

Questions and Answers for New Swim Parents

Your child has told you that he or she wants to join a swim team. How exciting! Now you are wondering what this means for you and your family. Here are some basic topics you should be familiar with and some questions you should ask before your child dives in.

1. Basic Information

Q. What is a competitive swim team?

A. The Wyoming Waves Swim Team is a year round swim team which provides swimmers of all ages, through training and guidance, the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to become world class citizens and world class athletes. Wyoming Waves is a USA Swimming affiliated organization based in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Wyoming Waves provides an opportunity for all athletes to swim in a safe, healthy environment while pursuing the highest level of personal development, both in and out of the pool.

Q. Are there any requirements for my swimmer to join the Wyoming Waves team?

A. A child must be at least 5 years old and able to swim 25 yards unassisted to join the competitive team. The Wyoming Waves also sponsors a developmental swim program called the Little Waves where the only requirement is that the child be at least 5 years old. No swimming experience is necessary to join as a Little Wave.

Q. What do I do to start?

A. By contacting Coach Jamie Winkler, a board member, attending a practice at East High School pool, or online through the Wyoming Waves website.

Q. Do you have a trial period?

A. Each new swimmer is given a two week trail period.

Q. How is the Wyoming Waves organized?

A. The Wyoming Waves is a 501(C) (III) nonprofit corporation which is affiliated with USA Swimming and Wyoming Swimming, Inc.

Q. What is USA Swimming?

A. USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming. It administers competitive swimming in accordance with the Amateur Sports Act. They also provide programs and services for members, supporters, affiliates and the interested public. Visit <http://www.usaswimming.org/> for more information.

Q. What is Wyoming Swimming, Inc. (WSI)?

A. Within the United States, there are fifty-nine (59) Local Swimming Committees (LSCs). Each LSC is responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws under which it operates. A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of the LSC. Wyoming Swimming, Inc. (WSI) is our Local Swimming Committee. WSI's geographical area consists of the state of Wyoming and the western Nebraska panhandle. Visit <http://www.wyomingswimming.org> for more information.

Q. Who runs Wyoming Waves?

A. A Board of Directors is elected by the membership to run the business affairs of The Wyoming Waves. All Board members are parent volunteers and athlete representatives who do not receive any payment for their service to the Wyoming Waves. The Board hires a head coach. The Board, in coordination with the Head Coach, is primarily responsible for establishing policy and budgets; running meets; fundraising; collecting dues and fees; coordinating parent volunteers; holding monthly meetings; and, overseeing the financial affairs of the club. The Head Coach is primarily responsible for the assistant coach staffing, supervision and education; scheduling of practices, meets and camps; organizing team activities; establishing coaching philosophy and training plans; setting goals; taking necessary disciplinary actions; and, acting as liaison with Wyoming Swimming.

2. Financial Obligations. The Wyoming Waves employs a professional coach, pays USA and Wyoming Swimming fees, purchases equipment for swimmers, and incurs other necessary expenses. These costs must be passed on to the swim team members in the form of membership fees and team fees. Questions you should ask are:

Q. What is the total cost per year for my child?

A. Swimmers are required to pay yearly registration fees for USA Swimming and Wyoming Swimming of \$49.00. Monthly dues for the 2007/2008 seasons are \$45.00 from Oct to Jun.

Q. What is the average cost per year for competitions for a swimmer of my child's age and ability?

A. Meet entry fees usually run from \$25 - \$45.

Q. How are entry fees for swim meets collected?

A. Meet entry forms are located on the team website or in the box located at East High School by the pool. Entry fees are collected with the meet entries. Checks for meet entry fees should be made out to Wyoming Waves. Meet entry forms need to be given to Coach Jamie prior to the appropriate deadline and payment mailed to the Treasurer.

Q. What equipment and outfitting will my child need and how much does it cost?

A. Swimmers need suits, caps, and goggles. A good practice suit runs about \$35 - \$45 and goggle cost between \$10 and \$20. A GST cap is free with membership.

Q. Where do I get the equipment such as suits, caps and goggles that my child needs?

A. Wyoming Waves swim gear and team apparel is available through the customized team store online or online through a variety of retailers.

3. Swim Practice. Questions you should ask are:

Q. Where are swim practices held?

A. Wyoming Waves swim practice is held at the Cheyenne East High School, 2800 E Pershing Blvd, Cheyenne, WY 82001. The facility is a 6 lane, 25 yard. Through cooperation with the East High School staff we are privileged to use this facility.

