).

*Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical

area and has its own set of bylaws under which it operates. A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of the LSC. SCSC is a part of the Midwestern Swimming LSC (MWS).

Midwestern Swimming: www.mwswim.org

Swimming Terms/Glossary

Strokes

The four competitive swimming strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

The combination of all four strokes is called individual medley.

*In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most used is freestyle, sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the surface of the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick.

*Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back

*The breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion like the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

*Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish.

*The individual medley, commonly referred to as the IM, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

Disqualification/Illegal Strokes (DQ)

The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer.

Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance with these technical rules. If a swimmer commits an infraction of the rules that is observed by an official, a disqualification (DQ) will result. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. A disqualification may result from actions such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

DQs are also a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

Freestyle: Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.

Backstroke: Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the stomach before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.

Breaststroke: An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly - except for one during the pullout), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish

Butterfly: Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

What Equipment Does My Swimmer Need?

Below are suggested items that will help kickstart your career in swimming:

- **Swimsuits**

- o Recommendation start with 2 suits for your swimmer. These suits can be worn at practice and at meets. The chlorine takes a toll on suits

The Seahawks encourages all swimmers to wear

- * One piece suit for girls at meets

- * Jammers or briefs for boys at meets

- Per USA Swimming competition policy, please ensure jammers do not go below the kneecaps or above the navel; swimmers may be disqualified for this

- o We have a team store setup on our team webpage, and you will receive the link in an e-mail

<https://www.siouxcenter.org/152/Seahawks-Swim-Team>

On the team store you can find

Team Suit, grab bag practice suits, team apparel

Checkout the sizing chart on suit form

- **Goggles**

- o We recommend buying at least 2 sets of goggles for your swimmer, as accidents happen, and they can break at any time.

- o Every swimmer has a preferred set of goggles, below are some popular models you may want to try:

TYR Swimple Kids goggles, Speedo Vanquisher 2.0, Michael Phelps K180, Aegend Anti-Fog Swim

- **Swim Cap**

There are two types of swim caps: Latex and Silicone. Latex caps are thinner than silicone and typically cheaper to purchase, while silicone are thicker and more expensive. Every swimmer will have their own preference as to which they like better. We recommend having 2+ swim caps, as they can rip easily

The Seahawks have latex and silicone team caps available for purchase through coaches

Latex \$7.00 Silicone \$14.00 (all new swimmers receive a latex cap after trial period)

- Towels
 - We recommend 2-3 towels to start off and add more as needed. Your swimmer will only need 1 towel at practice, but it is recommended you bring multiple to swim meets as they get used often and will be soaked by the end of the session.
- Backpack
 - Many swimmers will have swimming-specific bags that can easily store all their equipment and are water-resistant.

Short Course vs Long Course

There are two types of swim courses that swimmers will participate in. The first is short course, this is 25 yards and is swam from August – March. For example, the All-Season Center pool is a short course yard pool. The second type is long course, this is also known as an ‘Olympic Size Pool’ which is 50 meters in length. Long course is swum from April – July.

Types of Swim Meets/Time Standards

The Midwestern Swimming LSC establishes short course and long course Qualifying Time Standards. SCSC swimmers who meet these time standards are expected to participate in the MWS Championship Meet. Qualifying times must have been swum within 365 days prior to the starting date of the meet. MWS Qualifying times may be found on the team website.

USA Swimming has separate competition by age, sex, and ability. For each age group, it has also established standard times to help promote competition among swimmers with similar abilities. These standards are known as National Age Group Motivational Times. Out-of-state swim meets and special meets may require swimmers to meet a specified minimum time standard to be entered. These requirements will be specified on the meet flyer. Questions about qualifying times for a specific meet should be directed to the coaching staff or the Team Administrator.

- Intrasquad Meet- only Seahawk swimmers
- Dual Meet- Two teams competing against each other
- Invitational- Multiple teams, some will have high point awards and prelims/finals; these meets run much longer than Intrasquad or dual meets
- Qualifying Time Meets- Some meets have minimum and maximum qualifying times, and the swimmer must have those times to participate

- o Swim meets are often categorized by the time standards required to compete in the meet. The time standards are usually referred to like this, from fastest to slowest... AAAA, AAA, AA, A, BB, B

To view these time standards, visit the Times & Records Page on the midwestern website

Most of our local meets are categorized as B+ or B- meets. A "B+" meet means that a swimmer must have achieved at least a B time in an event to enter that meet. This type of meet might also be called a "B minimum" meet. A "B-" meet means that a swimmer's best time in an event must be slower than the B time standard to enter that meet. This type of meet might also be called a "B maximum" meet.

You might see meets categorized as BB+ or BB-, A+, etc. It works the same way as the B+ or B- meets, just using a different time standard.

o D2s/Championship Challenge: These meets have a maximum time requirement (cannot have a championship cut in that event) and is the last chance meet for swimmers to qualify for the championship meet

o D1s/Championships: Swimmers must have a qualifying time or must be invited to swim on a relay

o All Stars/Zones- USA Swimming "AAA" motivational time

o Sectionals/Jr. Nats/Nationals- USA Swimming meet qualifying time

• Timed Finals, Prelims/Finals Meets

o Timed Finals: Timed finals is the typical format for most swim meets, and the 12 & Under Sessions of the MWS Championship Meet. Timed finals mean your swimmer will only swim once, and that is their final time.

o Prelims/Finals: All swimmers who are entered in a particular event will swim that event during prelims (typically in the morning) and of those swimmers typically the top 8 or 16 top times from the prelim session will advance to the final's session (typically in the evening) where they will swim the same event again to determine their final place. The 13 & Over sessions of the MWS Championship meet and national level meets are typically held in prelim/finals formats.

