“Rules” for Racing

Attitudes matter. Expectations matter. Actions matter.

Meet Attitudes:

 **Go to the meet to swim fast, to be a player – not to be a spectator.**

 Show up early so that you can be on time and ready to go for warm-up

 During warm-up, practice your strokes as you do at practice, show off your good stroke techniques and get your muscles warmed up.

 Know in your mind that you are in the best shape of your life and your body is ready to swim it’s fastest.

** Leave it all in the pool, from start to finish try to lead your heat.**

 No roller coaster rides. Don’t start off slow then build up your races. Let it all out from start to finish.

 Race your guts out, with consistent strokes and a positive attitude. Practice is over it is time to show off all your hard work.

 You only get to swim each event once so give it 100%. If you don’t give it your all, you will never know how fast you truly are.

 Don’t hold back, your body is trained to handle each event you swim.

 **In any close race, get your hand on the wall first.**

**Finish the job.**

 The proper attitude is: No Matter What.

 Don’t fall “just short.” Practice to exceed your expectations and goals.

 No “if onlys”: regret is a wasted emotion. If the strength is there, use it.

 **Expect to swim fast, decide to swim fast.**

 No “wiggle room”, i.e., convenient excuses.

Don’t allow yourself to make excuses.

 Swimmer’s expectations are key to swimmers’ performance.

 Swimmers can swim fast even when things are not perfect.

 **Swim better as the meet progresses and others tire.**

 Everyone is tired. Your body is trained to swim fast and to not give up

 Know your goals and stay on track to achieve them.

 You do not have to feel good to swim fast.

 Conditions do not have to be perfect for you to swim fast.

 **Get tougher under tougher conditions.**

 The worse the weather, the more the champions show.

 The worse the weather, the more I like it.

Meet Expectations:

 **Learn from your mistakes; fix them.**

**Learn from others’ mistakes; avoid them.**

 Take stock after meets.

 A willingness to confront weaknesses and correct them is key.

 Keep things interesting by challenging yourself at each practice. At each practice pick out three stroke weaknesses/changes that you would like to fix. Then see if you can make it through the entire practice sticking to the goals that you have just set for yourself.

 Use meets as educational opportunities.

 **Cherish being on relays, and swim even faster on relays.**

 If you are chosen to swim on a relay, understand that you have been chosen out of all of the kids on your team to represent your team and teammates.

 Be supportive towards your teammates and help each other to get focused to swim fast.

 **Be self-reliant.**

**Know how to think for and take care of yourself during a meet.**

 Your mom & dad can’t get on the blocks, have not been swimming at every practice, and cannot swim for you. **Depend on you!!!**

 Mom & Dad’s job at the meet is to be supportive and to enjoy watching you race.

(**Parents** don’t hold your swimmers back from becoming young athletes by taking away their swimming responsibilities. This is their sport that they have chosen to participate in so let them enjoy it and have fun. Allow your athlete’s to fail & succeed on their own so that they can learn to handle everything that life has to throw at them. Most importantly keep in mind that your young swimmers have been trained to be successful so support them, don’t coach them and they will do just that.)

 Your Coaches job at the meet is to give you race advise and to help you stay focused so that you can achieve your goals.

 Swimmer’s job at the meet is to check in & be on time for warm-up, see your coach before & after each event, warm-up before each swim & cool down after each event, know your heat and lane assignments & be behind the blocks at least 3-5 heats before your race, and to race fast & leave it all in the pool.

 Have a practiced routine for the meet to help you manage your time while the meet is going on.

 Talk with your coach if you have any questions, they are there to help you.

 **Love to race. Enjoy the challenge to see how fast you are.**

 Racing is fun.

 It’s hard to get good by yourself. The Worthy Opponent helps you to expand your limits.

 Race your own race. Do the same thing you do at practice everyday.

 Racing every day all the time takes the fear out of racing.

Meet Behaviors:

 **The Challenge: It is VERY difficult to swim well from start to finish at a big meet.**

 Natural challenges: many races, long sessions and very long days, several days in a row, and weather indoors and out...

 Poor choices make a difficult challenge practically impossible. Things you do out of the water will affect your races, exp. Proper nutrition & hydration.

 Negative thoughts and attitudes. The way you think and the words you say can play a big role in how you swim, exp. That was Awful, I’m tired, I don’t want to swim that event, My head hurts, I can’t do that.

These phrases are all just a state of mind. If you think positively you will have a greater percentage of successful swims, exp. I love to race, I’m the best kicker on the team, I can win my heat, No one in the pool works as hard as I do, I feel great.

 A fast swimmer will put aside all of the distractions of the meet and just focus on how well and what a good job they are going to do.

