Wildcat Swimming

Middle School Swim Meet Survival Guide

January 1, 2010
All Okaloosa County Middle School Swim Meets are held at the Fort Walton Family YMCA. Swim meets are loud, hectic, hot events and the pool area is always wet. Spectators, coaches, timers and officials can expect to get wet. The meets last about two hours. The pool area is crowded. Seating is available on the bleachers. Folding chairs are not permitted because they impede walking traffic and block access to exits. Food is not permitted in the pool area, but clear drinks are allowed. There are loud noises from the starter’s whistle, the starting signal, splashing and churning water and cheering teammates, coaches and spectators.

Arrival:

Students will be given an arrival time that should allow them ample time to arrive at the YMCA and change into swimsuits and be poolside at the designated warm-up time.

For Wednesday meets beginning at 3:30: Students will be transported from Meigs Middle School to the YMCA by school bus. The bus will depart Meigs at regular dismissal time. Warm-up will begin at 2:30 p.m. Students should have all of their swim meet gear (team suit, team cap, goggles, team shirt, towel, etc.) with them when they come to school Wednesday morning.

For Saturday meets and the late meet on Wednesday (Jan 20th), parents are responsible for transporting their student to the YMCA, arriving at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time. The team will meet in a designated area prior to warm-up in order to take attendance. Students should have all of their swim meet gear (team suit, team cap, goggles, team shirt, towel, etc.) with them when they arrive at the YMCA.

Departure:

After the conclusion of the swim meet, there will often be a short team meeting. Then, parents (or designated persons) are responsible for taking swimmers home from the YMCA. There will never be a bus returning to Meigs. Please “check out” with the coaches when you depart so that all of our athletes are properly accounted for. All swimmers are required to remain for the duration of the swim meet, unless special arrangements have been made.

Warm-ups:

The two participating teams will each have a 20-minute warm-up period in the pool. The decision of which team warms up first or second is made by the participating team coaches. All USA Swimming and YMCA safety rules regarding meet warm-ups will apply. Warm-ups are completed 15 minutes prior to the official start time of the meet.

Meet Structure:

With the exception of the final meet of the season*, our middle school swim meets are all “dual meets,” meaning teams from two schools compete. Each team is assigned to three lanes, either 1-3-5 or 2-4-6. Events are run in the same order for every meet (see listing below), alternating girls’ races and boys’ races. Each event may have up to two heats. A heat is a race consisting of 6 (or less) swimmers competing simultaneously. In middle school swimming, the first heat is considered “Varsity” and its results are counted for scoring. The second heat is conducted as “JV” and does not count for scoring, but allows swimmers to gain experience and measure achievement by improving their times. Any swims in the second heat that may surpass any of those in the first heat still do not count for placing or points.

*The final meet of the season is the County Timed Finals. All six teams in the conference compete head-to-head in each event. The event order is the same as the dual meets, but “fun” relays such as the mixed freestyle relay, and backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly relays are added at the end of the program. No score is kept. Swimmers receive ribbons for first through twelfth place and are primarily competing for top standing in the county and school and county records. There are no district, regional or state competitions for middle school swimming.
Events:
Each athlete may compete in up to 2 individual events and 2 relay events. Each participating team in a dual meet may have up to 3 swimmers in each heat of each event. The coaches determine which events each athlete will swim. Swimmers will receive an event card stating the event information, swimmer’s name, heat and lane assignments shortly before they approach the blocks. Swimmers hand the card to the lane timer at their lane prior to their swim. The timers record the watch times on the card and the cards are collected and turned into the meet scorer.

The events in a middle school swimming competition are:

| Event 1: | Girls’ 200yd Medley Relay (4 swimmers, each swims 50yds of one of the 4 strokes...)|
| Event 2: | Boys’ 200yd Medley Relay ...the stroke order is: Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Freestyle)|
| Event 3: | Girls’ 200yd Freestyle |
| Event 4: | Boys’ 200yd Freestyle |
| Event 5: | Girls’ 50yd Backstroke |
| Event 6: | Boys’ 50yd Backstroke |
| Event 7: | Girls’ 100yd Freestyle |
| Event 8: | Boys’ 100yd Freestyle |
| Event 9: | Girls’ 25yd Freestyle (25yd events are only open to novice swimmers. Any swimmer who has ever competed in any competitive swimming is ineligible to participate) |
| Event 10: | Boys’ 25yd Freestyle |
| Event 11: | Girls’ 25yd Backstroke |
| Event 12: | Boys’ 25yd Backstroke |
| Event 13: | Girls’ 50yd Breaststroke |
| Event 14: | Boys’ 50yd Breaststroke |
| Event 15: | Girls 50yd Butterfly |
| Event 16: | Boys’ 50yd Butterfly |
| Event 17: | Girls’ 100yd Individual Medley (the swimmer swims 25 yards of each stroke in this order: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle) |
| Event 18: | Boys’ 100yd Individual Medley |
| Event 19: | Girls’ 50yd Freestyle |
| Event 20: | Boys’ 50yd Freestyle |
| Event 21: | Girls’ 200yd Freestyle Relay (4 swimmers, each swims 50yds Freestyle) |
| Event 22: | Boys’ 200yd Freestyle Relay |

The coaches will create a meet program and provide it to Meigs’ swimmers, parents and spectators.