Swim Meets 101

Meet Schedule

- Generally, a schedule will be posted at the beginning of the season with a list of meets that the team can attend. Additional meets may be added throughout the season and will be posted/mailed when added.

Home meets

All families are obligated to attend and work our two home meets (see meet schedule for dates)- a well ran meet requires parent volunteers. A meet duty list will be sent via e-mail in advancement of the meet.

Signing Up for Swim Meets

- You will need to sign your swimmer up ahead of time to enter a swim meet (10 days prior to the meet). Parents will receive an email notifying of entry period start and close dates on designated meets. It is your responsibility to get entries to coach 10 days prior to the meet for optional meets.

When to Arrive

- Check the warm-up time listed on the meet flyer as well as in the pre-meet email and arrive at least 15 minutes prior to give your athlete(s) the opportunity to prepare for warm-ups and find their coach.

Crash Room

- At most meets, there will be a crash room for swimmers and their families. We encourage our families and swimmers to sit in the same area, whether it is in a gym or at an additional area.
 - o This helps our swimmers get to know each other better and allows parents a time to further connect.
 - o Parents are also able to help get their swimmers to their race on time and helps coaches find our team in one area
 - o Please make sure to pick up after yourself when you leave for the day

What to Bring

Parent/Athlete Supplies

- Cash- Admission/meet programs and concessions
- Blankets- for the floor in the crash area
- Folding/Camping Chairs- most crash areas do not have provided seating

- Entertainment: Cards/Books/Games- there is usually down time between events
- Food & Drinks: Snacks, Fruit, Veggies, Sport Drinks, Water, etc.- Most venues will have concessions and you are welcome to purchase from them; however, we encourage swimmers to bring healthy snacks, sports drinks, and water to stay fueled up in between races
- Sharpies, Pens, Highlighters, Clipboard- To highlight meet programs and mark your swimmer
- Bleacher seat (if desired)

Athlete Supplies for Swim Meets

- Swimsuit (x2 a backup is a must have)
 - o Swimmers should wear a one piece suit or team suit
- Goggles (x2, a backup is a must have)
- Swim Cap (x2)- Team cap
- Towels (x2-3)
- Sweats/parka to keep warm between events and after warm-ups

Events

- Meet programs (heat sheets) can be purchased upon arrival; these heat sheets will include your swimmer's event, heat, and lane assignment. Programs/admission will typically cost between \$5-10, sometimes more, sometimes less
 - o SCH-MW is the team's name listed in the meet program
- Highlight your athlete's events in the meet program to help keep track of when your swimmer is swimming
- Some venues will have an announcer/video system in the crash room to assist with getting athletes to their events on time. Not all meets have this, so be sure your swimmer is paying attention to when their next event is. It is the swimmer's responsibility to talk to their coach and be behind the blocks for their race

- Lots of athletes keep track of their events on their arms Event # Heat # Lane # Stroke

Event #	Heat #	Lane #	Stroke
1	2	3	Fly
13	4	1	Free



Relays

- Coaches will form relay teams before the meet and swimmers/parents will be notified ahead of time (please let coach know if your swimmer is not willing to participate in relays)
- If age group numbers allow, we will add alternate spots to relays
 - o Alternates may be asked to swim if any of the first four athletes cannot attend
- The medley relay order differs from the individual medley: Back, Breast, Fly, Free

Awards

- Some meets (including championship meets) will present awards to swimmers (1-3, 1-8, 1-16)
 - o Coaches and or meet announcer will try to notify swimmers if they should report to the awards area
- Some meets will also present high point and team awards at the end of the meet
 - o Coaches and or meet announcer will try to notify swimmers if they should report to the awards area
- Some meets will not present awards but rather will distribute awards/ribbons at the end of the meet to coaches. Coaches will hand out awards/medals/ribbons during the meet or at practice the following week

Meet Mobile App

- App available on iOS App Store and Android Play Store
- Most meets will post results online through the app, this is a great way to see your swimmer's progress

and ranking throughout the meet

- o Not all meets will have this, and some may post results immediately, while others take a while to upload
- Yearly and monthly subscription available

Meet Etiquette & Tips for Parents

Below are some tips on how to navigate your first swim meet:

- Sit with the team! Whether this is in the crash room, tent or in the bleachers we are all here to support our athletes.
- Keeping all your swimmer comments positive. The parents of that struggling swimmer could be sitting behind you, and they will remember your comments...forever.
- Cheer loud! Whether it's for your own swimmer or a teammate, swimmers appreciate and will feed off parent support from the stands.
- o Swimming is a sport of tenths and hundredths of seconds. If you are talking too loudly, standing in the wrong place on the deck, clapping or using flash photography you could distract the swimmers and be responsible for a slow start or a disqualified swimmer.
- No flash photography, especially at the start of a race
- Parents cannot be on the pool deck
- o Due to USA Swimming policy and limited deck space, parents are not permitted on the pool deck unless they are volunteering in an official capacity. Want the best view in the pool? Visit the Midwestern website to learn how to become a certified meet official!
- Most indoor pools are very hot and humid in the bleachers, dress in layers that can be removed as needed
- Volunteering when the call goes out. If timing for two to four hours is too long, you can also find another parent (or two) to split up the time.am website