

TEAM UNIFORM

The team colors are navy, red, and white. One of the two required items to wear in any meet is a team swim cap, if you wear a swim cap. The reason for this requirement is that each coach is responsible for 30-50 swimmers at each meet and as the Seahawks cap is a unique design, unlike any other in the country, it is easily spotted by both coaches and parents alike. This cap is available from specified members of the club. Most swimmers should have at least two on hand for each meet.

The team suit is a solid navy Speedo racing suit with or without a screened San Luis Obispo Swim Club logo. All team members, including those swimming in an “unattached” status, must wear the team suit in competition. The suit is available from Swim Depot. It is also highly recommended that all members wear Team T-shirts to the meets.

Other optional items are available: Sweat Tops; Sweat Bottoms; Long Parka Coats; Bag; SLO Seahawks T-shirts; Warm-up Suits. Team Order forms go out in the Fall. These items make great Christmas gifts for your swimmers

It is highly recommended that each swimmers name be placed inconspicuously on all pieces of the team uniform.

COMPETITIVE STROKES

The four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle, (2) backstroke, (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swum by one swimmer called the individual medley. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (medley relay).

SWIM SEASONS

The swim year is divided into two seasons. The winter, or “short course”, season runs from mid-September to mid-March. The meets are held in a 25-yard pool. The summer, or “long course”, season runs from early April to mid-August. Meets are generally held outside in 50-meter pools (Olympic size). San Luis Obispo Swim Club hosts their home meets at the SLO Swim Center Sinsheimer Pool.

COMPETITION...and the winner is...

The San Luis Obispo Swim Club staff does not see the first place person as the only winner. We’d rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner, and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics: concentration, listening skills, and working toward goals.

Sports are not an end in itself, but a vehicle we use to teach children life skills and how to reach their potential. We use sport as organized play to demonstrate and measure one’s abilities. Seen in that light, winning without learning is not San Luis Obispo Swim Club’s desired intention. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most seconds. The real critical measure is who learned the most from the competitive experience.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records, and other material benefits. They will, however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and enhanced self- image. These are the things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential, and to contribute to the world they live in.

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by USA Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8-Under, 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and Senior. The Senior classification includes any age registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmers age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmers age for the entire meet.

Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as "C" swimmers. As they improve, they advance from "C", to "BB", "B", "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by USA Swimming. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

In Southern California, the LSC has designated its own time standards to fit the needs of their meets. These levels of achievements are "C", "B", "A", and "AA".

In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. An example: a "C" breaststroke time, a "B" freestyle time, and an "AA" backstroke time.

Some swim meets set certain qualification standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification.

TYPES OR LEVELS OF SWIM MEETS

1. Dual Meets - Occasionally, the San Luis Obispo Swim Club will compete with one other team in a dual meet. These meets help promote team unity, but usually limit the number of events a swimmer may enter.
2. "A-B-C" Meets - These meets generally do not have any qualification time standards. Most of the time these meets offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter from 3-5 events per day.
3. Qualification Meets - These meets have some type of qualification time standard(s) that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet.
4. Junior Olympics / LSC Championships - Southern California hosts three LSC championships, one in December and two JO meets at the end of each short course (winter) and long course (summer) season. Southern California Swimming sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets. Generally, the standards fall between the SCS "AA" time standards for the December meet and the "JO" Time Standard for the other two meets. There are also Senior Development Meets which are open to any swimmer in the LSC who has met the qualifying standards regardless of age.
5. Zone Championships - After the Junior Olympics (JO) is held in the summer, a swimmer may qualify to participate in the Western Zone Championships by swimming the zone qualification time. This is an all-star meet where swimmers compete as a member of the Southern California Zone team competing against other LSC from the Western United States. The team is selected from those swimmers qualified and who have applied for the team.
6. Junior National Championships - One of the highest levels of achievement SLO swimmers strive for is the participation in the Junior National Championships. USA Swimming sponsors an U.S. Junior National meet during the long course season. The National Club Swimming Association also hosts a Junior National Meet at the end of each season. SLO swimmers meeting qualifying time standards for this meet travel to different locations throughout the United States to compete against the best 18-Under swimmers in the nation.
7. Phillips 66/USA Swimming National Championships (Senior Nationals) - Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, the highest level of competition for our senior swimmers is the USA Swimming National Championships. As with the Junior Nationals, SLO swimmers meeting the national qualifying time standards travel to various cities throughout the U.S. to compete against America's best swimmers. Swimmers can qualify for national teams that represent the U.S. in international competition by their performances at Senior Nationals.

