

Adding Pizzaz to Your Event

Doug Garcia , Caitlin Gagnon, Bonnie Adams, Karyn Austin



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Presenters



Doug Garcia
Colorado LMSC



Caitlin Gagnon
Ohio LMSC



Bonnie Adams
Arkansas LMSC



Karyn Austin
Florida LMSC



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Doug Garcia



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FUN!

**Going for Records
Maybe...**



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Families and Friends



Two-Tiered Meet Sign-up

- Early Entries
- Late Entries
- No Deck Entries
- No One Event Entries



Officials wear Hawaiian shirts, again keep it fun!

Order of Events

Order of Events:

- 1 500 Mixed Freestyle
- 5 Minute Break
- 2 200 Mixed Individual Medley
- 3 100 Mixed Freestyle
- 4 50 Mixed Breaststroke
- 5 100 Mixed Backstroke
- 6 100 Mixed Butterfly

5 Minute Break

- 7 6 x 25 Butterfly Relay (See Note 1)
- 8 50 Mixed Freestyle
- 9 100 Mixed Breaststroke
- 10 50 Mixed Backstroke
- 11 50 Mixed Butterfly
- 12 100 Mixed Individual Medley

5 Minute Break

- 13 4 x 50 T-Shirt Relay (See Note 2)
- 14 200 Mixed Freestyle
- 15 200 Mixed Butterfly (See Note 3)
- 16 200 Mixed Backstroke (See Note 3)
- 17 200 Mixed Breaststroke (See Note 3)



Meet Communication

- **Use Club Assistant to announce the meet.**
- **Remind swimmers a day or two before the deadlines.**
- **Send a pre-meet email covering the details.**
 - Use short headlines and short descriptions such as Distance Events Check-in, Relay Entry Deadlines, Split Requests, etc.
 - EDIT, EDIT, EDIT keep it as short as possible



Sample Letter

THANK YOU for signing up for the 46th Annual Polansky Sweetheart Swim Meet. Once again this year we have a great turn-out of swimmers. If you will not be able to attend the meet, please let me know as soon as possible, this will allow us to reseed to be more efficient with lane space.

TIMELINE

Warm-ups start: 8:00 am

Sprint lanes open: 8:20 am, lanes 4 and 5

Pool Closes: 8:45

Event 1, Heat 1: 8:50

Second warm-up: immediately following the last heat of the 500, this will be for 15 minutes. Lanes 4-5 will be open for one-way sprinting.

SAFETY

Please remember to always enter the water feet first, even the diving well. Follow all the lifeguard's instructions. One way sprint lanes (lanes 4 and 5) will open at 8:20 and again for the entire second warm-up.

ROOM TEMP

Please plan your attire for both a cool and a warm natatorium. The facility has recently upgraded the HVAC system, and the room temp has been pleasant; however, we have no control over how cool or warm it will be in the natatorium.



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Sample Letter

SEATING

We have limited bench seating on deck; you and your group may want to consider bringing camp chairs for your comfort. Of course you can sit in the upstairs viewing area. There are no rules about where you can sit.

CLUB/WORKOUT GROUP CHANGES

If you discover when you get to the meet that you are in the wrong club or workout group, unfortunately, we will not be able to update your membership. Swimmers with a UC32 or a RMRM only membership (no workout group) will not be allowed to participate in relays.

STARTING PROCEDURES

Just to refresh your memory on the starting procedures.

Three short whistles: you should be behind your block ready to step up.

One long whistle: step up on the block, jump into the water for backstroke or an in-water start, or be on the side of the block for a dive from the side.

Take your mark: get into position and remain still. Any movement after the command take your mark may alert the official to have everyone stand again.

SPLITS

Official USMS Split forms will be at the check-in table. Please complete in advance of your event/heat and present to the official.



Fun/non-traditional events

- 6 x 25 Relay: 3 swimmers (all male or all female, no mixed teams) each swimmer does 2 x 25 butterfly
- T-Shirt Relay, provide the shirts
- Equipment Relay, a noodle, a fin, a rubber duckie
- Match Relay, first team to light the match
- Let your imagination and creativity run wild, and **HAVE FUN**



Having FUN!



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Having FUN!



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Hospitality and Gifts

- Have volunteer coaches help with sprint starts to keep things moving.
- T-shirts, challenging at times, but a good gift.
 - Brute Squad, swim the 1650, 400 IM, and the 200 Fly
 - Sprint Squad, swim the 100 IM, and the 50s of each stroke
- Gifts for high point such as a towel with high point winner and the meet logo printed/embroidered on it
- Beer glass
- Trophy for high point team
- Food



Meet Volunteers

- Officials
- Hy-Tek and Scoreboard Staff
- Head timer and timers
- Check-in team
- Set-up and clean-up
- Hospitality
- As meet director, once the meet has started, I sit and solve problems as they may appear, not very often.