Q. How many days a week will my child have swim practice?

A. The practice schedule varies depending on the availability of the pool. The practice schedule is posted on the Wyoming Waves website and in the weekly newsletter.

Q. Who will be coaching my child? What is this coach's background and experience?

A. Coach Jamie Winkler is registered with USA Swimming and Wyoming Swimming and has completed all required certifications, training and testing required by USA Swimming and Wyoming Swimming.

Q. Do I drop my child off or can I stay and watch practice?

A. Parents are welcome to watch practice. However, parents are asked to stay in the bleachers and to not interrupt practice. If parents need to communicate with their swimmer during practice, they should inform the coach and the coach will take the swimmer out of the water for them. Otherwise parents are asked to wait until after practice to talk to their swimmer or to the coach.

Q. What is Dryland training?

A. Dryland is a session during practice that includes stretching, jogging, stationary exercise and other physical activities designed to provide extra strength training and cardiovascular exercise. Dryland training is also important for injury prevention.

4. Swim Meets. Swimming competitions are called meets. Meets are organized so that children are competing against other children of similar ages and abilities. Questions you should ask are:

Q. Do I chose the meets my child competes in?

A. Yes. Swimmers and parents are encouraged to talk to the coach about attending meets.

Q. How do I enter my child in a meet?

A. Information on Team Meets and meet entry forms are posted on the Wyoming Waves website and are also available in the box at the East High School pool. If you are unsure of which events to enter your swimmer in, be sure to ask the coach. Entry forms need to be filled out and given to the coach.

Q. How often will my child compete in meets?

A. A Team Meet schedule is posted on the website and on the Wyoming Waves bulletin board at the beginning of each season. Generally, one or two Team Meets are scheduled each month of the season. A coach will attend all Team Meets.

Q. Where are the meets held?

A. Wyoming Waves competes in meets held in Cheyenne and in surrounding cities such as Laramie, Casper, Gillette, Ft Collins, Loveland, and Scottsbluff.

Q. What are the differences between short course and long course seasons?

A. Short course (SC) simply means swimming in a pool that is 25 yards. Long course (LC) means swimming in a pool that is 50 meters (like the Olympics). There are seasons for each. SC season is September thru March, and LC season is April thru August. The events are roughly the same. For example, there is a 50 meter (LC) freestyle as well as a 50 yard freestyle, but a meter is slightly longer than a yard (1 meter = 3.3 yards).

Q. Who prepares and sends the meet entries to the host team?

A. Meet entries are prepared by the coach.

Q. Who is responsible for providing transportation to meets?

A. Parents are responsible for providing transportation for their swimmer.

Q. What do parents do at the meets?

A. At home meets, which are held in Cheyenne, parents are asked to perform required functions such as timing, working with meet management, helping with hospitality, etc. At away meets, parents are often asked to help with timing.

Q. What do we need to do to prepare for the swim meet?

A. Make sure you bring all of your swim gear; team suit, team cap, goggles, and more than one towel. Usually it is not a good idea to use new goggles for the first time at a meet. Make sure you prepare for the weather by bringing proper clothing; parkas, sweaters, extra pants if cold. Don't forget sunscreen for summer outdoor meets. Also, bring water, Gatorade, and nutritious food so your child will eat properly and stay hydrated. Make sure your swimmer gets a good night's sleep before each day of the meet.

Q. What do we do when we arrive at the meet?

A. Make sure you arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the beginning of warm-ups or when the coaches tell you to be there. Check in with your coach to see when the swimmer should get ready for warm-ups. Purchase a program to determine which events, heats and lanes your swimmer is in. Coach will also have a program and can supply this information to you. Encourage the swimmer to conserve energy and to not use all of their energy playing around at the meet. Save it for the race. Sit with the team and cheer for the other Wyoming Waves swimmers.

Q. What is an Event?

A. An event is a specific type of race such as "11-12 year old Girls, 100 yard butterfly". There may be many "heats" per event.

Q. What is a Heat?

A. When there are more swimmers for an event than there are lanes in the pool (for example, 16 swimmers in an eight lane pool), the first heat includes eight swimmers. The second heat includes the next eight swimmers. The best times from all the heats for an event determine the first, second, and third place finishers for the event. A swimmer can win his or her heat and still not place overall in the event.

