

Race Day Preparation

With State Championships just around the corner we are in the final stage of our preparation. This stage includes fine tuning race plans and race day routines, consolidating technique and skill areas and developing top end speed. As these pieces of the puzzle fall into place, the swimmers will grow in confidence and progress towards being "race ready". It is very important that both the physical and mental state of the swimmers peak at state championships as it doesn't matter how well physically prepared the swimmers are, if they are not confident or are "thrown out of routine" and are mentally not in the correct state than their performances may not be there.

A major part of being race ready is the time immediately before the race or more specifically the 2 hours before the race. Most people are aware of the physical aspects needed to warm up but do not pay enough attention or place enough importance on the effect the physical preparation has on the swimmers mental state. For example if a swimmer has a "bad" warm up they can lose their confidence in their ability to race well on the day (a poor warm up does not always mean there will be a poor race to follow) or if a swimmer is late to the pool they will be stressing about being late and possibly miss components of the warm up.

To eliminate possible causes of stress and to make sure swimmers have ample time to go through all of their processes swimmers need to be at the pool 2 hours before they race (this accounts for if the event is running early...). Below is an example timeline and a general list of activities that swimmers are expected to follow

Activity	Time Allocation	Time to race
Find coach to check time line, and confirm warm up instructions	5min	1h 55min
Get changed into bathers, go to toilet, fill drink bottles, get equipment ready for warm up.	10min	1h 45min
Dry Land		
Warm up - 5 min skip	10min	1h 35min
Stretch Cords – external rotations, rev flies, internal rotation x 20 each		
Swing to loosen up – upper body, torso, legs		
Activation		
Squat & streamline x 10	10min	1h 25min
Prone Flies x 15		
Push up & twist x 10		
v-up + tuck x 20		
Stretch		
Chest, Lats, Back, hip flexors, hamstrings, gluteus, rollers	10min	1h 15min
Prepare for pool warm up – cap, goggles, equipment	10min	1h 05min
Swim warm up	30min	35min
Change into racing bathers	10min	25min
Speak to coach & marshal	10min	15min
Race		0
Cool down – eat, drink	20min	+20min
Speak to coach	5min	+25min

As you can see there is a full process that swimmers follow before and after races. Parents should also be mindful that directly after races the swimmer are often over analysing their race and emotional / hypersensitive and it is very easy to say the “incorrect thing”, it is often best to say nothing (about the race its self and technical components). If swimmers have multiple races their cool down often serves as a warm up as well and the process continues. This time also lets them process the results of the race or how they performed and settle emotions before talking to any one else, it should only be about 30min after they have raced that they will come and see parents & friends. At the end of the day swimmers are still required to do their full cool down as part of their process and to be best prepared for the next day.