Caitlin Gagnon



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Caitlin's Tip: Create FOMO

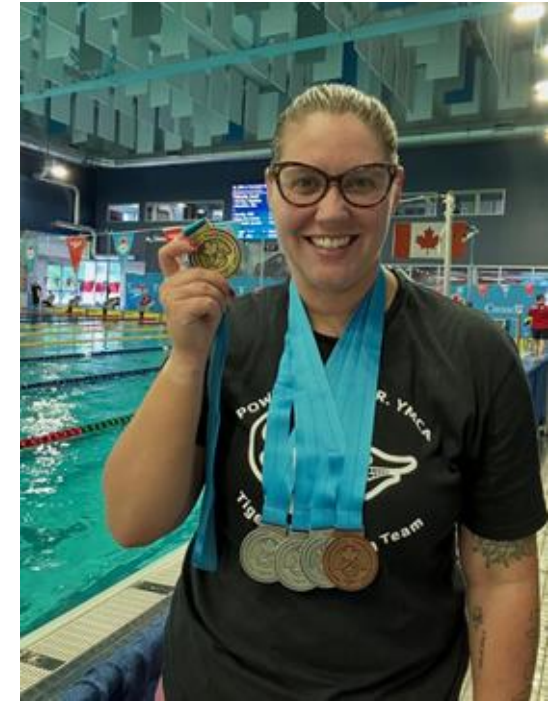
FOMO Tip #1: Exclusive Meet SWAG



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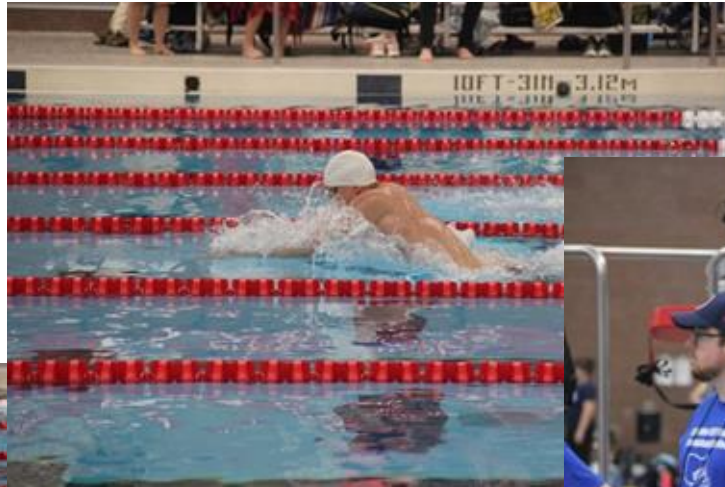
Caitlin's Tip: Create FOMO

FOMO Tip #2: Awards



Caitlin's Tip: Create FOMO

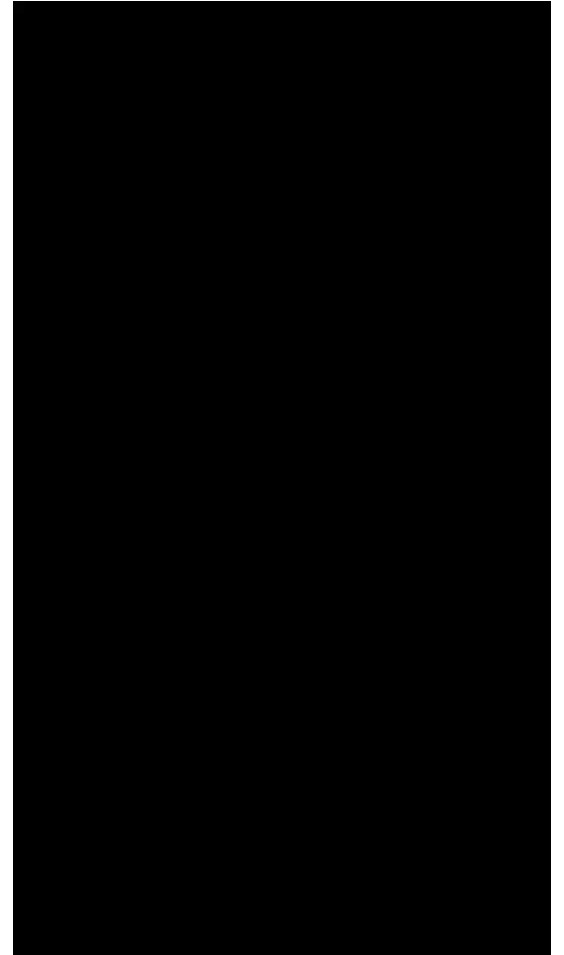
FOMO Tip #3.1: The Aftermath



Caitlin's Tip: Create FOMO



FOMO Tip #3.2: The Aftermath



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Bonnie Adams



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Beyond the Swim:

Turning your Event into a Celebration



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Think beyond the race...



Instead of asking:

What races should we offer?

**The race lasts minutes.
The memories last years.**

Ask:

What emotions do we want people to feel?
What memories do we want families to make?
What will they photograph?
What will they post on social media?

Celebrate Everyone!



Everyone belongs.

First-timers
Experienced swimmers
Kids
Grandparents
Entire families
EVERYONE

Our goal is to have our finish line feel the same for the swimmer who finished 1st and the swimmer who conquered their fear.

