

## The Insider's Guide to USA Swim Meets

USA swim meets can be a great experience for both the swimmer and the family members. The swimmers especially like to attend the out-of-town meets because it is a fun time to be with family and friends. This article will give you some tips in advance to make your experience in your first meet even better.

### **What to Bring to the Meet**

1. Be sure to bring your swim suit, PST cap and goggles ( if your swimmer uses them). Many families carry a spare pair of goggles, pre-fitted and ready to go, just in case. There will also be extra Paducah caps at every meet.
2. You will need either two or three towels per day. Towels will usually dry overnight in the hotel room.
3. A couple of warm shirts & pants such as fleece, sweats or a warm-up suit for swimmers, just in case it is cool in the pool area.
4. At least two or three t-shirts for swimmers.
5. Parents may want to bring warm-weather clothes because it is sometimes (but not always) hot in the pool area.
6. Small games or books to keep your swimmer occupied while sitting with the team.
7. Some venues prohibit coolers in the pool area. However, you can bring drinks such as water and Gatorade. Also, you may want to throw snacks like goldfish, granola bars, fruit, cereal, etc. in the swimmer's backpack.

### **What you can Buy at the Meet**

1. Heat sheets are essential since they list which events and heats your swimmer is entered in. The cost is usually between \$7 and \$10. The sales table will be located outside of the pool area.
2. T-shirts may or may not be sold at meets. T-shirt sales are always at the same table as the heat sheets and usually range in price from \$12 to \$15.
3. There are usually concession areas located at each venue.
4. Usually there is at least one swim shop present in case you would like to make a purchase. The swim shop is located outside of the pool area.

### **Before Going to the Meet**

1. Check the meet entries located on the Paducah web site, bulletin board at the pool, or in emails sent out. Check to see if your swimmer is entered for Friday night and become familiar with the events they will swim during the weekend. Typically the older swimmers have two events on Friday evening and all swimmers have either four or five events per day for Saturday and Sunday. Swimmers aged twelve and under usually (but not always) swim in the mornings and the older swimmers are in the afternoon.
2. Check the meet information that is also located on the web site, bulletin board at the pool, or in emails sent out. . Make sure you know what time your swimmer needs to be there for warm-ups. Be sure to check for each day of the meet because it can change from day to day.

### **At the Meet**

1. Be sure to arrive at the meet fifteen minutes before warm-up. This assures that your swimmer has time to put their gear in the stands, grab their cap & goggles and is on deck ready for the start of warm-up. The warm-up is very important for the swimmers and every attempt should be made to have the swimmer there on time.
2. The coaches will talk with the swimmers before the start of the meet and let them know where they need to show up to swim and whether cards will be assigned. If your child seems unsure of what they need to do, please have them talk to the coach.
3. Paducah swimmers and families try to sit together at the meets. When you first arrive at the pool try to locate the PST section (look for PST swim bags, t-shirts, and Caps) in the stands and come join us. We look forward to getting to know you and your swimmer.
4. Parents are not allowed on deck at any USA swim meets unless they are serving in an official capacity. USA requires this because of insurance purposes and it is very important that we cooperate with this rule. This rule also applies to all Paducah practices at the PAC.
5. A PA system will announce upcoming events. Typically there is a first call, second call and final call before the event is swum. It is good practice to be on deck by second call.
6. **Be sure to have your swimmer talk to their coach before and after every swim.** Many of the younger swimmers are anxious to talk to their parents, but it is very important for them to get feedback from the coach before they return to the stands.
7. The coaches pick the relay teams during the session. **Before leaving the pool be sure that your swimmer checks with the coach to see if they are on a relay.** Don't assume that your child will not be on a relay team. There is nothing worse at a meet than seeing the faces of three kids who won't get to swim a relay because the fourth has already left the building.
8. The coach is the liaison with the meet officials. If you have any concerns, questions or problems that you feel need to be addressed take it to the coach.
9. Paducah strives to show good sportsmanship at all times. This includes parents as well as swimmers.
10. Leave coaching up to the coaches. As a parent your job at a swim meet is to provide support, encouragement and understanding. The coaches will provide the critiquing.
11. Most importantly, have fun!