**Tips for Open Meets**

***What does my child need to bring?***

- food and drinks (see section on recommended food below)

- T-bag/t-shirt to wear after warm-up and in between races

- flip-flops

- goggles and FSC hat (plus spares)

- one towel per session plus an extra towel for the end

- don’t forget (if swimmers arrive in their poolside clothes) to make sure they have a dry set to go home in! It can also be useful to have a spare plastic bag for regular clothes and other belongings to keep them dry and in a locker while the swim bag is on poolside.

***Sign-in or Sign-out***

Meets can be “sign-in” or “sign-out”

At a sign-in meet, if you don’t sign in for each event by the specified time, you will not be allowed to swim. Always check sign-in, warm up and start times. If your swimmer is racing in more than one session in one day, sign-in for the later sessions may not be available at the start of the day. Your swimmer may need to come back out to the sign-in sheets after the first session is over to sign in for any later events.

At a “sign-out” meet, you must let your coach or team manager know before the warm-up starts if you are not planning on swimming a particular event. If you don’t, the meet will end up running with empty lanes, which prolongs the meet unnecessarily and reflects badly on FSC as a club.

Please turn up at least 15 minutes before the warm up and report poolside to your coach or team manager.

***Food before a meet***

Eat plenty for at least 2 days before an event, especially the night before. We recommend lots of pasta, bread, rice and potatoes (carbohydrate-rich food is best).

Eat little and often during the day if the event is in the evening

Foods to avoid

* Greasy foods (burgers, chips and doughnuts)
* Highly seasoned foods (pizza, curries and chillies)
* Fizzy drinks

***Food during a meet***

Choose things that are easily digestible and suitable for grazing throughout the day. The following work well:

* Pasta/Rice
* Bread, pitta bread, bagel or muffin
* Rice cakes
* Popcorn
* Banana
* Breakfast cereals or cereal bars
* Sports drinks/Weak squash (NO FIZZY DRINKS)
* Water – sip during the meet as most pools are very warm and it’s easy to get dehydrated.

Bring a snack for after the event. Swimmers have used up energy and need to replace it with something (so we recommend something like a cereal bar, biscuit, sandwich or banana).

***Warm up***

Warm up is 45 minutes to an hour before the event starts and is usually separate for boys and girls. Depending on numbers, often the older swimmers will warm up after the younger ones. There is no diving during the bulk of the warm up but towards the end of each warm up session, listen for the announcement as some lanes will become “sprint lanes” where swimmers can dive in and sprint one length, getting out at the other end and walking back.

The Coach may give your swimmer advice on how much warm up to do and what to concentrate on depending on the event they are swimming that day.

Once swimmers have warmed up they should dry off and keep warm.

Swimmers should make sure they know when the events they are swimming in will start and then should sit with the other club swimmers and wait for the Coach or Team Manager to tell them when to go to the Whipping area. If swimmers wander off, they might miss being sent to Whipping (see below) and could miss their race.

***Whipping/Marshalling***

Once the meet starts, announcements will be made calling each event in turn. When the announcement is made for your swimmer’s event, s/he will be called by the Coach or Team Manager and sent down to the Marshalling or Whipping area.

In the Whipping area your swimmer should put their goggles on their head or push them down around their neck. If they are carrying them it is possible they will put them down and misplace them. It will also stop them chewing and biting them! They should make sure they have their swimming hat on in plenty of time.

Swimmers will be lined up in the Whipping area in heat order and then asked to go and stand behind the relevant lane. The Timekeeper for the lane will ask your swimmer to confirm their name and will generally check that your swimmer knows what stroke they are about to swim.

After your swimmer’s last event they may go home. Before they leave, they should make sure to tell the Coach or Team Manager so that they know who is still poolside.

***Results***

When the races have been swum the times of each swimmer are recorded on the computer system. This produces the final result sheet after all the races for a particular event have been swum.

As soon as they are available, results sheets are displayed around the poolside for the swimmers and around the spectator area for you to read. If the host club is using Meet Mobile, results may be available on this app throughout the meet.

*Tip: It is worth noting your swimmer’s times for each event as DQs will not get an official time recorded, but praise for a PB, even with a disqualification, will help the disappointment.*

***Speeding Tickets***

For some lower graded open meets there are a set of upper cut-off times (usually UQT or UQT plus a few seconds), and swimming faster than these times earns a 'speeding-ticket'. Check the small print in the gala conditions, usually found on the host club’s website, to see if there will be speeding tickets and if so whether the cut of times are UQT or above. Getting a speeding ticket means that the swimmer is not eligible for medals (and is effectively disqualified) but it is a very positive indicator of a 'good time' for that race, in that age group. So your swimmer should be reassured that a speeding-ticket is a good thing!

***Medals***

Generally medals are awarded for the top three in each stroke/age group and ribbons can be awarded for 4th to 8th places. These can be collected at the meet any time after the results are published.