



Become a Swim Meet Volunteer

Competitive swimming is a unique sport—not only because of the life-time benefits to the swimmer, including physical fitness, improved self-esteem, low injury rate, to name a few—but because it takes many parent volunteers to run swim meets. In no other sport can so many parents take such an active role. You don't have to just sit on the sidelines and watch; you can get down on the deck and participate by volunteering.

Parent volunteers are essential for all Potomac Valley swim meets.

“So, what types of volunteers are needed for most swim meets?”

Timer: Typically this position requires the most volunteers, and it is the simplest position. Each lane at a pool typically requires 2-3 timers per lane to ensure accurate timing. Timers use stopwatches and automatic buttons to record times for the swimmers participating in the meet.

Head Timer: The Head Timer supervises the timers in each lane and assists the timers if there is a timing malfunction.

Marshall: Marshalls are responsible for monitoring the behavior of swimmers on the pool deck to ensure the safety of every swimmer in the pool. You are basically an extra set of eyes for lifeguards and meet management.

Runner: Runners do a variety jobs including posting results, collecting timer sheets, transporting documents between meet workers, etc.

Hospitality: Most swim meets provide snacks, drinks, and food at swim meets for coaches and officials working at the meet for a long period of time. Hospitality workers are similar to concessions workers, but only prepare food for coaches and officials working at a swim meet.

None of these positions require previous experience! The next one is a little different.

Official: Officials are the folks stationed around the deck to ensure that the competition runs smoothly and according to USA Swimming rules. These volunteers have undergone training, have worked as apprentice officials, have taken comprehensive rules tests, and have undergone evaluation by an experienced official before being certified by PVS. In addition, they are required to pass criminal background checks and to take athlete protection courses prior to stepping on deck. It sounds complicated, but it's really not, and it's an especially rewarding volunteer role. Contact your club's Officials Chair for more information.

“How do I get involved as a volunteer?” Many clubs have a Volunteer Coordinator who will be happy to answer your questions and assist. If you don't know who this is, contact your child's coach.

Swim meets require a considerable number of parent volunteers. The smallest meets may have 150 or fewer swimmers and require 30-40 volunteers to run; larger meets will need even more parents. Pick a position and provide a helping hand!