MEET SCHEDULE

Each season's meet schedule is distributed at the outset of the season.

1. The meet schedule has been established with the expectation that swimmers will attend every meet available at their classification level. We do not schedule a meet unless we feel it is important to participate. However, it is not mandatory to attend meets. One can also choose to enter only one day of a two or three day meet.
2. On an average, we want all team members to compete once every three or four weeks. The meet schedule is established with this philosophy in mind. In some cases, meets of a similar classification are scheduled as close as two weeks apart or as far as one month apart. This happens when the meets that the coaching staff chooses from offer no other alternative.
3. As a general rule, we will not permit any swimmer to compete in competition on two successive weekends (except in championship meets). In a situation where there is an "A-B-C" meet one weekend and a "Championship" meet the following weekend, the swimmer must choose one meet or the other. This policy holds true for all levels of competition.
4. The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning meets San Luis Obispo Swim Club swimmers may attend.
5. Team championship meets are either indicated on the meet schedule or talked about in the parent meetings. Since the coaching staff places the most emphasis on these meets, SLO swimmers who are qualified are highly encouraged to attend.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

The San Luis Obispo Swim Club engages in a multi-level competition program with USA Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

1. We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance as improved performance. All the coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has both a "good" and a "bad" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the San Luis Obispo Swim Club coaching staff.
3. A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.

Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging, goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.

Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Oftentimes, a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...**BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK (or didn't know what to ask):**

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could.

Before the Meet Starts

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all SLO swimmers.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
3. Find the check-in place and your swimmer will need to check in.
4. Check for special posted instructions in the area. Usually one will need to circle the swimmer's name or "#" before each swimmer's name, in each event they are swimming, that day. If this is not done, the swimmer will not be allowed to swim that event.
5. This is done so that the people running the meet know who is actually at the meet.
6. Once "checked in", write each event-number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.
7. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day-he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed-up before he/she can go all out.
8. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.
9. The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
10. According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
11. Psyche Sheets. A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the concession area of the pool. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

Meet Starts

1. It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
2. A swimmer's event number will be posted; he/she should check what heat and lane they will be swimming.
3. Swimmers should then report to the coaches their heat and lane then go to the blocks with his/her cap and goggle. Generally, girls' events are odd-numbered and boys' events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 Freestyle."
4. The swimmer swims their race.
5. After each swim:
 - a. He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) his/her time.
 - b. He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will ask him/her their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.
6. Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - a. Positive comments or praise
 - b. Suggestions for improvement
 - c. Positive comments
7. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

- a. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them.
 - b. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
8. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.
 9. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
 10. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again
 11. When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there. (The coaches speak from experience on this issue).

What Happens If Your Child has a Disappointing Swim

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. The first thing you say is, "Hey that is not like you. You're usually a top swimmer." Then you can go on and talk about the good things the child did. You never talk about the negative things.

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things.

What to Take To the Meet

1. Most important: Swim Suit and SLO Team Cap--and goggles (if your swimmer uses them).
2. Baby or talcum powder--To "dust" the inside of swim cap. This helps preserve the cap and makes it easier to put on.
3. Towels--Realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack at least two.
4. Something to sit on. Example: sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
5. Sweat suits: bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
6. Team T-shirts: Two or three. Same reason as above.
7. Games: travel games, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
8. Food: Each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at the meet, but the lines are long and most of the time they only sell junk food. Suggestions for items to bring:
 - A. Drinks: Hi-C, Fruit juice, Gatorade
 - B. Snacks: Granola bars, Fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, Jell-O cubes, sandwiches

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other San Luis Obispo Swim Club parent for help or information!

