

CENTRAL VICTORIA SWIMMING

Swim Meet Handbook



A new swimmer's guide to the world of competitive swimming

Central Victoria Swimming Inc.

Introduction

It can be pretty daunting for a new swimmer at his or her first Swim Meet, and equally daunting for the parents! There can be hundreds of people all crowded around a 25m or 50m pool, lots of hustle and bustle, announcements on loud speakers, official-looking people everywhere and language you may never have heard before.

But despite the chaotic look and feel of the place it is actually highly organised. All Swim Meets run to pretty much the same proven formula regardless of whether it's being held in a small country town, at a large metro club or at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (MSAC).

At any Swim Meet, it's important not to compare our children's performances with others of the same age, because children progress at different rates as they develop physically and emotionally. And just as there are times when children can reach plateaus and improvement seems to slow, there are also periods of time when they can make rapid progress.

We've prepared a few pointers to help you get the most out of your day at the Swim Meet.

How do I find out what Meets are being run?

Clubs advertise their Swim Meets on the **Competitions** page at Swimming Victoria's website (www.swimmimgvictoria.org.au). They also mail "flyers" to the Club Secretary who will give them to the Team Manager for posting on the Club notice-board or in a Swim Meets folder in the club rooms. On the **Competitions** page of our website (www.cvs.org.au) you will also find information about Swim Meets in and around Central Victoria. Keep an eye on each of these places through the course of the season as they are always being updated.

Your coach is also on top of the Swim Meets for the whole season and may have developed a program of Swim Meets for you to compete at.

Club Nights and Time Trials

As well as running Meets that are open to all comers most clubs also run intra-club swimming events.

These are mostly in the form of Club Nights or Time Trials.

These are generally open to ALL Club Members regardless of your competitive status. In fact, they are a great opportunity for non-competitive swimmers to "have a go" at competitive swimming in a familiar environment, amongst friends.

Club Nights and Time Trials are run on a number of days through the season. Each Club has a different mechanism for determining success at these events but they invariably involve awards at the end of the season recognising a swimmer's improvement.

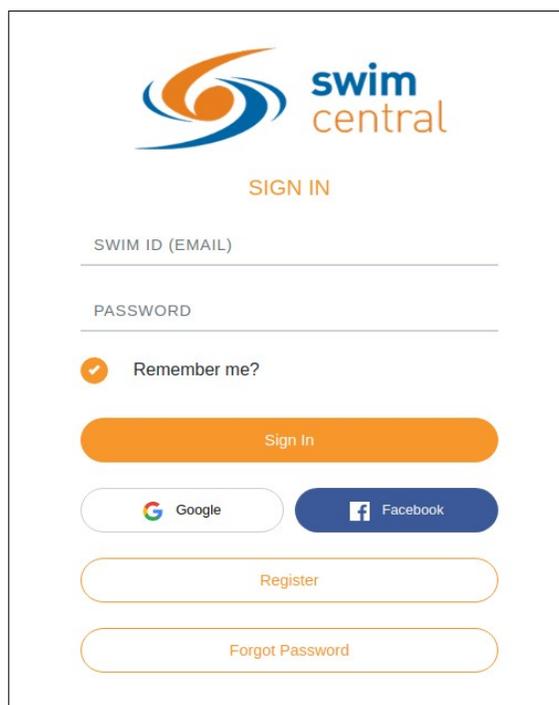
Club Nights and Time Trials are not about you versus another swimmer. They are about you versus yourself. Winners of the end of season trophies are not necessarily the fastest swimmers but they are always the swimmers who have shown the greatest improvement in their times over the course of the season. Proposed dates for Club Nights and Time Trials will be in your Club Handbook or on the Club website.

Entering a Swim Meet

Firstly, to compete at a Swim Meet that is either run by your Club and open to all comers or run by any other Club you must be registered as a Competitive swimmer. Non-competitive swimmers may not enter these Meets. If, during the course of the season, you would like to change to a Competitive swimmer then just speak to your coach or the Team Manager. It can be done quickly and easily at any time during the year.

Online Entry

The most common way to enter a Swim Meet is via the Swimming Victoria Online Entry portal. A Club that intends to run a Swim Meet will publish the Meet on their website and the Swimming Victoria website. There you will find a flyer providing the all the information you need to enter the Meet. You'll also find a link to **Swim Central** where you can select the events you want to swim and pay the Club.



The image shows a screenshot of the Swim Central login interface. At the top left is the Swim Central logo, which consists of a stylized blue and orange wave icon next to the text 'swim central'. Below the logo is a 'SIGN IN' button in orange. Underneath are two input fields: 'SWIM ID (EMAIL)' and 'PASSWORD'. Below the password field is a 'Remember me?' checkbox with a checkmark. Below that is a large orange 'Sign In' button. At the bottom of the form are two buttons for social login: 'Google' and 'Facebook'. Below these are two more buttons: 'Register' and 'Forgot Password'.

