

Surreywood Clerk of Course Notes

Your primary job as Clerk of Course is to get the swimmers to the right place at the right time.

Setting Up

Make sure there are chairs on the opposite side of the pool from the timers.

Make sure the benches are set up with plenty of space around them for your helpers to move around.

Use chalk to make holding spaces for heats before they are seated on the benches. Ours are directly behind the benches.

Decide what path the swimmers will take to get to the pool. This should be away from swimmers approaching the benches to make sure they do not cross paths, if possible.

Have a table for the Clerk of Course. This will serve as a landing spot for clipboards, heat change sheets, and a central place for you to discuss the meet with others. Think of it as a home base.

Each helper should have a heat sheet. This includes mini mite and mite parents/helpers.

Each person working clerk of course should have a clipboard and pencil as well. We also recommend any cheat sheet you need to help with organization.

Talk to the coaches for both teams before the meet to see if there are any last-minute changes to their lineups.

- Fill out heat change forms as soon as possible and get them to the computer.
- We recommend only the Clerk of Course communicate changes with the computer.
- Make sure each person in clerk of course has made corrections on their heat sheets.
- Make sure those change forms come back to the Clerk of Course after being entered into the computer (you will give these to the swimmers when they go to the blocks.)

Talk to all the mini mite and mite helpers from both teams before the meet. Explain expectations for them bringing their groups to the Clerk of Course and remaining with them until they are in the water. Show them where you would like them to stage their swimmers, that way you know where to find them.

Talk to the announcer to determine how they want to be informed of what event to call to clerk of course. Some may want you to write it down, some may want you to verbally tell them. They have a lot going on, so its important to communicate with them how they want you to.

Decide on one person to communicate to the announcer what event is being called to Clerk of Course. This person should also change any signs you have to indicate “now seating” to the crowd.

Your “now seating” signs should be visible to the greatest number of people at the meet. Check that they can be seen easily when there are people standing up. We recommend only having one set to change and for people to reference. It will eliminate confusion. If you need more than one sign, make sure you have someone dedicated to changing the signs, not the Clerk of Course.

In order to keep the meet moving you should always have swimmers at the blocks. The first event should be there before the meet begins, but don't get too many swimmers stacked up behind the blocks.

Before sending swimmers to the blocks, always double and triple check that they know what lane they are in. We ask each swimmer their name while they are on the last bench before entering the pool deck and match their lane with the heat sheets.

Younger Swimmer Events

Younger swimmers only swim 25m/yds.

Younger swimmers should always start on the opposite side of the pool from the timers. **Do not move your timers.** This adds unnecessary time to your meet. It is much easier to take the younger swimmers to the opposite end of the pool and have them swim toward the timers. This is what the chairs on the opposite side of the pool are for.

It is helpful to have mini mite and mite parents line up the younger swimmers before bringing them to Clerk of Course. Most parents know the swimmers on their team and a familiar face is always appreciated by the swimmers. If possible, have an area specifically for this, close to the Clerk of Course benches.

For the younger swimmers (under 10 years old) try to not call more heats than you have benches. Little ones are easier to corral if they are sitting down. The mini mite and mite parents will thank you.

Have the mini mite and mite parents stay with their swimmers until they are in the water. The Clerk of Course should assign a parent/helper for every heat (bench) swimming. This will ensure swimmers don't get lost and a dedicated parent for each heat for each team can assist with emergencies. The parent/helper for each heat will take the swimmers to where they will start their race and stay with them until they are in the water.

Helpers should move to where the swimmers will exit the pool while the swimmers are swimming to escort them off the deck. Swimmers are often disoriented when they exit the water, especially at unfamiliar pools. A recognized face can help them exit the pool deck safely.

If you have more heats than helpers, ask your helpers to return to the Clerk of Course to get another group until all the younger swimmers have competed their events.