*Events are not announced in the pool area in any way, so it is important for spectators to pay attention and keep track of which event is in the water so as not to miss their favorite swimmers’ event.

Swimmers will be encouraged to remain in the “team area” or nearby poolside during the swim meet. This is necessary so that swimmers can be accounted for and make it to their events at the proper time. Our high school volunteer coaches will assist with managing the swimmers, distributing event cards and directing swimmers to where they are supposed to be.

ALL SWIMMERS SHOULD CHECK IN WITH THE COACHES BEFORE AND AFTER EACH OF THEIR RACES. Coaches are usually seated at the coaches’ table alongside the pool and need to give swimmers appropriate instruction, encouragement, etc.
Scoring:

Boys’ and girls’ events are scored separately. Places are determined by the official times calculated from average of the times recorded by the two hand-held watch times collected by the timers. Place judges also verify the finish order of each race and record those results.

**Individual Events are scored as follows:**

1st place: 7 points
2nd place: 5 points
3rd place: 4 points
4th place: 3 points
5th place: 2 points
6th place: 1 point

**Relays are scored as follows:**

1st place: 14 points
2nd place: 10 points
3rd place: 8 points

Disqualifications:

Swimmers may be disqualified for false starts and any stroke, turn or finish infractions as recorded by the attending Officials who adhere to the guidelines provided by the Florida High School Athletic Association. Other disqualifying infractions include the wearing of any jewelry, inappropriate swimwear, or grossly unsportsmanlike conduct. Disqualified swimmers earn no points. Any infraction committed by any member of a relay team disqualifies the entire relay team. All Officials are volunteers, trained and certified by USA Swimming, and may not be interfered with in any way during a swim meet. The following are the rules pertaining to stroke, start, turn and finish infractions:

101.2 BREASTSTROKE

.1 Start — The forward start shall be used.

.2 Stroke — After the start and after each turn when the swimmer leaves the wall, the body shall be kept on the breast. It is not permitted to roll onto the back at any time. Throughout the race the stroke cycle must be one arm stroke and one leg kick in that order. All movements of the arms shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The hands shall be pushed forward together from the breast on, under, or over the water.

The elbows shall be under water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and for the final stroke at the finish. The hands shall be brought back on or under the surface of the water. The hands shall not be brought back beyond the hip line, except during the first stroke after the start and each turn.

During each complete cycle, some part of the swimmer’s head shall break the surface of the water. After the start and after each turn, the swimmer may take one arm stroke completely back to the legs. The head must break the surface of the water before the hands turn inward at the widest part of the second stroke.

.3 Kick — After the start and each turn, a single butterfly kick, which must be followed by a breaststroke kick, is permitted during or at the completion of the first arm pull. Following which, all movements of the legs shall be simultaneous and in the same horizontal plane without alternating movement.

The feet must be turned outwards during the propulsive part of the kick. A scissors, flutter or downward butterfly kick is not permitted except as provided herein. Breaking the surface of the water with the feet is allowed unless followed by a downward butterfly kick.

.4 Turns and Finish — At each turn and at the finish of the race, the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water level. The head may be submerged after the last arm pull prior to the touch, provided it breaks the surface of the water at some point during the last complete or incomplete cycle preceding the touch.

101.3 BUTTERFLY

.1 Start — The forward start shall be used.

.2 Stroke — After the start and after each turn, the swimmer’s shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast. The swimmer is permitted one or more leg kicks, but only one arm pull under water, which must bring the swimmer to the surface. It shall be permissible for a swimmer to be completely submerged for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards)

after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface. The swimmer must remain on the surface until the next turn or finish. From the beginning of the first arm pull, the body shall be kept on the breast. Both arms must be brought forward over the water and pulled back simultaneously.

.3 **Kick** — All up and down movements of the legs and feet must be simultaneous. The position of the legs or the feet need not be on the same level, but they shall not alternate in relation to each other. A scissors or breaststroke kicking movement is not permitted.

.4 **Turns** — At each turn the body shall be on the breast. The touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface. Once a touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner desired. The shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall.