Use your unique **Swim Central** login/password to enter events at the Meet. If you're not sure what it is then speak to your Team Manager, Coach or Club Secretary. Select from the calendar the Swim Meet you wish to enter. You will only be presented with events for which

you meet the eligibility criteria. That criteria is typically limited to your age and gender. Some Meets, especially Championship Meets, will impose a time criteria. That is, you will only be able to enter the event if your Personal Best time equals or betters the time required.

The screenshot shows the 'Events Calendar' interface on the Swim Central website. The calendar is for July 2019, with the 7th highlighted in green. To the right, the event details for '2019 Bendigo Hawks Winter SC Series - Round 2' are displayed. The details include the organiser 'Bendigo Hawks Aquatic', event type 'State Championship', venue 'Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre Bendigo', start date '14-07-2019', finish date '14-07-2019', nominations open '20-05-2019', and nominations close '09-07-2019'. Under 'Membership Requirements', there is a red 'x' icon next to the text 'Swimmer (8yo & under) Jul19-Jun20 Swimming Australia'.

When you select an event your Personal Best time will be used to enter the event. If it's the first time you've competed in that event over that distance you will be entered with NT (No Time). So, how does Swim Central know what your best times are? Every Meet conducted in Victoria aspires to achieve an Approved Meet status. That is, the Meet has met a whole bunch of requirements stipulated by Swimming Victoria including (but not limited to) the number of Officials, the number of Time-keepers, the safety of the pool and surrounds and the way in which results are collated. Rest assured, it's very unusual for a Meet to not achieve Approved Meet status.

The results of all Approved Meets are loaded by SV into the National Results database and it's there that the Online Entry portal looks to find your best times.

Simply select the events you wish to enter, according to the entry rules of the competition, check what you've entered for accuracy and proceed to the credit card payment process. Job done. You're entered!

Manual Entry

If you can't pay by credit card or can't get access to a computer then there is always the manual method. You must first complete and submit an official Swimming Victoria Entry Form. You can submit an Entry directly to the host Club by the nominated closing date or to

Qualifying Times and Approved Meets

A Qualifying time is the maximum time in which a swimmer, competing in a given Age Group or Open event, must complete the swim. You must be able to prove, if requested by an Official, that you have previously swum the qualifying time at an Approved meet should you not complete the swim in the maximum allowed time.

Only competitions run at the State, Country and District level have qualifying times. Victorian, Victorian Country and District qualifying times can be found on the SV or CVS website.

To determine if a Meet at which you have competed was an Approved Meet visit the Swimming Victoria website and follow the link to the Events page. One of the chief criteria that must be satisfied before Swimming Victoria will grant a Club "Approved Meet" status for its Swim Meet is the number of Timekeepers in each lane. Approved Meet status will only be granted if every lane has three Timekeepers. That's why it is so important to volunteer for timekeeping whenever you can.

What to take and when to get there

Amongst the essential items to bring to a Swim Meet are:

- folding chairs
- sun screen and hats sunglasses
- a rug for the kids to sit on camera
- extra warmth if it might be cold water bottles
- thermos for tea, coffee, soup or pasta a nutritious lunch or snacks
- pen or pencil highlighter pen

Your Club will usually erect a sun-shade at local meets. For the swimmers, don't forget to pack in your swimming bag:

- Club SwimCap Goggles
- Spare goggle strap
- Thongs
- Two towels – you can purchase from most good sports stores a special swimmer's chamois (like the one dad uses on the car!) to quickly dry off after warm-up or an event. Two wet towels can get very heavy!

All swimmers are strongly encouraged to wear your Club Apparel to Swim Meets.

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Plan to arrive at Meets about one hour before the Meet begins. If the Meet starts at 10:00am then aim to be at the pool by 09:00am. All pools will charge admission, usually \$3.00 - \$4.00 per person and offer a Meet Program for sale, usually \$5.00. Most Clubs allow swimmers to enter free of charge.

Clubs will always sit together at a Meet so when you arrive at the pool find where your team-mates are and set yourself up for the day.

Check the Meet Program

The first thing to do when you get settled is to take the copy of the Meet Program you just purchased on entry and with your pen or your highlighter check to make sure you have been properly entered in your chosen events.

If you find an error or are unsure about an event speak with the Team Manager or a Coach immediately. Most Swim Meet organisers are happy to make late modifications to the Program due to errors or omissions if they are given plenty of time.

Parents, when you are happy with the program let your children know which Event numbers, Heat numbers and Lanes they are swimming in. It's not uncommon to see swimmers of all ages wandering around with that vital information written on the back of a hand!

Warming Up

Swimmers must warm-up prior to the commencement of the competition – that's why you should arrive at least one hour before the Meet begins! Your Swimming Coach will be on pool deck to assist with warm-up, which usually consists of stretches, slow laps, and short sprints. Practicing starting dives on unfamiliar blocks, turning and finishing on the wall are all good things to try out before the meet begins. When you are out doing your warm-up familiarise yourself with the location of the Marshalling area. If you are unsure ask a senior swimmer, a coach or the Team Manager.