A helpful tip is to have the parent lead the swimmers by having them hold hands. Start with the swimmer who is swimming in the closest lane to the Clerk of Course. This allows the parent to drop off the first swimmer in line at the first lane they come to and proceed with the next swimmer to the next lane until all the swimmers are at their assigned lanes. So, if lane 6 is closest to the benches, the swimmer swimming in lane 6 should be at the front of the line.

Relays for Younger Swimmers

Always call for your younger swimmer relays at Clerk of Course before the meet starts. We start calling the first events to the Clerk of Course at least 20 minutes before the national anthem.

Be sure to have enough parents/helpers to lead mites and younger to the blocks and chairs.

Use 4 benches for seating each heat of the younger swimmers relay.

Seating should look like this:

The first bench will have all swimmers doing backstroke, on their assigned lane number.

The second bench will have all swimmers doing breaststroke, on their assigned lane number.

The third bench will have all swimmers doing butterfly, on their assigned lane number.

The fourth bench will have all swimmers doing freestyle, on their assigned lane number.

So, all the swimmers sitting on a “3” on each bench are on the same relay team and will be swimming in lane 3.

The parents/helpers leading the swimmers on bench 1 should turn in the relay cards to the timers.

In any 25m/yd legged relay, first and third swimmers start at the blocks, while second and fourth swimmers start on the opposite side of the pool from the timers. This will ensure the last swimmer in a relay ends their swim at the timers.

Mite Relay Seating at Clerk of Course								
Pool Starting Point	Lanes/Teams						Stroke	Clerk Bench
Chairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	Free	Bench 4
Blocks	1	2	3	4	5	6	Fly	Bench 3
Chairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	Breast	Bench 2
Blocks	1	2	3	4	5	6	Back	Bench 1

Older Swimmer Events

Sit as many heats in each event as possible prior to sending them to the blocks. This should allow you to find missing swimmers early and accommodate any changes that need to be made by hand.

Most older swimmers do not sit on the benches but will stand behind their bench. They get too big to all fit, so let them sit or stand.

Discourage long term visitors to the benches. Most Clerk of Course areas are small, and the extra non-swimmers can add to the chaos. We encourage well-wishers from outside the Clerk of Course area but discourage socializing with non-swimmers while swimmers are on the benches. The swimmers get used to this and understand if you explain you want to make sure their friends get to the blocks on time.

Many of the older swimmers want to know what their seed time is and are curious about what the heat looks like on paper. It is not uncommon for us to be surrounded by swimmers looking over our shoulders. Let them satisfy their curiosity. The heat sheets are not a secret.

Some older swimmers take care of the younger siblings, especially if their parents are timing or serving in another volunteer capacity. They may not be able to come to the Clerk of Course when you first call. Be aware and make sure they are present at least 3 heats before their heat. Many swimmers will volunteer to help find their friends.

For the older swimmer heats, the swimmers generally know which lane and what order they are swimming in. It is always good to quiz them.

Turnaround is usually short for older swimmers if they are in a relay. We instruct swimmers in their last individual event to report back to Clerk of Course as soon as they get out of the water if they are in a relay.

Relays for Older Swimmers

Make sure you have all the relay cards from the coaches by the time the second half starts.

Relay lineups are often different from what is listed on the heat sheets due to several reasons. Use the cards to place teams instead of the sheets.

For midgets and above, all swimmers start from the blocks.

The first swimmer in the relay must give the relay card to the timer.

Designate the first swimmer on the team as responsible for ensuring all their team members are present and in the correct order.

Medley Relay	
Seat 1	Back
Seat 2	Breast
Seat 3	Fly
Seat 4	Free

Adding/Deleting Swimmers and Combining Heats

Preferably all changes should be done prior to the start of the meet.

Combine heats only if necessary.

Using colored paper for the change forms helps. It is easily seen and acts as a flag for timers.

Try to avoid manual changes, but if they can be easily accomplished, fill in any latecomers wherever they best fit regardless of their color ranking or time.

