

Greater Pensacola Aquatic Club

Frequently Asked Questions about Meets

1. What do the swimmers do at meets?

The coaches use their knowledge of the swimmers skill level and age to enter them in events. The coaches will decide to enter swimmers in the appropriate events to not only showcase their talent but to further their success in swimming. This means that swimmers will not always swim the same event in every meet so that they can expand their abilities.

Between events, swimmers are expected to warm down as directed by their coach, relax, stretch or anything else that will help prepare them for their next race. Cheering for teammates is another activity that is highly encouraged.

2. At meets, who do the swimmers compete against?

Swimmers compete by age. The age groups can vary but they are typically as follows:

8 & Under

10 & Under

11 – 12

13 – 14

15 – 16, 15 & Over, or sometimes Open

3. What is expected of GPAC parents during GPAC hosted/home meets?

It is expected that all parents will help run the 4 Sanctioned meets that GPAC hosts during the year. There are many volunteer positions that need filling during these events (look on the GPAC website for a volunteer positions list). Also, look for e-mails as early as a month out from the event to sign up to help.

A hospitality table is set up at these meets to supply drinks, snacks and meals for coaches (local and visiting) and other meet personnel. Each family is assessed a \$5.00 hospitality fee so that GPAC's hospitality is consistent and of high quality. However, on occasion additional goods are needed so please, look for separate e-mails requesting assistance in stocking the table and/or working with Hospitality.

4. Where do we find out about meets and other info that is important?

Future meets are listed on the calendar on the team website: www.gpacswimteam.org.

Also, please check the bulletin boards at the pool at which your swimmer practices. Sign-up sheets (at PJC & Milestone) are usually posted two to three weeks prior to the event. Each USA Swimming Team charges fees so that they can effectively run a meet. These fees may include a surcharge, a facility use fee, a per/event fee, etc. GPAC pays these fees upfront for each family's convenience, however it is the responsibility of each family to pay these fees. Meet fees will be added to your next month's statement. Please be aware that once your swimmer is entered into a meet, refunds are not given if you child fails to compete.

When you arrive at the meet site, look for the GPAC area. Usually, there will be a banner posted. You are not required to sit there but it can be helpful to you and your swimmer to be nearby.

Meets tend to vary in format. Some meets will separate into a morning and evening session with 12 & under swimmers competing in one while the 13 & overs compete in another. However, smaller meets may not separate the groups into morning and afternoon time slots. There is no way to tell how a meet will be set up until the meet information is posted. Always

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check the GPAC website for information. Also, check with the coach to clarify and confirm when your swimmer(s) will be competing and when they need to be at the pool for warm-ups.

5. What are Inter-squad meets?

Inter-squad meets are meets where only GPAC team members compete, no other teams are involved. These are held for several reasons. Inter-squad meets are less serious and can be a good opportunity for all of the swimmers to intermingle and have a little fun. These meets also serve as a test run for our new swimmers and volunteers.

6. What are Sanctioned meets?

Sanctioned meets follow the guidelines presented by USA swimming with regards to membership of participating teams, officials, host team, etc. The meet is conducted under USA swimming technical and administrative rules. All times achieved will be recognized by USA swimming. There are two different types, Long Course Meters (LCM) of which, the shortest distance is 50 m (typically swam in the summer). The second is Short Course Yards (SCY) of which, the shortest distance is 25 yd (typically swam in the winter). For further information on Sanctioned meets, go to the USA swimming website www.usaswimming.org and do a search for sanctioned meets. You may also wish to visit the Southeastern Swimming website at www.seswim.org. Southeastern Swimming is our local organizing/governing body and they are an "arm" of USA Swimming.

7. What are Summer League meets?

Summer league meets are held at various pools around Pensacola from June through August. They are often held weekday evenings, though some do occur on weekend mornings. Not all summer league teams are affiliated with USA swimming as they may come from country clubs, neighborhoods, the YMCA, etc.

8. When/where are the scores/times from the meet posted?

Depending on the location of the meet, official finishing times and placement are posted (paper copy) near the pool location. After a meet, the sheets may be posted on the bulletin board at the pool your swimmer attends. They will be posted on the team website under the Meet Results link.

9. Is there an award for placing at a meet?

This varies from meet to meet. Typically, most meets award ribbons to the first six to eight finishes for each event. At some meets, heat winner ribbons are also awarded as the swimmer finishes the race. Some meets will award medals instead of ribbons, while others may not provide any award. Also, some meets will award trophies for high point scorer in each age group, as well as, trophies for team finishes. These awards are placed in your swimmers mailbox (when they are received) and they may be picked up during practice.

10. How do we prepare our swimmer(s) for meets?

Make sure you are at the pool in time for warm-up. Each team is allotted a certain amount of time for warming up and late arrivals will not be given additional time in the pool. Improper or no warm-up will most likely result in slower swims and may lead to injury. Please have your swimmer ready for warm-up.

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11. What should we bring to a meet?

It is a good idea for your swimmer(s) to have backpack with at least two towels, a spare team cap and a spare set of goggles

You likely will want to bring a couple of folding chairs as not every location has enough seats. Some swimmers may also like to have a sleeping bag on which to sit. Some venues allow for you to bring your own food or drink while others do not, so a cooler is a good idea. A number of parents bring popup awnings to provide shade and these tend to be communal seating areas for all GPAC to share

It is also a good idea to bring some games (cards, game systems, chess, checkers, yatzee, etc...) for your swimmer to help keep them occupied.

