

CBST-SAL – Deck Parents’ Guidelines

Basic job description per operating procedures: Ready Bench (Deck) Parent: The deck parent has a copy of the meet events for the swimmers. The deck parent will line swimmers up at the blocks and get them motivated to swim. (1-2 per age group)

- Upon arrival at a meet the deck parents should see the coach for a copy of the meet sheet which lists all events for our team’s swimmers in order.
- The two deck parents should always work together – communication is key.
- Deck parents need to identify an area on deck where they expect their swimmers to stay throughout the duration of the meet.
- Using the meet sheet, the deck parents should make sure that all swimmers in their age group are present at the meet (often work with coaches to do this). When doing so, tell the swimmers who the deck parents are, where the designated area for the age group is on deck, and remind the swimmers that they are expected to be in that area for the whole meet. Let the swimmers know that if they need to leave the designated area (to visit the bathroom, see a parent, visit the snack bar, etc.) they must ask the deck parent BEFORE they do so and must be back at least 5 events (not heats) before their scheduled swim.
- The first event deck parents need to line kids up to swim is the medley relay. The order of the relay is back, breast, fly, free. For 8 and under swimmers, the back and fly swimmers need to go to the starting end of the pool and the breast and free swimmers need to go to the opposite end of the pool. For this case, if possible, one deck parent should go to each end of the pool with the appropriate swimmers. Swimmers 9 and up swim 50s so all should report to the starting end of the pool.
- Deck parents should line their swimmers up in lane/heat order and make sure each swimmer knows what stroke, distance, event, heat, and lane they are swimming. Be sure to tell swimmers that once you line them up, they are expected to stay lined up.
- After lining the kids up, the deck parents should go to the starting end of the pool and position each child in order in the right lane. (Except for 8u relays, in which one deck parent should stay at each end of the pool if possible.) Once all children are positioned, at least one deck parent needs to stay behind the blocks until all swimmers have entered the water. Watch the kids – make sure they get in the right lane. If there is an issue, resolve it with the lane timer and/or starter. If time seems tight to line up for the next race, one deck parent must stay at the blocks until all swimmers have entered the water and the other can go start assembling children for the next race. If there are any swimmers in the current race who will be in the next race as well, be sure to remind them to come right back to you in the designated area immediately after their race to get lined up again.
- There is no circumstance under which a deck parent should need to touch a swimmer (other than a light touch on the shoulder to get the swimmer’s attention if it’s difficult to be heard – but please try to use verbal communication if at all possible). If you need to raise your voice to be heard, please do your best to not sound as if you’re angry or yelling.
- It is NOT your job to find kids who are not in the designated area. It is your job to make sure kids in the designated area get to their swims on time.
- When there is only one deck parent for a group, work with deck parents for other groups and coaches as needed.