

# Parent Volunteer Jobs at a SAL Swim Meet

Anyone who has been to even one swim meet knows that it takes much effort on the part of parent volunteers to make it happen. Approximately 12 parent volunteers are needed for each away meet and at least 18 volunteers for each home meet as timers, judges, scorers, snack bar helpers, etc. We will be looking for help from every family during the course of the season, and we are sure that every parent can find a meet job that he/she enjoys doing. A description of the meet jobs is provided below:

**Timer:** This is the most popular meet job among both new and experienced swim parents. You use a stopwatch to time the swimmer in your assigned lane. There are typically three timers per lane, and the median of the times is used as the official time (or as backup for electronic timing systems). It's cooler on the pool deck than in most observation balconies, and you get a much better view of the action.

**Runner:** After each race, the runner collects the times from the timers in each lane, and takes them to the scoring table. You stay on the move throughout the meet, so it's great exercise.

**Scoring Table:** Scorers from each team record the results following each race, and track the team scores. There can be some pressure at the table, and the job requires knowledge of the computer program (Meet Manager) used for the computerized scoring system. The scorekeepers are critical to the success of the meet, and they are often the only ones who know which team is winning the meet. The league runs clinics each fall to train new scoring table workers, and your team leaders will also be very happy to show you the ropes and have you apprentice for this essential job.

**Finish Judge:** These judges stand at the end of pool and observe the end of the race. They help decide the order in which the swimmers finished the event (i.e., who won). No technical knowledge of swimming is required, but it does require a keen ability to focus your attention for close races.

**Stroke & Turn Judge:** These judges determine whether a swimmer touched the end of the pool during a turn and whether the technical aspects of the swimming stroke were legal. It requires knowledge of the US Swimming stroke regulations, and a willingness to fairly disqualify swimmers when appropriate. Those who are interested in this job usually "apprentice" with someone who has done it before. We provide a copy of the rules, and a master with whom you can apprentice. There is also a training program available from the league (see below).

**Timing System Operator:** This job is for someone who likes to play with electronic gizmos. The timing system uses an electronic signal from the starter's device and the touch pads in the pool to determine the swimmers' times and order of finish. This information is displayed on the scoreboard and is fed into the computer program used by the scorekeeper that keeps track of the official results. This job requires a couple sessions of on-the-job training, which your team leaders will be very happy to arrange.

**Starter/Referee:** This is the most technically demanding job. The Starter/Ref runs the events in the meet by ensuring that the swimmers start simultaneously and oversees all the other meet officials. This is a leadership position that requires experience and a take-charge personality. It is up to the Starter to keep the meet moving.

**Announcer:** This is a great job for someone with a strong voice and an ability to correctly pronounce names. You announce the names of the swimmers in each event, and work with the Starter/Referee to keep the meet moving quickly and smoothly.

**Snack Bar:** The snack bar is a great place to work if you're not interested in watching the whole meet. This is an important fund raiser for the team, as we raise money for end-of-the-season awards and other extras this way. You get to interact a lot with both kids and parents.

**50/50:** This is a great way to meet everyone at the meet. This is another club fund raiser at home meets. You sell the lottery tickets during the meet and a drawing is held toward the end. The winner gets half of the money collected, and MAC gets the other half.