

Dual Meets and Champs Primer

Dual Meets

Our dual meets (held on Saturdays, or Friday nights or Sundays for divers) are a competition between two teams, do not cost an extra fee, and athletes swim coach-chosen events. At dual meets the maximum number of events per athlete as set by league rule is four – either three individual events and one relay or two individual races and two relays. Note that diving events count toward the event limit for swimmers who are also divers. Given the size of our team, swimmers should not expect to routinely swim the maximum (league allowed) number of events at each meet. Our coaches work to have each swimmer in a minimum of one relay and one individual swim at each dual meet, and generally are able to have each swimmer in more than that targeted minimum number of events. These minimums apply only for swimmers who attend the full meet (i.e., not arriving late or leaving early) and who are able to swim multiple events based on their current abilities. The coaches will try to vary the events that each swimmer gets to swim from meet to meet. If there is a particular event your swimmer would like to swim, it is fine to let the coach know that. Just understand that it is not possible to accommodate all requests and further that the coach may need your swimmer in a particular race for strategic purposes. Invitationals are a great way to get to swim events of your own choice.

Remember also that dual meets are a competition between two teams – the coaches write a line-up to try to win the meet so the fastest swimmers in attendance in each age group will generally swim the league maximum allowed number of events. For some meets, however, the coaches will know ahead of time that they do not need to use the fastest swimmers to win the meet so they may give other swimmers the opportunity to swim in official heats and win points for the team and also to swim more races in that particular meet. Similarly, the most skilled divers will usually be the official divers.

Keep in mind that while swimmers swimming unofficially (those in any heat after the first heat of an event and those in lanes 1 and 8 of an eight-lane pool, even in the first heat) cannot score (even if their time beats a time of an official swimmer), their times do count for purposes of seeding in invitationals and champs (both division and league) and also for purposes of any personal best recognitions. This is also true for divers designated as unofficial. Coaches will consider all times swum/scores achieved during the current season when writing the line-up for each meet. Please keep in mind as we go through the season that for each dual meet the swim coaches are scheduling up to 100 swimmers to swim in 39 events (many with additional heats). It's like a big puzzle with many factors that need to be considered to arrive at the optimal solution. The coaches do their best to write a smart and fair line-up each week given the parameters (such as swimmers in attendance and number of extra heats negotiated with the opposing coaches).

There are four or five dual meets during the SAL “regular” season. At these meets CBST-SAL usually competes against another SAL team in our division (see league website for divisions) or another team in the league but outside our division (based on geographic proximity and/or competitive considerations such as team size/strength).

Championship Dual Meet(s)

After the “regular” season there one or two championship dual meets (also called “flight championships” by the SAL):

- To participate in a championship dual meet, an athlete must compete (**officially or unofficially**) in at least 40% (or two) of the regular season dual meets.~
- These meets will determine the top performing teams within each division and the League.

Individual Championship Meets

Following the championship dual meet(s) there are two individual championship meets:

- Division Championships – commonly referred to as “B Champs” and
- League Championships – commonly referred to as “A Champs”
- A swimmer may compete in no more than three individual and two relay events (five total events) at individual Championships.

Division Championships:

- Any athlete who would like to compete in Division Championships may do so, subject to the maximum swims as stated above, as long as the athlete has not qualified to swim the same event at League Championships.
- There are no dual meet participation requirements to compete in Division Championships.

League Championships:

- To participate in League Championships, an athlete must compete (**officially or unofficially**) in at least 40% (or usually, two) of the regular season dual meets (as a swimmer to be eligible for league championship swimming events, and as a diver to be eligible for their league championship diving event). For divers, they must have competed in their own age group at least twice during the season in dual meets (officially or unofficially).~
- Athletes may only compete in their own age group for league championships (no swimming/diving “up” in an older age group).
- The top 18 athletes (plus two alternates) in each event qualify to swim at League Championships*
- Times/scores must be earned during the current season at regular season or the championship dual meet or at SAL recognized invitationals to be considered for league champs qualification.
- If a swimmer qualifies for more than three individual events, the coaches will determine the actual events to be swum at league champs (with input from the athlete) at the League Championship seed meeting.
- If an athlete is listed as an alternate for an event at League Championships, the athlete **MAY** compete in that event at Division Championships (to ensure that the athlete will be able to participate in that event at least once). It is possible that the athlete may also participate in the same event at League Championships (if one of the top 18 athletes scratches the event) but that

event does NOT constitute an additional event for purposes of the total championship maximum events allowed per athlete. It is also possible for the athlete to attend the League Championships meet as an alternate and not get the opportunity to compete at that meet.

