



Swim Meets Policies & Expectations

(Revised August 2023)



Competition

The Helena and Butte Dolphins Swim Team (HDST) is a USA Swimming competitive team and believes that competition helps swimmers understand the reasoning behind what they do at practice, bond closer to their peers and increase confidence. While we have this swim meet requirement, the coaching staff makes sure that each swimmer is ready to head into competition as we want this to be a positive experience for every swimmer and for them to enjoy the competition.

There are two swim seasons in Montana Swimming that HDST participates in:

Short Course (25 yards/25 meter)

September-March

Competition Requirement: At least two swim meets are required. Swimmers who qualify for state championships are expected to participate. Those who qualify but do not attend state championships will be prohibited from participating in Montana Swimming's BC Championships or any other high-tier competition (like regionals). It should be noted that BC Championships should not be seen as a substitute for State Championships. The experience gained from participating in State Championships is vital before advancing to more competitive levels. If a swimmer does not qualify for State Championships during the short course season, they are invited to compete at BC Championships.

Long Course (50 yards/50 meters)

April - August

Competition Requirement: Swimmers who are participating in the summer season are required to attend the Helena meet that is held in July and if qualified for state championships are expected to participate.

Swim Meet Fees

Entry fees (set by the meet host), lodging, and travel expenses are not paid by HDST. HDST will try to get group rates at hotels when appropriate to help with travel costs.

What charges are included in "meet fees"?
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Individual Event Fees - this can range from \$2.00 or more, depending on the level of swim meet and meet hosts. This pricing is set by the meet host.

Swimmer Surcharge: This is a fee charged ONCE to all swimmers who attend a meet and is also set by the meet host.

Relays: Relay fees are covered by HDST and will not be charged to your account.

HDST Team Fee:

This fee is included in the swimmer surcharge fee but set by HDST. This fee helps defray the cost of staffing meetings and providing other activities that the coaching staff may plan for swimmers.

In-state Meets: \$20 per swimmer

Out-of-state (non-championship): \$40 per swimmer

Upper-level meet (regionals, sectionals, etc): TBD by meet and location.

Total meet fees invoiced to a swimmer are then:

Swimmer surcharge (also includes HDST team fee)+ individual event fee

When are meet fees due?

Swim meet fees will be charged to the bank account or card on file when registration closes for that meet. There are no refunds for meet fees once accounts are invoiced or charged. If a swimmer needs to scratch from a meet due to illness or a family emergency, the HDST team fee will be credited to your account.

Timers

At every meet, swimming teams from Montana are allocated specific timing slots that they are obliged to fill. The meet host decides the quantity of slots each team must supply, taking into account the number of children participating in each session. Upon receiving the necessary information regarding the slots our team is required to fill, Coach Alana and Coach Beth will take responsibility for assigning those slots. Details about these assignments will be communicated via the BAND app in the chat dedicated to that particular meet. Both coaches will strive to ensure the assignment process is fair and equitable. Please be aware, if you fail to meet your timing obligation, a fine of \$50.00 will be charged on your account, the penalty charged to the team by Montana Swimming.

Meet Communication

Meet communication is communicated via e-mail and through the team's BAND app. Coaches will create a BAND chat group for every meet to alert you for any updates that there maybe throughout the meet and for parents to communicate with one another as well as share photos.

Attire

- Swimmers are required to wear the team suit and cap at competitions. If you already have a team suit from previous years, you may still wear that.
- Swimmers will be provided one silicone swim cap at the start of every season. Additional caps may be purchased for \$10.00.

Other Swim Meet Notes

- All swimmers must have a legal guardian (18 years or old) watching them at the meet. Swimmers may not be dropped off and left alone. If you need help with carpooling or need arrangements please communicate it in the meet BAND chat as other parents are more than willing to help.
- Parents are not allowed behind the blocks or coaches area unless they are timing or are an official
- Please do not approach officials at a meet, if you have a concern to address about your swimmer's event please contact a HDST coach.
- Swimmers must attend warm ups. Please give yourself adequate time to settle in before warm-ups at a meet.

Other F.A.Q.

When will I receive meet information?

Swim meet information will be communicated as soon as Coach Alana or Coach Beth receives the information from the meet host. This includes warm-up times which usually is provided to Coaches about 3 days prior to the meet, but various pending events on the meet host.

How do you determine who and how many coaches attend a swim meet?

If there are more than 15 swimmers attending a given meet both Coach Alana and Coach Beth, or one head coach and one assistant coach, will attend the meet. If there are less than 15 swimmers, one coach will attend the meet to represent both the Helena and Butte Dolphins Swim Team.

Why is my swimmer in something that I didn't select?

Parents and swimmers are allowed to select the swims that they desire for every meet. Once you select and submit Coach Alana and Beth will review each swimmer's entry and approve the selected swims or change accordingly so that we feel that will challenge your swimmer appropriately.

Why are coaches just sitting at a table timing?

Coaches are the back up timers for timers at meets and watch each swimmer's performance closely to analyze their technique, pacing, and overall performance. They identify areas for improvement and note down points to work on for future practices.

My swimmer missed their event! Why?

Occasionally, swimmers might miss their events. To help mitigate this, we request that swimmers touch base with their coach a few events before their own, and then again after their race. Your support in ensuring that your swimmer stays attentive to the event schedule during the meet is greatly appreciated, as this can significantly help to prevent missed races. Furthermore, for those new to meets, we often pair them with a more experienced swimmer. This mentorship helps guide newcomers through their initial meets, providing them with a smoother, more informed experience.

My swimmer received a DQ. I want to know what it is, why and how that can not happen again?

DQ's (disqualifications) are not the end of the world. Even olympians get DQ'd! "DQ" stands for disqualification in the context of a swim meet. A swimmer can be disqualified for a number of reasons, all of which pertain to violations of the rules set forth by the governing body of the sport (such as USA Swimming or FINA). Common reasons swimmers get a DQ is incorrect stroke technique, false start, turns and finishes. Disqualifications are used as a learning tool to help swimmers understand what they may have done wrong that led to the DQ and something that we work on at practice more to prepare for the next meet.

When a DQ occurs coaches will receive a DQ slip from the meet officials. We will review the slip and go over it with your swimmer and make note of it as an area to work on during practice.

Qualifying Times and Championship Meet Progression

1: MT State Championships

The first qualifying meet swimmers are eligible for is the State/LSC Championship at the end of each short course (SC) and long course (LC) season.

**For 9 Over Age Groups, swimmers must achieve 1 BB Time in their age group. Once 1 BB Time is achieved, races at the B Time may be entered for Bonus Events (Exception: For Freestyle Races, 400 yards/meters and above, a BB Time must be achieved)

**For the 8&Under Age Group, swimmers need to qualifying for 1 event and then they can swim any race they have a legal time in at State Championship Meet

2: SWAGR (Regionals) - 14 & Under Meet

The next level is often referred to as regional meets, which include teams from ~5-8 different LSCs, and swimmers qualify within their own age group.

3: Age Group Zones

The next level is the zone level, which for MT encompasses all of the LSCs in the Western Zone. Swimmers usually compete for their LSC instead of club team and again qualify within their age group.

4: Senior Sectionals/Futures

All meets at this level and up are considered "senior" meets, meaning swimmers must meet a certain time, regardless of age. Senior Zones, Sectionals, and Futures make up this next tier.

6- Jr Nationals

The first level of national meets is the Junior National level with standards for winter and summer.

7- National Level

Finally, the US Open, National Championship, and Olympic Trials make up the top tier of swimming in the US.