The Marshaling and Event boards Located in a prominent position, usually down one end of the pool, will be the Marshalling and Event boards. The Marshalling Board is used to advise swimmers when they should go to the marshalling area for their next event. Senior swimmers will be on hand to lead the younger ones over to the Marshalling area if required. The Event Board is used to advise swimmers and parents the Event and Heat that is just about to be underway.

The Swim Meet announcer will usually broadcast the Event being swum currently and will also keep swimmers up to date with the state of event Marshalling. But it is your responsibility to always keep an eye on the Marshalling Board. Some events may have many Heats and some Events may have very few Heats – marshalling for your next event may come up more quickly than you thought!

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Marshalling

When your next Event and Heat is advertised grab your cap and goggles and find your Coach or the Head Coach. Your Coach will offer encouragement and some advice on how you should swim the race. It is very important that you speak to a Coach before you go to Marshall.

Having spoken with your Coach you can proceed to the Marshalling Area.

At the Marshalling area the Marshals will call out Events one Heat at a time. Listen carefully for your Event, your Heat and your name. When you hear your name report to the Marshall. He will check your name off against the program and give you your Heat and Lane assignment. Sometimes it is decided by the Meet Officials to combine Heats (and Events). Listen carefully to the Heat and Lane assignment given to you by the Marshall – it may be different to what is in the Program (or on the back of your hand!). At some Meets you will be directed to sit in a particular seat. At others you may be asked to stand in a line in a particular position. Whichever it is, make sure you do exactly as asked. Once you have been directed by the Marshall you must not leave the Marshalling area.

The Check Starter

Just before your heat is to be swum the Check Starter will lead you out to the pool deck behind the blocks. Make sure you do not lose your position in the line. The Check Starter will again ask your name and confirm the stroke and distance you are to swim. Then you're in the hands of the Starter and it's time to make all that hard work at training pay off!!

Getting your Results

After you have swum your race and been directed by the Referee to exit the pool you may walk behind the Timekeepers for your lane and politely ask for your time. Timekeepers must be always ready for the start of the next race so you must wait for an event to be underway before you ask.

The Timekeepers will be able to give you an approximate time only as the official time must be validated by the Scoring Officials. So, you may only get a time like 44-low or 41-mid or 52-high. Always say "thank-you" to the Timekeepers.

Depending on the Meet or the Club, results will be broadcast by the Swim Meet announcer – usually just the first three placings in each Event. Full results are posted on a board, a wall or a window somewhere around the pool. It pays to wander over to check the results from time to time just in case you have a ribbon or medal to collect! It's also good to write down the time you swam so that you can keep a personal record of your achievements.

Your Club will always get hold of a copy of the results for every Meet that they know members have competed at. If you are the sole representative of your Club or there is just a small handful of members present please let your Club Records Officer know so that a copy of the results can be

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obtained from the host Club. Once the Club has a copy of the full results they will be posted on the Club's noticeboard or website.

Timekeeping

This is perhaps the most important job at any Swim Meet. Without Timekeepers there can be no Meet. With insufficient Timekeepers the Meet cannot attain "Approved Meet" status and any times swum at the Meet cannot be used to enter future Meets at any Club. To attain "Approved Meet" status there must be three Timekeepers for each lane.

Every lane has a central timekeeper and two other timekeepers. Each has a stopwatch (supplied by the host Club) or a button to operate for the semi-automatic timing mechanism. When the Starter activates his hooter or gun each timekeeper starts his stopwatch and stops it when the swimmer finishes the race. Each time-keeper also presses the timing system button which will send the time directly to the central timing computer. The central timekeeper records each of the times in the program in case a rare computer malfunction occurs. There is also an official called the Chief Timekeeper who resolves any timekeeping problems and records the time of the winning lane.

Timekeeping really is an easy job, which provides the best seat in the house with snacks and drinks included!! Please take the opportunity to time-keep when you can to help the host Club and to help your swimmers.

Relay Teams

Relays are great fun and always the highlight of any Meet. Quite often swimmers do unofficial PBs in Relays. The Head Coach will select the Relay teams, usually before the day of the Meet. If you are selected please be sure that you make the swim. If for some reason you can't make it please let your coach or the Team Manager know immediately so other arrangements can be made. If you don't there will be at least 3 other very disappointed club-mates.

During the course of the season every effort will be made to give every swimmer a chance to compete in a Relay. For the big meets such as the Country Championships or the District Championships teams are usually selected based on performance in competition and performance at training. A swimmer who may swim fast but trains and competes very little will not necessarily be selected ahead of a swimmer who shows commitment to the Club and the sport of swimming in all aspects.

Conclusion

So, there you have it! There are many other things that we haven't touched on in this guide but we hope by now you have a good understanding of the most important things.

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Remember, if there is anything else you need to know or anything in this guide you are not sure about please speak to your coach, anyone on the committee or (probably the best resource of all) an experienced swimmer or parent. They will all be only too glad to help!

Good luck and Happy Swimming!!

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