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games, and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

Special Parent's Note

At away meets, our team will be assigned specific lanes for timing. Parents should sign-up at the team area for a time slot. Everyone should plan to time part of the meet each session their children is swimming. At some of the meets, the parents are allowed to sit with the swimmers at the blanket area. If you don't think that a ground is comfortable, feel free to bring folding chairs to sit on.

CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS POLICY

One of our team goals is to qualify as many swimmers as possible for the Championship meet(s). Whether attendance is **REQUIRED** or **OPTIONAL**, the Championship meet is a special experience and extremely important in the athletes development.

As our season progresses, all of the swimmers get excited and motivated to “go for a cut”. Unfortunately, some of the swimmers do not have the consistent practice habits nor the USA Swimming meet experience to make the cut, yet, through and extremely psyched swim and a lot of desire, they do the time. Because they don’t have the practices and meet experience, the swimmer will probably not repeat the time at the Championship meet. They really don’t belong there.

As an Age Group swimmer, our swimmers learn they swim faster at the Championship meet than at any other time during the season. They are prepared for this; they are taught this; we practice this. If a young swimmer goes to the Championship meet and is not properly prepared, the experience is negative and can affect other championships later in his/her swimming career.

We, as coaches, believe that the honor of competing in a Championship meet is earned through consistent practice habits and competitive experience at USA Swimming swim meets. There’s a big difference between “wanting” to go to the championships and “deserving” to be at the championships. Talent plays a supporting role to commitment.

To insure that all of our swimmers are properly prepared for their championships:

1. Meet attendance and participation through out the entire season is important. USA Swimming meets offer the experience necessary for the championships.
2. Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains with. “Consistency” is the key word.

The Junior Olympics is not the ultimate goal. It is a seasonal goal that should lead to Zones, Junior & Senior Nationals, and beyond. Making the “cut off time” is simply a requirement to attend the meet. The goal is to be as prepared as possible and perform to the best of one’s ability at the meet. Sometimes swimmers get the “end” and the “means” mixed up.

Swimmers are special people and deserve to have positive experiences as rewards for their dedication and commitment. Let’s make sure that parents, swimmers, and coaches, are laying the foundation for the best possible experience at the Championship meet.

PRELIMS & FINALS**Meet Format**

In a preliminaries and finals meet format, the object of the preliminary swim is to qualify for the evening finals session. If a swimmer places among the top 8 (in an 8 lane pool) after his/her morning swim they then qualify to swim in the Championship finals in the evening session. Some meets also swim a Consolation final. If a swimmer places from 9th - 16th place from preliminaries, he/she qualifies to participate in the Consolation finals in the evening session. In the evening finals session, the Consolation heat is swam first followed immediately by the Championship heat. During the prelims, the results are usually posted within 1/2 hour of the conclusion of the event. If a swimmer does not wish to swim in a final swim he or she may “scratch” the event and not be penalized. This must take place within a half hour of the posting of the preliminary results. Therefore, within approximately 1 hour of the end of an event, a swimmer should know if they have made finals. A swimmer should never leave the meet without making sure if they are a finalist or an alternate. USA Swimming rules dictate that if a swimmer makes a finals event and fails to show up they are bared from participating in the remainder of the meet (individual events and relays). Alternates (the 17th & 18th place swimmers) should check with his/her coach about attending finals.

It is the policy of the Seahawks that all swimmers making Finals (Championship, Consolation or Bonus) will swim in that event. Making plans other than to compete in Finals is planning to fail,

as the goal of a prelim / final meet is to make finals. No Seahawk swimmer should scratch an event without prior discussion with the Lead Coach at the meet.