Create WOW Moments

Mobile Sauna
Physical Therapy tent
Ice Bath
Clinic by elite swimmer
OZ Wave with inflatables
Expo
Mascot
Finisher Belt Buckles
OZ Mile Hats
Special Sponsors



It isn't about the THINGS, it's about creating moments people remember.

Think outside the box



Innovation doesn't have to be expensive.
It starts with curiosity.



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Karyn Austin



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Holiday Swim Theme Ideas



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SWAG Annual Trick or TREAT Swim



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Annual “Trick or Treat” Workout



Find fun “props” and then get creative!

More “pizazz” from our Trick or Treat Swim



Best costume contest, fun relays at the end, and taking pictures during are a must!

Annual SWAG Trick or Treat Swim



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TRICK OR TREAT PLAYLIST

- Maneater - Hall and Oates
- Ghostbusters – Ray Parker Jr.
- Somebody’s Watching Me -Rockwell
- Black Magic Woman – Santana
- The Adams Family- It’s a Cover Up
- Disturbia – Rihanna
- Witch Doctor – Sha Na Na
- Witchy Woman – Eagles
- Thriller – MJ
- A Nightmare on My Street-DJ Jazzy Jeff
- Time Warp – Rocky Horror
- Superstition- Stevie Wonder
- Love Potion Number Nine – The Searchers
- Addams Groove – MC Hammer
- The Monster – Eminem with Rihanna
- Purple People Eater – Sheb Wooley



Annual HO, HO, HO, Holiday Swim



Holiday themed suits during practice, then ugly sweaters for coffee after practice



Ho Ho Ho Holiday Swim Ideas



Props from Amazon, Dollar Store, and clearance items at the end of the holidays for the future!

Parts of Holiday Swim



Sleigh relay with swimming reindeers for the big finale. Pictures are GOLD for your athletes sharing on social media, can you say free MARKETING for USMS??

Giving to our Community



Lifeguard Gifts, we raised over \$500 last year



We raised over \$600 in cash and donations



Holiday Playlist

- Carol of the Bells, Mannheim Steamroller
- Light One Candle, Peter, Paul and Mary
- Run Rudolph Run, Sister Hazel
- Baby It's Cold Outside, Glee Cast Version
- Santa Claus is Comin' to Town, Bruce Springsteen
- Deck the Halls, REM
- What Christmas Means to Me, John Legend/Stevie Wonder
- Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, NCYNC
- All I Want for Christmas is You, Mariah Carey
- This Christmas, Chris Brown
- Sleigh Ride, TLC
- Christmas Is, Run D.M.C.
- Jingle Bell Rock, Daryl Hall & John Oates
- I Want a Hippopotamus for Hanukkah, The Jimmies





Wrap Up/ Q&A

Don't be afraid to ask. If you're
thinking it, someone else probably is
too!



Thank You!

Slides, Resource Links, and Panelist
Bios will be posted on the USMS
website.

Panelist Bios

Doug Garcia – Chair of Colorado LMSC, and coach of Loveland Masters in Loveland Colorado. Doug has been involved with Masters Swimming since 1992, serving on various local and national committees. He has served as meet director for more than 30 years.



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Panelist Bios

Caitlin Gagnon – Caitlin has been swimming since 2000 and has never taken a break from the sport. She currently works in local government communications and is proud to be one of the original USMS Ambassadors. She has served as the Chair of the Ohio LMSC since 2022.



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Panelist Bios

Bonnie Adams – A lifelong swimmer, coach, and event visionary, Bonnie has spent more than three decades inspiring swimmers of every age and ability to dive into new adventures. As the founder of SWIM OZ and The Joys Of Swimming Foundation, she is passionate about building welcoming communities where swimmers feel just as celebrated as seasoned elite athletes.

Within USMS, Bonnie has served as Head Coach for the 2024 Masters Pan American Championship Team, coached multiple USMS Top Ten swimmers, earned numerous USMS Top Ten rankings herself, and was named Arkansas Masters Swimmer of the Year. She is also the Race Director of the nationally recognized OZ Mile Swim Festival, an event that has become known for the festival atmosphere and unforgettable open water swim.

When she's not producing remarkable events, Bonnie is helping swimmers unlock their potential through remote video analysis and coaching high school athletes to become confident competitors and leaders. She is also the Founder of The Joys Of Swimming Foundation and co-creator of the EPIC 10K50 Project, an ambitious 50-state open water journey designed to inspire possibility, promote water safety, and demonstrate that swimming truly has the power to change lives.

Whether she's coaching on deck, directing events, or dreaming up the next big idea, Bonnie believes the best events aren't just well-run—they're unforgettable.



Panelist Bios

Karyn Austin – Founder and Head Coach of Swamp Water Aquatics Gainesville (SWAG) in Gainesville, Florida. She was the 2023 Florida LMSC Coach of the Year and the 2020 recipient of the USMS Kerry O'Brien Coaches Award. Karyn is a Level 3 coach for both USMS and USAT along with being a Swim Smooth Certified Coach.



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