



SYCAMORE FLYING FISH

***NEW PARENT SWIM
PACKET
FALL/WINTER 2009-2010***

Purpose of the New Parent Swim Packet

The Sycamore Flying Fish (SFF) year round USA Swimming swim team is great fun for both the kids and their parents. This packet was developed with the new parent in mind to help you through your first season on the team.

Practice

Know your child's Practice schedule. It is important for your child to attend as many practices as possible. The more they attend, the more they will learn about each stroke and how to complete their events in meets without disqualification (DQ).

Arrive at practice early so your child is not rushed and stressed before they begin their warm ups. Practice begins with warm-ups and stretching. Then the kids enter the pool and learn the ins and outs of competitive swimming from our coaches. Be prepared for them to swim a lot of laps and build their endurance as well as their stroke skills.

Please do not discuss your child's swimming progress with the coaches during practice; if you have questions for the coaches they are usually available after practice or by appointment. They are also available for private lessons; please contact them directly if you are interested.

Parents please sit on bleachers (starting block end) while watching your swimmer practice. It minimizes distractions for swimmers and coaches. The Sycamore Athletic Director has requested that all swimmers/parents enter the building through the covered ramp entrance (**not** the steps at the office end of the pool) and to park their car. Please do not sit in your car along the building. It blocks the flow of traffic for others and buses.

Have extra suits for your child to practice in rather than their team suit, it will prolong the life of their team suit. Rinse your child's suit in cold water after each use and hang to dry.

While your child is practicing is a good time to meet and talk to other parents. Parents who have been around for a while can be a good source of information to understand the world of competitive swimming. During practice some parents often take time to do other things, such as: chat with your friends, catch up on e-mail or get some work done on your laptop, read a book, walk or run around the track outside, or just sit and watch the kids.

We strongly recommend that you do not simply drop off your child. It is very important that you come into the pool area before and after practice to check your folder and the team bulletin board for any news or postings pertinent to upcoming meets, any team news, etc.

SFF Website sycamoreflyingfish.com

The team website sycamoreflyingfish.com contains important information such as the Practice Schedule, Meet Schedule, Information on Upcoming Meets, and notices on what is happening with the "Fish." Check it out! Visit our website before each invitational meet to learn more information about the meet (either through our site or by linking to the host club's site) including the facility rules (if coolers are allowed or not allowed, parking restrictions, etc.) and in most cases the warm-up times for each age group. You can also find meet Psych Sheet (listing of each event, the swimmers entered and their times). Our website can be a great source of information for your family.

Lanelines

This is a Sycamore Flying Fish newsletter published weekly with pertinent information regarding meets, deadlines, etc. Please review it for important upcoming announcements.

Meet Selection

A meet schedule was included in the package that you received at the parent meeting. It is also posted on the website and information regarding meets is distributed via email prior to the meets. Meet sign-up is done on line. After you have logged into the web site, proceed to the “Meets” page and then select “Attend this event” for the appropriate meet. You can then indicate whether or not your swimmer will be swimming in the meet, and you can provide notes to the coaching staff regarding your intentions. For example, you can indicate that your swimmer will only be available on Saturday. Some meets are held over the course of several days (Friday – Saturday – Sunday). It is fine to enter your child in the events held on a single day. It is also fine to participate in the entire meet. Long-distance events are typically scheduled for Friday evening. Meets are usually held in multiple sessions, with swimmers in different age groups competing during either the morning or afternoon session. For example, the morning session may be for swimmers over age 10 and the afternoon session may be for ten and under swimmers. Each meet is different. This information is contained in the host team’s meet packet, which is usually linked by the SFF web site.

Swim Meet Prep

Before you begin your preparation for a swim meet, it is important to make sure that your child has been entered in the meet. Check our website under Schedules and Upcoming Meets to see in which events your child has been entered. Many of the three day meets have Friday night events that allow only a certain number of swimmers and/or have a time standard. Before you plan your Friday evening around a swim meet please make sure that your child will be swimming. You can find this out by checking the Psych Sheets and reading the detailed meet information on the Host Team websites. You can link to those sites through the Fish website. If you are unsure, talk with your swimmer’s coaches.

Being prepared for a swim meet will make your time at a meet much more enjoyable. Swim meets can be long and tiring for all of us, the better job you do preparing for the day the more enjoyable it will be for you and your child. Most of all swim meets are fun, especially for your child.