Circle Seeding

Used only in the prelims of Championship meets with events that has “prelims & finals”. This affects only the top 24 seeded swimmers (8 lane pool) which compete in the last 3 heats. All other heats are regular seeding. Circle seeding goes like this: The fastest seeded swimmer will be in the last heat in lane 4. The second fastest swimmer will be in the second to last heat lane 4. The third fastest swimmer will be in the third to last heat lane 4. The fourth fastest swimmer will be in the last heat lane 5 and so on.

The finals are seeded like a regular meet as are any events that are swam as timed finals such as relays, distance freestyles and other events most often held on Friday evening as a timed finals session.

Awards & Placing

The swimmers who participate in the championship finals receive awards as listed in the meet information. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals often do not receive awards, but do score points for the team. One very important thing: Once a swimmer has made the championship final, the worst they can place is 8th, regardless of how slow they may swim in finals. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals may place no better than 9th (the winner of the heat) regardless how fast they swim. It has been known to happen that the winner of the consolation finals swims a time that would have placed him/her 2nd or 3rd in the championship finals, but the highest he/she can score is 9th. That is why it is important to swim very fast in the morning prelims session to make the championship finals. If a swimmer is disqualified in finals, they do not score points or get awards, however, a non-finals swimmer can not be moved up to score. The place simply is not awarded. Alternates occasionally get to swim and can score the same as any other swimmer.

Receiving Awards in Public

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to be prompt and to cooperate fully with dignity and respect at the presentations. A club uniform is to be worn when accepting the award. It is also customary for San Luis Obispo Swim Club swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a “thank you”. Good sportsmanship is essential. If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team.

OUT OF TOWN MEETS

Trips to meets in other cities become an important aspect of a swimmer's career while advancing through the age group ranks. San Luis Obispo Swim Club has established the following policies for the safety of the swimmer and peace-of-mind of parents:

1. Parents are to be responsible for arranging transportation and lodging to away meets, with the exception of Nationals and those competitions so designated as "Team Trips". **DO NOT ASK YOUR SWIMMER(S) TO HANDLE THIS JOB.** Oftentimes, a certain hotel will be designated as "team headquarters."
2. Parents are encouraged to attend out-of-town meets with their swimmers and to chaperone other youngsters. These trips can be great fun for parents and swimmers alike. They also are a rare opportunity to participate in a special way in each young swimmer's career.
3. A coach has too many responsibilities to the entire team to accept responsibility for an individual swimmer. Therefore, do not ask a coach to provide transportation. The Board of Directors has directed that coaches are not to provide transportation for swimmers, this includes practices.
4. Any swimmer riding in a car is responsible to the parent/driver for his/her behavior and is expected to adhere to the San Luis Obispo Swim Club "Honor Code" at all times.
5. A medical release and emergency telephone number should be given to the parent/driver with whom your swimmer is riding in case emergency medical treatment is required.
6. An appropriate contribution is expected from each passenger in a car to the driver/owner to help defray gasoline and related expenses.

TEAM TRIP POLICY

It is important for swimmers to participate in meets both with and without their parents in attendance. This adds to the growth experience a child can gain from competitive swimming, teamwork, and individual initiative. As a swimmer progresses to Junior and Senior Nationals, oftentimes they attend these meets without his/her parents. It is, therefore, necessary for a swimmer to learn to travel without his/her parents.

1. All San Luis Obispo Swim Club swimmers must travel with the team and stay in the hotel with the team on all Team trips.
2. San Luis Obispo Swim Club swimmers must remain with the team for the duration of the trip (including meals and team functions).
3. If a San Luis Obispo Swim Club swimmer would like to return with his/her parents, he/she may leave if his/her meet is over and arrangements were made prior to the start of the trip with a signed permission slip. However, the swimmer is still responsible for full round-trip transportation costs.
4. The full amount of designated transportation will be collected in advance or billed to accounts. These amounts are not refundable.
5. All release forms must be signed prior to the trip.
6. The "Honor Code" must be followed by all swimmers. Regulations must be followed as set forth by coaches and chaperones.