

MY FIRST MEET



ENTER

- **What do I fill in on the meet entry form?**

Fill in the entry form and sign it. Be sure to attach your USMS card to the entry. Although we must use your name and information exactly as it appears on your USMS card, we ask that you fill in contact information such as phone number and/or email in case we need to reach you before the meet.

- **What about seed times?**

Seed times represent your approximate guess of times for events you plan to swim. They are used to put you in races with swimmers of similar speeds so you don't get stuck swimming with someone a lot faster or slower than you. If you cannot estimate your times, entering "NT" for no time will place you in the first race which usually (but not always) has the slower swimmers.



PREPARE

- **What do I bring to the meet?**

Obviously bring a swimming suit, towels, and goggles. Extra towels are recommended; you can keep one dry in your locker to use after the meet when you get dressed. Bring some warm dry clothes (warm-up suit, sweat suit, or tee shirt and sweat pants) to keep warm between your events. Sometimes, you can bring a lock if you use the pool lockers, but our pool has pay lockers taking a quarter. We will have snacks, but you can also bring your own along with a drink or water bottle.



ARRIVE

- **What do I do when I get there?**

The first thing to do is check in at the registration table in the lobby to be sure your registration is complete for the meet. We will give you your lei greeting, and a souvenir to remember your first meet. Pick up your tee shirt here if you ordered one. You also receive a meet program with meet announcements, relay entry procedures, and schedule of races. Use this to determine when you are scheduled to swim your race.

- **When do I warm-up?**

Dress and enter the pool area, claim your territory on the pool deck, and swim your warm up. Stretching on deck is recommended. All lanes of the pool are open to swimmers during the 45 minute warm-up period prior to the meet start. During warm-ups, you can swim laps and drills, but kickboards and paddles are not allowed. After the meet starts, there will always be one lane available for warm up and warm down before and after your race. Some people do not warm up prior to the meet start. They instead wait to warm up at a time just before their race, especially if their first race is scheduled late in the meet.

- **Can I practice starts?**

Not all the time. You must always enter the pool in a safe manner during warm-ups, - no jumping in on top of swimmers, and no dive starts. For 15 minutes in the middle of the warm-up period, a lane or two will be designated for swimmers to practice their starts. During this time only, you can dive from the designated starting block and swim to the pool end.



• When do I swim?

Each event will have several races or "heats" scheduled. For example, the third heat of an event is the third race for that event. Use the meet program to determine what heat and lane you are assigned to swim in. You do not need to check in prior to your races, and your name will not be called for your race. Pay attention to the meet progress, and when it is time for your race, show up at the starting blocks.

• Anything to do before my race?

Just before your race, it is a good idea to check with the lane timer to be sure you are at the correct lane and heat. The starting official will give three or more short whistles. This is a signal to the swimmers to take off all warmup suits, sandals, and clothing. Another long whistle follows, which means it's time to get up on the starting blocks or get into the water for backstroke events. You do not have to dive in from the starting blocks to start, but can start from the edge of the pool, or from in the water.

• When do I go?

The starting official will give a hand signal and say "take your mark." During a short pause, the official will glance to be sure everyone is still and not moving on the starting blocks, then will start the race. The electronic starter will sound and a strobe light will flash, signaling the start. Now get going! A false start will occur if you leave or are moving before the start occurs, and you will be disqualified after you finish the race. If the official gives a premature start or if several swimmers false start, the electronic starter might flash and beep several times, signaling everyone to stop swimming and to get back to the starting blocks. But, this does not happen often.

• Is my race done?

After touching the wall at the end of the race, leave the pool quickly. It is courteous to stay in the water until the remaining swimmers also finish, but not necessary – we want to move the meet along. If you must use a ladder to exit, do not immediately swim across another swimmer's lane to reach it. Wait in your lane until the other swimmers have finished their races, then swim across their lanes to the ladder.



• How is my time determined?

Your time is determined using times from three stopwatches. The fastest and slowest times are dropped and the remaining time is your official time. Be careful not to interrupt or distract timers while they are recording times or getting ready for the start of the next race. Ask timers for your time only after the next race starts so you are not distracting them during the start.

• Did I come in first?

After all races for each event are over, the times are submitted to the officials for recording. After recording, each event results (including your time and age group place) will be printed and posted on the pool wall. Times will be listed by age group, not by who you swam against in your race. If you are entitled to an award (first, second, or third place in your age group), you can pick it up at the awards table. Results for the meet will also be posted on our team web site later in the week. Now you will have something to compare at your next meet!

Above all, remember to relax, enjoy yourself, and cheer the other swimmers.

- Alexandria Masters Swimming