Prior to setting out for the meet know how to get to the location of the meet. The majority of the meets have parking concerns (Sycamore is an exception). Plan ahead and know where you are going, get there early to get parked and into the facility.

Your child should wear his/her swimsuit, team shirt, and pool shoes to the meet. Do not plan on time to change at the pool!

Please plan on arriving at the pool for the meet at least 20 minutes BEFORE warm up starts. This will give you plenty of time to check in with your coach, find the team, stake a claim on a piece of real estate for your blanket, your chairs, yourself & your cooler, buy a heat sheet & check out the concessions.

Often times the SFF families sit together in a certain area at the away meets. Most of the pools have bleacher areas to sit and watch your child's events. They usually have areas where you can "camp" such as a gym or commons area. So, don't forget to bring a folding chair to sit on during the down time, you'll need it. Have plenty of drinking water/Gatorade available to your swimmer and newspapers, magazines, books, etc for you to enjoy during the non-swimming time.

Your Child's Swim Bag should contain: (label everything: bags, goggles, towels, t-shirts, etc.)

Team suit, a spare suit and:

- ✓ Your Team swim cap (should have 2 - they tear easily!)
- ✓ 2 pair Goggles (minimum - straps break!); always alternate 2 pair during practice: NEVER wear untested, new goggles at a meet.
- ✓ Deck sandals/Pool Shoes (to avoid cuts and/or nasty foot fungus).
- ✓ 2 or 3 Large Towels (sometimes you need 3, the last one for the after meet shower)
- ✓ Something warm: warm ups, sweats, etc. (this applies especially to the indoor meets). Some "common" areas can be cool to freezing.
- ✓ For the summer outdoor meets, don't forget the SUNSCREEN: waterproof, rub proof, goof proof. Remember, sunscreen is oily; a swimmer could lose their goggles because of it. Remove sunscreen around the eyes and forehead before the race.
- ✓ Water bottle/Gatorade/PowerAde
- ✓ A black pen (for marking E/H/L, info for each race on their hand or forearm: E= event #; H = Heat #; L = Lane #) see below
- ✓ A highlighter (for marking their race info on the heat sheet)
- ✓ A pen to write down the swimmers times they achieve at the meet.
- ✓ During all of our meets here at Sycamore we will operate concessions. All of our away meets have concessions, if you choose to pack light and buy snacks, food, and drinks at the pool.
- ✓ You may want to consider bringing snacks that you know your kids will eat: pretzels, raisins, trail mix, Ritz bits w/peanut butter, goldfish, grapes, small chunks of fruit or veggies, bagels, cheese nips, favorite dry cereals in Ziploc bags, string cheese, beef jerky, Gatorade Bars or Power Bars, ask around for ideas!
- ✓ Cooler: Most meets allow coolers, though some do not. Usually the website of the individual meet will be very specific if they are NOT allowed.
- ✓ Baby powder (sample size will last a long time): to lightly dust inside of swim caps after drying them; keeps them from sticking together & easier to put on!
- ✓ Swim shampoo, conditioner, hairbrush, comb, contact solution, girls-only stuff, deodorant, and other toiletries
- ✓ A DRY Change of clothes for after the meet
- ✓ Activities and Games to pass the time! Bring cards, Gameboys, homework, books.
- ✓ INHALERS: If your child is asthmatic, this is the most important thing they own. Different environments have different triggers that can set off an attack. Tell the coach(es) if your child has asthma & where their inhalers are! Bring their inhalers!!!
- ✓ Ear drops: usually a vinegar/alcohol solution in a glycerin base - you don't want to deal with swimmer's ear. Use after practice & meets. Every practice. Every meet.

What to do when you arrive at the Meet: Check it Out/Settle In

Some meets have events that are Positive Check-In events. What that means is that though your child may be entered in the meet and in that event they will not officially be entered until they Sign In. The reason this is done is because the long events take much more time and meet organizers want to have as few empty lanes as possible. Examples include Friday night events and in some meets all events 200 Meters or over.

Once you have signed-in (if necessary) find a seat with other swimmers/parents from your team. Tell your child to head over to the rest of the team and to **TELL THE COACH THAT THEY ARE THERE AND ARE READY TO SWIM!** The coach(es) will be looking to see who is there so they can determine who will swim in the relays. They have to know who has shown up!