Once your mind is focused it is time to prep your body, exp. Warm-up, cool down, eat healthy snacks and drinks, stay off your feet in between races, & have fun racing your friends.

***Swimmers will create consistently good performances by creating good habits.***

 Plan out each race. Think of each race like writing a short story.

* Introduction, warming up for your race
* Initiating Action, checking your heat & lane and talking with your coach
* Rising Action, preparing behind the blocks & stepping up to race
* Climax, Your race (plan in detail: know how many kicks you will take off each wall, image how your body and strokes will feel during your swim, race your friends & opponents around you, accelerate into and off of each wall, then when things start getting tough push through the pain and finish strong into the wall) the more detailed you plan your race the better your swim will be, step up on the blocks with a plan & you’ll be ready to race.
* Falling Action, after you have executed your plan and finished into the wall knowing you have swam your best race possible.
* Conclusion, talking with your coach and getting congratulated by your parents & teammates on how well you swam.

 Plan each event out during practice so all that you have to do is race at the meet.

 Do rehearsals for each event at practice. Race in each practice as if you where racing in a meet.

 Know your strengths and weaknesses in the pool. Then show off your strengths and try to improve your weaknesses at each practice.

Meet Actions:

**Practice**

 Don’t self-taper by skipping practice the day before the meet or the day after

**Calm Before the Storm**

 Get a lot of sleep the 2 nights before the meet.

 Fuel adequately:

 Eat a high-carb dinner the night before.

 Eat a high-carb breakfast; stay away from the bacon and sausage.

 Wear your team uniform.

 Dress for the weather.

 Be on time, and check in with your coach first thing.

 Warm up with the team. Look like you know what you’re doing.

**Before Each Race**

 Pre-race rituals are individual, but they need to get you

READY TO RACE!!!

 Talk to your coach before each race.

 Warm up well.

 Purpose of warming up: physiology (letting your muscles know what it is that you are about to do), technique, psychology (know your race strategy).

 Timing of warm-up is critical. Try to warm up 23 minutes before race-time.

 Figure out when you swim by learning how to use a heat sheet.

 How much to warm up: warm up hard/fast enough to serve its purpose.

Rule of thumb: 10 & U: 50-400; 11-12: 100-500; 13-14: 150-600yds

**During Races**

 Race your guts out. Leave it in the pool. Finish happy.

**After Races**

 Most common mistakes: not warming up properly, not cooling down properly.

 The 2-minute drill: be warming down within two minutes of having finished the race.

 Warming down means swimming, not standing around chatting.

 What and how much to do:

 Same distance guidelines as for pre-race warm-up. Add a few hundred yards if this was the last event of the session or day.

 First half: stroke just swum or free style; second half: stroke about to be swum.

 Respectable pace, not slow and sloppy.

**Between Races**

 Use the time between races to recover, not to mess around or get in trouble.

 Stay off your feet.

 Cheer for your teammates. There is a balance between this and staying off your feet.

 Keep warm and dry. Warm, relaxed muscles are fast muscles.

 Pay attention, and learn how to use and love the heat sheet.

 Missing a race is bad for everyone.

 Eat and drink appropriately.

This depends on how much time between races.

A little: sports drink. Medium: sports drink and a snack. A lot: a full meal.

 Junk food, candy, soda, etc. will be confiscated.

Special Considerations:

 Prelims/Finals Meets. Swim fast in the morning if you want a chance at making finals. Take a nap and eat a healthy meal in between sessions.

 Stresses are cumulative. When you come onto the pool deck leave the bad things that happened that day at the door. Try to keep the pool deck a positive place to hang out and swim fast with your friends. Have fun!!!

 Consequences of poor choices will accumulate throughout the meet. Making the last day of the meet harder to swim fast.

 Remember why you came to the meet!!! To Swim Fast & Have Fun.

 No warm-down pool. Stretch in a hot shower.

 Deal with problems as they arise. Don’t worry about things that you can’t control.

 If breaks between events, use your time wisely.

 If no pool available at all, find a way to get the heart rate up and body ready. Stay moving behind the blocks when getting ready for your race.

 Smart kids stay strong from start to finish at a long, hard meet.

 Knowing your routine without having to think or worry about it helps keep you calm during a championship meet.

 Team Travel Meets. Understand that you are representing your team the entire time you are on the trip. Make sure your actions are something to be proud about. Be a strong team representative while on travel.

 When you are forced out of your comfort zone, stay calm and collected and then make small adjustments as needed so that you can still swim fast.

 Parents are not there to make all the decisions and smooth over every problem. Take responsibility for your own actions. Understand that everything that you do on and off the pool deck has consequences.

 “What can I do to swim faster? —Questions that guide decision- making. Try to answer questions like these at practice. Your coaches can help you to fix your strokes to make you faster but you have to be willing to make the change.