Q. Why do I have to be there for warm up when my child does not swim until two hours later?

A. Warm-up is essential because it helps the swimmers get focused on their events and accustomed to the pool that they are racing in (starts, turns, backstroke count, etc.). Swimmers are accustomed to doing a good warm up everyday at practice and need to create the same experience on meet day. Not warming up can lead to injuries in the future. Swimmers should show up to warm-up on time and be ready to get in at the START of warm-up.

Q. What does it mean to be "DQ"ed?

A. It means there are aspects of the stroke that we still need to work on! When a swimmer is disqualified or "DQ"ed it means that there is something that they did that is illegal under the swimming rules. A DQ can be for something like a one handed touch in breaststroke, false starting, or a stroke violation like flutter kick on the fly. A DQ is no big deal and although it may cause some tears, it is best to keep it in perspective. Every swimmer has received or will receive a DQ at some point in his or her swimming career.

Q. What is a False Start?

A. When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the start horn sounds.

Q. What strokes do the swimmers use in competition?

A. Freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

Q. What is Freestyle?

A. Freestyle is usually the front crawl with the flutter kick, but any stroke or combination of strokes is legal as long as the swimmer does not walk on the bottom of the pool or use the lane line to gain momentum, and touches the walls on turns.

Q. What is Backstroke?

A. Backstroke is done on the swimmer's back. A flutter kick is used while the arms alternate (one then the other). Swimmers cannot roll past 90 degrees from their back as they stroke and cannot roll onto their sides or stomach when approaching the finish wall. (Many younger swimmers have a tendency to do this to see how close they are to the wall; they will need to learn to count the number of strokes they need to take after they pass under the flags.)

Q. What is Breaststroke?

A. The breaststroke uses the whip kick (or frog kick is acceptable), while arms pull underwater simultaneously. The two hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turn and finish.

Q. What is Butterfly?

A. In the butterfly, the feet and knees are together on the kick (dolphin kick), while arms move simultaneously. The two hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turn and finish.

Q. What is an Individual Medley?

A. An event where the swimmer swims each stroke in a specific order: fly, back, breast, and free.

Q. What are Relays?

A. Relays are a combination of four swimmers. The freestyle relay consists of four individual freestyle swims and the medley relay consists of four individual strokes--backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle. The coaches will determine who swims on the relays.

Q. How long is each race?

A. Different age groups swim different race lengths. Short Course distances for 8 & Under swimmers are generally 25, 50 or 100 yards and their Long Course distances are 50, 100 or 200 meters. 9 – 12 year olds swim Short Course

distances of 50, 100, 200 or 500 yards and 50, 100, 200 and 400 meters. Swimmers, age 13 and older, swim Short Course distances of 100, 200, 500, 1000 and 1650 yards and Long Course distances of 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1500 meters.

Q. How should parents behave at meets?

A. Parent's behavior at swim meets is vital to the success of their swimmer. It is also important for the success of the team.

1) Don't Coach. Leave the coaching to the coaches. This includes pre-race strategy, "psyching up", and motivating. This also includes post-race critiquing and setting goals.

2) Support the Coaches. They need your support for everyone to "win".

3) Be Your Swimmer's Best Fan. Support your child unconditionally. Do not get upset or withdrawn if your child performs poorly. Your child should not have to perform well to win your approval and support.

4) Support and cheer for all swimmers on the team.

5) Take your concerns directly to the coach in an appropriate manner. Do not go to parents to discuss concerns.

5. Volunteering and Parental Responsibilities. Most teams depend heavily on parent volunteers to perform a variety of tasks. Questions you should ask are:

Q. How can I contribute to my child's team if I know very little about swimming?

A. You can contribute by helping with meets, fundraisers and team activities. Your biggest contribution will be your unconditional love and support for your swimmer.

Q. Who can I ask when I have questions?

A. The coach is the best place to start if you have questions directly related to your swimmer. The Board is available for other related questions. The coach and board contact phone numbers and email addresses is posted on the Wyoming Waves website. In addition, GST has a very informal structure. There

are usually board members or “experienced” parents at the pool who can help find answers to your questions as well.

Q. What is expected or required of parents?

A. Parents are expected to help at home meets and team activities and to participate in team fundraisers.