

Swim Meet Sign up Guide and Toolkit

One of the best parts about the Watertown Aquatics Team is that it provides not only a great fitness and growth experience; it also provides team members the opportunity to participate in competitive swimming at many levels. While competition is not required it is one of the most fun and rewarding parts of being a WAT swimmer. This guide is designed to describe some of the complexities and terms around the swim meet registration and meet participation that can be very confusing to newer parents and swimmers.

Meet Registration and Types

At the beginning of each session WAT is required to pre submit entries and fees to reserve spots in meets for the sessions. This normally happens in March and August. Unfortunately this is prior to the beginning of our sessions in many cases. The only way swimmers are guaranteed spots in those meets is by committing at that time to swim. Half of the projected fees for those meets is also due at the time you sign up.

Meet fees are normally composed of two things: a splash fee that you can consider as a basic entry fee (it covers many things including the fees to USS to participate), and per event costs. Splash fees are normally around \$5. Per event fees vary widely based on the meet, but are normally between \$3 and \$6 dollars. Relays are more expensive, but the cost is split between all the swimmers on the relay.

If you do not sign up for meets at this time there is a very good chance that you will not be able to later!!!. Meets fill quickly. Generally we participate in two meets a month, and we do not travel much beyond Milwaukee or just west of Madison for these meets. Normally swimmers are grouped by age brackets (8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and Sr. class at these meets

Meet Types

There are several meet types – below is a description of the most common:

Basic Meet

- This is the most common meet we participate in. Various events selected by the host team are available to swim. Usually swimmers are limited to four individual events and two relay entries at these meets. These meets usually consist of two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Different age groups (see the age groups above) will swim at different times. Sometimes the meet may be conducted over several consecutive days. Depending on the host team, they may present medals, ribbons or a combination to the top finishers (almost always the top 6 and sometimes many more).

Dual/Triangular Meets

- These meets are more like competitive practices than normal meets. Dual meets consist of WAT and one other team and Triangulars are WAT and two other teams. These meets are free, normally conducted on a Friday night and lack the stress and intensity of the meets above. Every swimmer should compete in every dual or tri, especially the newest swimmers as in is a non-intimidating way to get started. There is also no need to pre register nor any cost other than helping time and run the meet associated with a dual or Tri. We most often run Duals with the Fort Atkinson Swim Team (FAST) and Waterloo (LOO).

Swim your own Age (SYOA) Meets

- These meets are great for beginners and younger swimmers. Normally swimmers are grouped by age brackets (8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and Senior). At a swim your own age meet performance is compared only to other swimmers of the same single year age. Competition is much more even and many of these meets provide ribbons medals and sometimes trophies to the best swimmers and are fairly generous in how they do it. These are a great way to get started and every swimmer, new or experienced can benefit from these meets.

Individual High Points Meet

- A middle ground between basic and SYOA meets is the individual high points meet. In these meets swimmers compete in their age brackets, but their placement is combined and scored by points to determine overall best swimmers across all events participated in. This is in addition to ribbons and awards for the individual events. The highest points winners often receive trophies in these meets. Our Conference meet in the Winter and Summer and the unique Fort Atkinson Pentathlon Meets are examples of high points meets.

Prelim/Finals Meets

- Highly competitive, prelim finals meets consist of several sessions in which swimmers swim events first in preliminary heats. The top 8-16 (depending on the meet) will then swim the same event later in the day in a "final" heat. The results of the final heat determine final places within the event. Larger meets take the top 16 swimmers and hold a consolation final (the 9th -16th fastest times of the preliminary heats) and a championship final (the top 1st -8th fastest times of the preliminary heats). These meets are great for all swimmers for practice as the daytime events are just like any other meet.

Regional Meet

- The Regional meet is a multi-day meet at the end of the winter session designed as a last chance for swimmers to achieve qualifying cut times for the State Championship Meet. Swimmers may only swim in events that they

do not already have qualifying times in. This meet does not require pre registration, but fills quickly once it is announced. It can be a hectic and confusing meet because every event and distance possible is offered for every age group over the three days it runs. You may select any or all days for your swimmer to participate at this type of meet.

State Championships

- The State meet is the highest level of club competition most of our swimmers will see. To participate in the meet swimmers have to meet a minimum cut time. These times are periodically adjusted, almost always getting faster. The state meet is conducted over 4 days. The winter state is swum in a 25 yard pool and the summer state is swum in at an Olympic 50 meter length pool. Generally the top 10% of the fastest swimmers in the state reach qualifying times for the state meet.

Central Zones Championships

- Wisconsin swimming is a part of a larger national organization. Roughly the middle quarter of the US is the Central Zone for US Swimming. Swimmers qualify to participate in this meet by swimming extremely fast times. The meet can be conducted anywhere in the region with recent meets in Topeka, KS, Grand Forks ND, and Indianapolis, IN. Swimmers swim at the Zones meet not as a member of WAT but as a representative of Team Wisconsin! This is a great goal for any WAT swimmer to shoot for.

Speedo Championships, Junior Nationals, etc

- Several other meets exist for those swimmers at the highest levels of competition.