Buy a heat sheet (bring small bills as they generally cost under \$5; sometimes they lack adequate change). At some meets heat sheets are sold as a packet for the entire weekend and it may cost \$10-15. Heat Sheets are available to determine which events your child will swim. Each race is divided into 3 parts, Event/Heat/Lane. The Events swum are Freestyle, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Backstroke, Individual Medley (IM) and Relays: Freestyle and Medley. Review the Heat Sheets to find out where your child is entered and then mark the information on your swimmers hand or forearm as seen below. A black pen works great for this Swimmer Graffiti, but **ONLY** on DRY skin. List the events in order & leave room above & below the 1st & last events for possible relay event numbers in case your athlete is chosen to participate in one of our relays! Write small & carefully so your swimmer can read it!

For example, if your child is in Event #5, 25 Freestyle, Heat #1, Lane # 6: Event #22, 25 Breaststroke, Heat #2, Lane #3 and Event #68 Freestyle Relay, Heat #1, Lane # 4 here is what you will write on his/her arm or back of the hand: (Note: If your child is entered in a relay be sure they know which leg of the relay, which stroke, and for the 8 and unders which side of the pool they need to be at for the start of the relay, Back and Fly at the start end and Breast and Free at the opposite end).

E	H	L	
5	1	6	25 Fr
22	2	3	25 Br
68	1	4	FR

Helpful Hints to have a Fun Meet

Don't be afraid to get involved, even if you've never been to a swim meet in your life. Consider being a Timer, timing is easy and you get an upfront look at the meet. You may even want to consider becoming an Official.

Have spare change for the concession stand and small bills to purchase heat sheets at the meets.

Be aware of when your child swims, so that they don't miss their race. Some events run faster than others. They will not hold the event to find a swimmer. If they miss it, they will not have the opportunity to make it up.

For the younger kids, usually 8 and unders most of the invitationals have a "Clerk of Course" where you take your child and they place them in the appropriate heats and walk them to the starting blocks. The older kids are expected to find their own way to the starting blocks, however, the 9 and 10 year olds still need some parent supervision.

Always check for relays! If your swimmer is scheduled to swim in a relay they will be notified by their coach prior to the first event (usually right after warm-ups around the time they do cheers). It is crucial that if your child is scheduled to swim a relay that they must stay at the meet until the completion of the relay! There are 4 swimmers on a relay, the swimmers count on each other to be there and to try their best! The relays are exciting and build great team spirit!

It is important to know that your swimmer will not be perfect in every race. There are many requirements for each stroke to be completed without disqualification. Your swimmer will learn these in time. Expect your swimmer to be disqualified (DQ) the first few times they swim an event, and praise them when they complete a race without disqualification! Even the most experienced swimmers are sometimes DQ'd.

Never discuss issues related to your child's progress as a swimmer with the coach during meets or practice, or around your swimmer, schedule a time to meet that works for both you and the coach!

CHEER! On all of the kids, congratulate all of the kids, console your child if necessary, but NEVER coach. Our coaches ask that each athlete come directly to them after their race so that they can tell them how to do better, congratulate them, whatever is necessary. The main thing is that your athlete realizes that they are there to beat their own times. Pouting, getting angry, scowling, crying and worst of all bragging is unsportsmanlike conduct and parents must avoid it at all costs! Try to teach your swimmer to be a good sport & to congratulate the swimmer who wins. Someday it will be your child's turn to be the one congratulated and boy, does it feel good!

How long is the average swim meet?

Expect 4 hours or more! Swim meets are not known for their brevity. Bring something to occupy the time while you wait for your swimmer to swim again. Play cards, read the paper, write a letter, file your nails, etc. Bring extra towels or blankets to sit upon to prevent bleacher buns. Sit with other Flying Fish parents & get to know each other: we're a happy bunch and will include you and your Aunt Harriett in our conversations!

All of us have met some friends we will have forever at swim meets. You will too. Don't be afraid to ask questions of other parents, we all started out not knowing anything about USA Swimming and SFF and have learned by asking questions and listening.

Make the season FUN for you and your swimmer! Always encourage your swimmer to do their best before every race.

Smile! You're going to love it...but be flexible!

Volunteer Opportunities

Our team has many volunteer opportunities for you to help the team and to meet your volunteer obligations. Volunteering is a great way to learn more about the sport, meet new friends, and enjoy the meets. Volunteer job descriptions and job assignments can be found under "Volunteer" listing on our website.

Once again, WELCOME!! We are so glad you are part of the Sycamore Flying Fish team☺