If you are adding a swimmer to a heat, do not worry about placement according to their times.

Sometimes a faster swimmer will end up in an outside lane if they are added last minute. This is OK.

Any additions or deletions made by the coaches should be given to the Clerk of Course in writing as soon as possible but no later than 4 events prior to the changed event.

Be sure all changes made at Clerk of Course go to starter/referee, computer, and announcer, especially heat changes.

Each change slip should be given to the timers as the swimmer approaches the block. This can be done by the swimmer or a mite parent. Any change should have a slip for the timer to hand in with the times. A paper trail is important.

There should always be at least 3 swimmers seeded in a heat. Avoid only one swimmer in a heat.

Avoid having any swimmer swim alone unless they are the only swimmer in their age group, boy or girl. You can combine two SAME length/stroke events, boys and girls, if you can separate the boys and girls by a swim lane.

Keep a Clerk of Course master copy of the heat sheets with all changes noted on it. This is helpful until all times are recorded. There is no need to keep the sheets after everything has been finalized in the computer.

Seeding Relay Events

All events except relays are pre-seeded.

All relays are manually seeded, and coach's relay cards should be at Clerk of Course prior to start of the meet. But certainly, no later than the beginning of the second half.

Relay teams are seeded first by color – blue, gold, silver, and then by letter – A, B, or C teams in order from fastest to slowest. Start with Home team, alternate with away team according to the above ranking.

Rank all blue teams, then gold, then silver, always putting highest teams together.

Don't put silver teams with blue and gold teams unless you don't have enough for a 2nd heat. You can have silver teams with blue or gold if there are too few to add heats. But there shouldn't be a blue/gold heat with only one silver team unless you don't have enough teams for a 2nd heat.

Home team always get the advantage, if all teams are equal.

Home team blue in lane 3, away team gold A in lane 4, home team gold A in lane 2, away team gold B in lane 5, etc.

Each team is allowed 2 blue relays, 3 gold and 3 silver.

Entries marked QUAL are not included in the color rankings.

Exhibition relay teams can be in any spot. The change form will say "exhibition."

Helpful things to know

Make sure you are over-communicating. Talk with the coaches, the meet manager, the announcer, the mini mite and mite parents, etc.

Heats are seeded fastest swimmers to slowest swimmers in the lanes as follows:

3,4,2,5,1,6 (6 lanes)

4,5,3,6,2,7,1,8 (8 lanes)

It is always controlled chaos. Embrace it and have fun with the swimmers. Be creative and silly with the younger ones. Many have anxiety while they are sitting on the benches. You can make it fun.

Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, use a megaphone if needed, and drink plenty of water. You will be doing a lot of talking.

Eat before the meet. Have snacks available.

Have LOTS of water available!

TAKE TIME TO WATCH YOUR OWN KIDS SWIM!!!!!!

COVID Recommendations

During set up, create extra staging areas. Rope these off so people do not set up camp in them. You will need enough space to accommodate multiple events and heats individually, socially distanced. Treat these areas as parts of Clerk of Course. Only swimmers and helpers should enter these spaces.

Mark social distancing with chalk on the ground inside your Clerk of Course area. This really helps with the younger swimmers. They love standing on chalk lines!

Recruit extra Clerk of Course helpers, preferably one per staging area. This will help with getting the swimmers to the final benches. Many hands make efficient work.

Only call events you can safely socially distance. This will require more frequent calls and flips of the signs.

If your team is using the parking lot for parent camping, be sure you have a good way to communicate called events to them. Use a megaphone or place event flip signs in a highly visible space.

It will be more challenging to get swimmers to the Clerk of Course when families/teams are spread out. Please be patient with everyone and allow for longer travel times to the Clerk of Course areas from their camp.

Only one heat should be at the blocks. As soon as a heat enters the pool, you can send the next heat to the blocks.

Use your helpers to keep the swimmers socially distanced.

Have plastic sandwich bags available for swimmers to put their masks in while they swim.