.5 **Finish** — At the finish, the body shall be on the breast and the touch shall be made with both hands simultaneously at, above, or below the water surface.

101.4 **BACKSTROKE**

.1 **Start** — The swimmers shall line up in the water facing the starting end, with both hands placed on the gutter or on the starting grips. Standing in or on the gutter, placing the toes above the lip of the gutter, or bending the toes over the lip of the gutter, before or after the start, is prohibited.

.2 **Stroke** — The swimmer shall push off on his back and continue swimming on the back throughout the race. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it is permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, at the finish and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn. By that point, the head must have broken the surface of the water.

.3 **Turns** — Upon completion of each length, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. During the turn the shoulders may be turned past the vertical toward the breast after which a continuous single arm pull or a continuous simultaneous double arm pull may be used to initiate the turn. The swimmer must have returned to a position on the back upon leaving the wall.

.4 **Finish** — Upon the finish of the race, the swimmer must touch the wall while on the back.

101.5 **FREESTYLE**

.1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.

.2 **Stroke** — In an event designated freestyle, the swimmer may swim any style, except that in a medley relay or an individual medley event, freestyle means any style other than butterfly, breaststroke or backstroke. Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and each turn. By that point the head must have broken the surface.

.3 **Turns** — Upon completion of each length the swimmer must touch the wall.

.4 **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his person touches the wall after completing the prescribed distance.

101.6 **INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY** — The swimmer shall swim the prescribed distance in the following order: the first one-fourth, butterfly; the second one-fourth, backstroke; the third one-fourth, breaststroke; and the last one-fourth, freestyle.

.1 **Start** — The forward start shall be used.

.2 **Stroke** — The stroke for each one-fourth of the designated distance shall follow the prescribed rules for that stroke.

.3 **Turns** — A) Intermediate turns within each stroke shall conform to the turn rules for that stroke. B) The turns when changing from one stroke to another shall conform to the finish rules for the stroke just completed, and shall be as follows:

1) **Butterfly to backstroke** — The swimmer must touch as described in 101.3.5. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner, but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall.

2) **Backstroke to breaststroke** — The swimmer must touch the wall while on the back. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner but the shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast when the swimmer leaves the wall and the prescribed breaststroke form must be attained prior to the first arm stroke.

3) **Breaststroke to freestyle** — The swimmer must touch as described in 101.2.4. Once a legal touch has been made, the swimmer may turn in any manner.

.4 **Finish** — The swimmer shall have finished the race when any part of his/her person touches the wall after the prescribed distance.
PARENTS (AND FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS) ARE NEEDED:

...To **provide drinks and snacks** for the swimmers during the meets. Healthy snacks are especially important at the Wednesday afternoon meets since the students are often hungry and tired after school and need an energy boost prior to competition. Drinks such as water and Gatorade are always necessary and donations of such are greatly appreciated. No sodas or candy, please.

...To **serve as timers, place judges and scorers** in order to conduct the meet. Please consider volunteering to work in at least one of our meets. The meet cannot begin until all positions (12 timers, 1 head timer, 2 place judges, 2 scorers) have been filled. Volunteer Officials will be engaged by the coaches. Timers and place judges have a front-row seat to all of the action. Plan to get your legs and feet wet! Timers do not have to have prior experience, it’s easy to learn. If you can volunteer, please be at the start-end of the pool 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the meet. If you are available to work at a swim meet and can notify the coaches ahead of time, it would be greatly appreciated.

...To **cheer wildly and support** all of our Meigs Wildcat Swimmers...whether they finish first or last. Each athlete is giving 100% effort and deserves enthusiastic recognition of their efforts.

**AND, FINALLY...**

There is to be **no flash photography at the start** of the races! Once swimmers are in the water, photos and videos of the swimming performances are encouraged.

Swimmers are permitted (and encouraged) to wear their Meigs Swimming parkas to school on meet days and to all of the meets. Swimmers should have their team t-shirts and sweats to wear at the meet. Please write the swimmer’s name somewhere on the garment.

On the morning of the school day immediately following a swim meet, the morning announcements at Meigs will recognize, by name, the swimmers who placed first, second, or third, and any other outstanding achievements. We will also publish meet highlights and meet results on the team website. The Northwest Florida Daily News will sometimes carry the scores of the meets on page 2 of the sports section, but they never give any other print copy space to middle school swimming. To date, ESPN has not televised any middle school swimming.

DO YOU STILL HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? IF SO, PLEASE ASK!! The first meet will seem like total chaos, but you’ll get the hang of it quickly. We look forward to seeing you at the swim meet.

**GO WILDCATS!!!**