



Information for First Time Competitors

What to bring:

- 2 Towels (at least)
- Club swimming cap
- Swimming costume/trunks
- Goggles
- Water bottle
- Spare costumes/trunks, cap and goggles if possible (goggles can snap, caps may tear and a dry costume after your race is more comfortable!)
- T-shirt, shorts/tracksuit bottoms for poolside
- Healthy snacks (cereal bars, fresh or dried fruit, digestive biscuits, etc) and drinks (water, diluting squash, fruit juice, sports drinks if you like - **no chocolate or fizzy drinks and no glass bottles or containers!**)
- Suitable shoes for poolside
- If you are competing in more than one session remember to bring a packed lunch – e.g. pasta, rice, sandwiches, salads, yoghurt, jelly, fruit, etc.

Timetable:

You must arrive in plenty of time – at least 20 (preferably 30) minutes **before the warm-up time** – and report to the appointed poolside coaches/team managers. **If for any reason you cannot make it to the competition, please let the entries secretary and/or poolside coaches know.**

If you do not arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of the warm-up you risk being withdrawn from all of your races in that session. Try to let the poolside coach know if you are delayed for any reason on your way to the competition.

All swimmers do a warm up at the time allocated by the organisers at the beginning of the session, regardless of the time of their first race. Information about competitions, including warm-up and start times, is displayed in poly-pockets at the bottom of the club notice board for several weeks before the competition.

Normally the host club will allocate time slots and lanes within the warm-up period to competitors. Competitors will be supervised and instructed what to do during the warm-up by the poolside coaches and helpers appointed by TASC prior to the Meet.

After the warm up, swimmers should have a drink, dry off, eat a small snack, change into a dry costume, put on their poolside clothes and shoes and report back to the poolside coach or team manager.

Swimmers must stay with their poolside coaches/team managers during the competition and must ask their coaches permission to leave poolside **for any reason**. Coaches need to know where their swimmers are in order to be able to prepare swimmers for their race and to make sure they report to marshaling in good time. Swimmers will not be permitted to leave the competition until the session is over and their coach has dismissed them. It is much appreciated that swimmers stay and support their team mates in finals.

The team manager or poolside coach will send swimmers to the marshalling area several heats before their event. Competitors will be supervised and directed to the start of their event by a host club official (marshal).

The people on poolside dressed all in white are the technical officials – timekeepers, judges, starters & referees. You must follow their instructions.

Parents are not permitted to sit with swimmers on poolside unless they are the poolside coaches/team managers/helpers appointed by TASC for that competition. In some cases this is because there is severely limited space on poolside and in others, the meet organisers restrict swimmers and spectators to separate areas.

Swimming Tips:

If you do not wish to dive from the blocks you must tell the marshal or official on your lane before you line up for the race. Be sure you know which stroke you will be swimming and how many lengths you need to do. Your coach or team manager and the marshal will have told you, but if you are not sure you can ask the judge or timekeepers on your lane while you are waiting – they won't mind.

Starts:

At the start of each race the referee will give 3 or more short whistles – this tells the swimmers in that heat to get ready (and everyone else to be quiet!). The referee will then give one long whistle telling the competitors to get up on the blocks for **butterfly, breaststroke** and **front crawl** events or into the water for **backstroke** events. For **backstroke**, the referee will give a second long whistle telling the swimmers to get into position for the backstroke start.

The starter will then say, “Take your Marks”. You must take up your starting position and then stay completely still until the starting signal (usually an electronic beep or horn) is given. The starter cannot give the signal until all the competitors are completely still.

Front Crawl

Swim all the way up and touch the wall then turn. You do not have to tumble turn as long as you touch the wall.

Backstroke

You must touch the wall with your hand whilst still on your back – you cannot turn onto your side to touch. This includes touching at the turn unless doing a tumble turn. Swim on your back all the way to the finish except for tumble turns. Remember to look forward at the start of your swim.

Breaststroke

You must touch with **both hands at the same time** for turning and finishing. Hands must not pull beyond your hip-line except for the **one** long pull at the start and at turns. No flutter kick between breaststroke kicks. Your head must break the surface with each arm stroke.

Butterfly

Again you must touch with **both hands at the same time** when turning and finishing. No flutter or breaststroke kick at any time. Both arms must move forward at the same time over the water.

Relays

You must wait until the swimmer coming towards you touches the wall before you dive from the blocks (or leave the wall if you are starting in the water). You must also swim in the order you have been given and, in medley relays, you must swim with the correct stroke.

After each race you must report back to your poolside coaches for feedback – make sure you have enough to drink, dry off quickly, put on your poolside clothes and have a small snack. Swimmers will normally be expected to stay with and support their team-mates until the end of the session – including medal presentations.

A Word about Disqualifications:

It can be upsetting for swimmers (and their parents) to be disqualified and it happens to every swimmer at some point. It will help if you remember -

1. A disqualification just means you have made a mistake – it doesn't mean you are a failure or a bad person or that the judge/referee doesn't like you! You are still learning and it takes a lot of practice to get it right. As you improve your technique, get stronger and gain experience in racing you will make fewer and fewer mistakes until you rarely make any at all.
2. The first person you should go to when you have been disqualified is your **poolside coach**. The referee should have told you what your mistake was but, if necessary, the poolside coach will check with them to find out exactly what has happened so that you and your coach can work on correcting the fault for next time.
3. It is understandable and OK to be upset but that swim is done. Learn from it, then 'throw it away' and focus on how you will excel at your next swim!
4. Even Olympic and world-class swimmers get 'DQed' so you are in great company!

General:

- You must be quiet for the start of each race so that the swimmers can hear the starting signal. Once the starting signal has been given you can (and should!) be as noisy as you like in supporting your team.
- **Programmes, start sheets and results sheets** are usually made available for sale at the competition. The host club often has swimming items (costumes, caps, goggles, water bottles, etc.) for sale at and there is often a raffle or some other form of fundraising.
- **If you wish to take photographs and/or video recordings**, you must apply for permission from the competition organisers by filling in a form which is usually available at the programmes sales table. You will then be issued with a wristband or card which must be attached to your camera or video recorder so that it is plainly visible.
- **Mobile phones** must be **switched off** - their use is not permitted in the pool hall, spectators' area or changing rooms.
- **Parents** - please be aware that poolside coaches and team managers are only responsible for your child during the warm-ups and competition sessions. If you are not going to be present yourself, please arrange for another adult to supervise your child during the breaks and ensure that the coach or team manager has a contact number in case of emergencies. Please also note that parents are not allowed in the changing areas during competitions and galas.

Finally – Keep Safe, Swim Well and most importantly,

HAVE FUN!