12. What about nutrition before and during a meet?

In general, you will want your swimmer to eat carbohydrate rich meals before competitions. You will need to steer away from greasy and heavy items especially the day of the meet. Fruit, energy bars, or light sandwiches are good snacks while water or Gatorade/PowerAde etc are good drinks for hydration during meets. You can also check with your coach and/or ask your parent representative for their ideas. Remember, they are there to help you.

Some meets have concession stands where small meals, drinks, and snacks may be purchased but do not count on one being at every meet and do not count on them offering the kind of food your swimmers need.

The USA Swimming website has recipes you can make at home for healthy snacks located on its Parent page. You may also want to visit the American Dietary Association's (ADA) website at www.eatright.org for help. Also consider going to www.MyPyramid.gov for on-line assistance in using the USDA food pyramid.

13. What is the bullpen?

The bullpen is a place where younger swimmers are gathered in order to make sure that they are organized by heat and lane so that they reach the blocks correctly. There are usually two or three volunteers who are tasked with corralling swimmers and organizing them. Parents/guardians can help with the work of the bullpen by ensuring their swimmer is sent to the bullpen area when the age group is called. Each club does this a bit differently but when GPAC hosts a meet we run this service for every team.

Meet policies do not allow for parents/guardians to 'hang around' the bullpen area or the starting blocks.

Parents/guardians hanging around the bullpen or around the blocks, etc. hinder the progress of the meet and have in fact caused swimmers to miss their event. You will be required to leave the area if you are not working in the Bullpen or have an assigned duty at the blocks. Failure to leave the area can result in the team being fined and/or disqualified from the meet.

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14. What is a heat sheet?

Heat sheets are a sort of program that lists all swimmers by the event, heat, and lane, in which they are scheduled to swim. These are extremely helpful in making sure a swimmer is where they are supposed to be on time (so that they do not miss their turn to swim).

Most heat sheets cost between \$2 - \$5 at smaller Summer League meets and up to \$15 and higher for the larger Sanctioned meets during the fall and spring. (GPAC parents can help support the organization by purchasing ads in the heat sheets for the large meets hosted by GPAC.)

15. How do I read a heat sheet? What is the difference between each heat and how are swimmers selected for a heat and lane?

Depending on the number of entries for a particular age group, there may be a number of different heats. Typically the higher the heat number, the faster the swimmer. Also, within each heat the fastest swimmers are in the middle lanes, the slower swimmers are in the outer lanes. See the sample of a heat sheet following.

Sample Heat Sheet excerpt:

<u>#45 Girls 10 & Under 50 LC Meter Butterfly</u>				
Meet Qualifying:		55:09		
<u>Lane</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Seed</u>
<u>Time</u>				
Heat 1 of 7 finals				
1				
2				
3	Pocket, Polly	9	GPAC-SE	55:10
4	Jones, Barbie	10	SUNS-MS	55:08
5	Washington, Martha	10	PAC-LA	55:09
6				
7				
8				
Heat 2 of 7 finals				
1	Johnson, Lady	9	TNT-SE	55:06
2	Ella, Cinder	10	BMAC-SE	55:04
3	Drew, Nancy	9	GPAC-SE	55:02
4	White, Snow	10	GPAC-SE	55:00
5	Schmidt, Gretel	8	ATAC-SE	55:01
6	Oakley, Annie	8	SAC-SE	55:03
7	Calamity, Jane	10	GPAC-SE	55:05
8	Woolworths, Susann	10	ATAC-SE	55:07

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16. How does my swimmer know what events & heats in which they are entered?

Some people choose to use a permanent marker to indicate the event, heat, lane, and stroke on the swimmer's body [hand or inner arm]. The specifics are whatever you devise. This can be very helpful to the people running the bullpen as it helps them to get the swimmer where they need to be.

Example:

E	H	L	S
3	2	4	FL
13	1	5	BK

17. How do we know if our swimmer is swimming in a relay? How many relays does GPAC enter per event? How are relays determined?

Have your swimmer check with their coach to see if they are on a relay team.

The maximum number of relay teams varies from meet to meet, but GPAC will try to enter the maximum number of relays, per age group and event. The number of swimmers who attend the meet also affects the number of relays that GPAC can enter, as 4 swimmers are needed for each relay team.

Relay teams are typically determined by the fastest combination of 4 swimmers per relay team.

Have your swimmer(s) check with the coach before leaving a meet to see if they are needed to swim on any relays as relays can change during a meet.

18. How do we find out about away meets?

The meet schedule is listed on the GPAC website. Training group coaches also advertise the meet in different ways. For the age group swimmers at Milestone and PJC a sign up sheet will be posted just as they are for home meets. For the Junior, Senior and National groups the coaches usually email the families to find out who will be attending which meet.

Lodging for away meets is set up for a block of rooms. The coaches set up these blocks and then the information is posted on the GPAC website. Please use the information posted to book your rooms. Please note that GPAC does not cover the costs of these rooms.

Meet information is posted on each teams website. When possible the away meet information is also either posted on our website or a link to the information may be posted.