

June 16, 2009

Bull-Pen Letter to parents:

We understand that meets can be very loud, confusing and at times frustrating when you're not sure where to find information, who to ask or how the meets work. With 150 plus kids and over half of them are 10 and under we've made some changes to the Bull-Pen process. We are adding more bull-pen volunteers both in the bull-pen area and at the blocks. With more volunteers in the bull-pen we will be available to answer questions, direct parents and swimmers and help set up relays for the younger swimmers. So please, go to the bull-pen if you have questions or can't find information. At the starting blocks, the bull-pen people will help to make sure the kids are lined up in the correct lane and order to keep the races running smoothly.

For the meets to run smoothly, it's very important for everyone to be patient, keep track of your kids, make sure they report for their races on time and ready to swim (i.e. goggles, caps etc) and do your best to follow these guide lines. Please take the time to look over these procedures and feel free to ask one of the bull-pen volunteers if you have any questions.

Rules:

- 1) Bull-Pen check-in: Swimmers must check in with the bull-pen before 6:15 or we will assume you're a no-show (unless approved by the coaches in advance). All changes to the line-up must be made before the races start; the coaches need time to replace missing kids in races and relays.
- 2) If for some reason you need to leave early before you completed all your races you must check-out with the bull-pen so we can fill your remaining races. If your family has completed all their races it is fine to leave early without checking out with the bull-pen.
- 3) Please feel free to direct all of your questions to the bull-pen. We may not have all the answers but we can help point you in the right direction.
- 4) Where to report for a race??
 - 10 and under Relays report to the bull-pen area- race #1 to 4 and #61 to 65.
 - All Individual races # 11 to 60 report directly to the starter blocks.
 - 11 and up relays, are responsible for organizing your relays yourselves. If you have any problems go the bull-pen for help.

5) **WHEN TO REPORT FOR A RACE??** A good rule of thumb is to report 5 races before your race. The best way to be sure you don't miss any races is to pay attention, keep track of the kids so you can find them quickly and listen to the starter, they will make announcements you need to know. Tips:

- When you're checking your lane assignments, count back 5 races before your race to figure out when you need to report for your race. If you need help, ask the bull-Pen volunteer.
- Beware! Races are not always in order, some numbers are skipped (race #21 and #22 are skipped) and sometimes races are combined.
- Younger age groups will have more A, B, C or D races than the older age groups, so they go through numbers quicker.
- The starter will announce any changes in the race order and the race numbers.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE 5 RACE RULE:

- **Race #1-4:** 10 and under - Medley Relays must report to the bull-pen area after the coach "Pep-Talk". These are the first races and we want to start on time, so please report to the bull-pen after warm-ups and the coach's pep-talk.
- **Race #61-64:** 10 and under Free relays: must report to the bull-pen area after race #50 (if you're in race #50/51/52/53 report as soon as you're ready).
 - 11 and up relays race # 5 => 10 should report directly to the blocks: The older swimmers should be able to collect and position the relay teams themselves. If you need any help or have problems they should go to the bull-pen for help.

Other useful information:

Race 1-10 Medley Relays

Race 11-20 Freestyle

Race 21-22 Skipped (8 and under do not race Individual Medleys).

Race 23-30 Individual Medley

Race 31-40 Breast Stroke

Race 41-50 Backstroke

Race 51-60 Butterfly

Race 61-70 Free Relays.

Girls races are odd number races

Boys races are even number races

Ribbons:

12 and under - Ribbons are given out for 1st thru 6th place in individual races and only 1st and 2nd place for relays.

13 and older - Ribbons are awarded for 1st thru 3rd place and only 1st place for relays.

Races start at 6:30. Home team warm-up 5:45 to 6; Away team warm-up is 6 to 6:15.

What to do when you arrive at the meet:

- 1) Check-in with the bull-pen.
- 2) Find the "Event Sheets". For home meets two sets of Event sheets are posted in the windows of the club house. At away meets they are usually posted on a wall or fence. Ask the bull-pen if you can not find them.

These sheets are in alphabetical order by the swimmers last name. These sheets **DO NOT** list the lane assignments! (more on lane assignments below). Under each swimmer name it will list all the races they are in. For example:

Jane Swimmer:

#1 Medley relay-back	#11D Free style
#41B Backstroke	#61 Free relay - 3

How to read these sheets:

Races #1 to 4 - Medley relay (only one relay per age group) Jane will swim the back stroke. In the medley relay each swimmer swims a different stroke; the strokes are in alphabetical order, Back, Breast, Butterfly, and Free. The 10 and under swimmers will swim 25 yards so the Back and Butterfly need to line up at the starter/block end of the pool and the Breast, Free swimmers need to line up at the "turn end" of the pool. Jane should report to the bull-pen after warm-ups/pep talk.

#11D-Freestyle - Individual race. The race order is 11, 11A, 11B, 11C, 11D. Jane should report to the blocks when they call for race #10.

Race #41B- Backstroke: Individual race. Jane should report to the blocks by race #36.

Race #61 Freestyle relay #3. All swimmers will swim freestyle. Jane is in the third position. 10 and under swim 25 yards so the swimmers need to lined up at both ends of the pool. Swimmers 1 and 3 line up at the starter/block end of the pool; swimmers 2 and 4 line up on the turn end of the pool.

- 3) Get ready for warm-ups. Listen for the coaches to call all ORCA's for warm-ups followed by coach's pep talk.
- 4) After warm-ups look for the Heat Sheets with lane numbers:
The home team scorers place the swimmers in their lanes and typically we do not get the lane assignments until after warm-ups. The lane assignments are listed on the Heat Sheets which list the races in race order 1-70. So you need to look up each race you're in and find the lane you're in for that race. The bull-pen will post several copies of the Heat sheets and the bull-pen volunteers will have copies. PLEASE: There will be a lot of people trying to view only a limited number of heat sheets, PLEASE be patient, wait in line, and if you are not in race #1 -10 let the people in the first 10 races go first. If your first race is later in the meet wait until the crowd thins. THANKS!
- 5) Swim fast, have fun.