- If an athlete qualifies for League Championships in a particular event, the athlete **MAY NOT** compete in the same event at Division Championships.
- If a swimmer qualifies for an individual event at League Championships, the swimmer **MAY NOT** swim the same stroke in a relay at Division Championships.
- Coaches will determine all relays for Championships.
- An athlete may compete at both League and Division Championships. For example, a swimmer might swim two individual events and one relay at League Championships and one individual event and a relay at Division Championships – as long as the athlete does not exceed the maximum of three individual and two relay events.

Note that for diving, the championship meets may be combined into one meet with those athletes who qualify to compete at the league champs level, continuing on when the division portion of the meet is over. See current season championship meet communications for details in any particular season.

*Because of the three individual and two relay maximum event limit (and the fact that some athletes may not be available to participate in the meet), it is possible that athletes who are ranked below the twentieth fastest swims/diving scores of the season will qualify to compete (or serve as an alternate) at League Championships. The coaches will speak to those athletes who may qualify to compete at League Championships, and the parents will be asked to sign their athletes up accordingly.

Additional Champs Information:

For individual champs, most of the league's participants (and most of our team's members) will participate in division (B) champs. Coaches have no discretion as far as who qualifies for league (A) champs. Only those athletes with the fastest 18 times/highest 18 scores in the league (of roughly 20 teams) will qualify for league champs. For relays, once a relay swims a time this season in an SAL meet, our team "owns" that time. That is, for purposes of champs seeding, the fastest time swum by a relay from any given team is what will be used for that team for league champs. The swimmers who ultimately swim in that relay at champs need not have ever swum the relay together, or at all, before. When it is time to determine champs relays, coaches will use all current season times (up to and including the dual champs meet and any subsequent invitational meets – NOT including division champs) and will make the fastest possible relay. This could mean that a relay team that has swum together all season will be changed for champs and/or that a relay team that has never swum together before will be the league champs relay. Under unusual circumstances, coaches may use their discretion and change a relay based on factors other than fastest times, but this is very rarely done.

Top times lists are posted periodically by the league (see Meet Information – Top Times on the league website). These lists are produced from all swims in meets within the league (dual meets and invitationals) to date during the season. As these lists include all swims, there are times for

swimmers in events that are not the “typical” events for their age group (for example, an 11-year-old may swim up in the 14 and under 100 backstroke, so be listed on the top times list for 11/12 100 backstroke, but the typical event for the 11/12 group in backstroke is a 50). These events are listed on the reports due to how the reports must be generated and because people are interested in the information, however, these “non-typical” events are not relevant for the individual championship meets as they are not available events for those meets. See the league website (League Information – League Documents) for the SAL Operating Procedures. In that document, the last page is an Appendix listing the available events at league (A) and division (B) champs which are the events available in our team portal for champs registration. Similar top scores reports are circulated by the league for divers later in each season.

The swimming psych sheets (one for boys and one for girls) for champs are specific to the league champs meet and list all swims for only the champs events. This is the document to which swimmers should refer to get an idea of whether they might qualify for league champs. Again, the top 18 swimmers (plus two alternates) in each event qualify for league champs. At the seed meeting there will be some scratches so a few athletes beyond the 20th position may get into a particular event. Psych sheets based on initial champs entry submissions are usually posted on the league website (Championships page) soon after the initial entry deadline.

~Note that to the extent that an athlete does not meet the 40% requirement solely due to medical restriction, the athlete may provide a doctor’s note to league leadership for consideration if the athlete wishes to participate in the championship dual meet(s) and/or league individual championships. The note must specify the dates of the restriction and when participation can resume and be provided well in advance of the meet(s) for which the athlete is seeking consideration.