

GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

Age Group Swimming: The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members is nationally recognized. Age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18. Local meets may also include events for 6 and under, 8 and under, or seniors.

Anchor: The final swimmer in a relay.

Block: The starting platform.

Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50 meter pool into two 25 yard courses.

Championship Meet: The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are necessary to enter the meet.

Check-in: The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the swimmer must mark his/her name on a list posted by the meet host.

Circle Swimming: Performed by staying to the right when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

Clerk of Course: Area where swimmers must report for heat and lane assignments prior to swimming each event in a deck-seeded meet.

Cut: Slang for qualifying time; a time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or swim a particular event.

Deck: The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but an “authorized” USA member may be on the deck.

Deck Seeding: Swimmers report to a staging area and receive their lanes and heat assignments for the events.

Distance Events: Term used to refer to events over 400 meters/ 500 yards.

DQ: Disqualified: This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind; i.e., freestyle kick in butterfly. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the achieved time be used as an official time.

Drill: An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke used to improve technique.

Dry land Training: Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics, and/or weight training.

Dual Meet: Type of meet where two teams/ clubs compete against each other.

Entry Form: A form, on which a swimmer enters a competition, includes USA Swimming number, age, sex, event numbers and seed times.

False Start: Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start. A false start results in disqualification.

Finals: The championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight swimmers from the preliminaries compete, depending on number of lanes in the pool.

Final Results: The printed copies of the results of each race of a swim meet.

Finish: The final phase of the race, the touch at the end of the race.

Fins: Large rubber fin-type devices that fit on a swimmer's feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.

Flags: Backstroke flags placed 5 yards (short course) or 5 meters (long course) from the ends of the pool, which enable backstrokers to count their strokes to the wall at the ends of the pool.

Goal: A specific time achievement for which a swimmer sets and strives. This can be short- or long-term.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated through the filtration system.

Heat: A grouping of swimmers during an event with one swimmer per lane who competes against each other. Six swimmers swim each other in a six lane pool, eight in an eight lane pool.

Heat Ribbon: A ribbon or coupon given to the winner of a single heat at an age-group swim meet.

Heat Sheet: A listing of all swimmers for each event of the meet.

High Point: An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. Not all meets offer high point awards.

I.M.: Slang for Individual Medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

Lap Counter: A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. Also, the person who counts for the swimmer stationed at the opposite end from the start.

Long Course: A pool 50 meters in length.

Long Distance Events: Any freestyle event over 1500 meters, normally conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river or ocean. Also known as Marathon Swimming.

LSC: Local Swimming Committee. Consists of representatives from all USA swim clubs within a designated geographic area of USA. The LSC, to which WAM belongs, includes almost all of Wisconsin.

Meet: Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer tests himself/ herself against the clock to see how he/ she is improving.

Middle Distance: Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters to 400 yards/500 meters in length.

Mini-Meet: Intra-squad competition for SEAY. These are usually held on practice nights and involve no cost to the swimmers. An excellent opportunity for new swimmers and for veteran swimmers as they experiment with some aspect of their stroke.

National Age Group Time Standards: Time standards derived from the previous years' results that are broken down by age and gender as well as B, BB, A, AA, AAA, and AAAA divisions. These designations are NATIONAL and may be used for entry or qualifying purposes. Many LSCs have their own time standards as well.

National Age Group Top 16 Times: Time standards set for both short and long course based on previous years' achievements. Only times meeting these standards may be submitted for consideration each year.

Negative Split: Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

Official: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and referees.

Pace Clock: Large clock with a large second hand and a smaller minute hand, used to check pace or maintain intervals in practice; may also be digital.

Preliminaries (Prelims): The qualifying rounds of a swim meet which determine the swimmers who will participate in the final session of each event.

Pre-seeded: A meet in which a swimmer's heat and lane assignments are determined before the start of the meet and are printed in the heat sheet.

Proof-Of-Time: A requirement at some meets that swimmers be able to show proof (final results) that they have swum qualifying times. It assures that all participating swimmers have met the established qualifying standards.

Psych Sheet: A listing of all swimmers, ranked according to entered time for any event in a meet.

Qualifying Time: The time standard necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition.

Referee: The chief official at any swim meet

Relay:

Free Relay--Four swimmers swimming a set distance, one at a time, usually using the crawl stroke. The first swimmer starts the race at the sound of the gun. Each successive swimmer starts their segment at the conclusion of the preceding swimmer's portion of the relay.

Medley Relay--Four swimmers swimming as in the free relay except each successive swimmer uses a different stroke in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

Rest: Also known as Taper. The final preparation--the resting phase--at the end of the season before the championship meet. Prior to major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer may shave his entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event in a competition.

Seeding: There are two types: (1) deck seeding, which is the procedure of assigning swimmers to their proper lanes and heats immediately prior to each event, and (2) pre-seeding, which is the process of assigning swimmers to heats and lanes prior to the swim meet.

Seed Time: This is the best time a swimmer has achieved swimming a particular event. The seed time is used to place the swimmer in the proper heats the next time he/she swims that event. Seed times carry over from one season to the next and from one age group to the next.

Senior/Open: In USA Swimming, there are no age restrictions in Senior/Open competition. Any age swimmer may compete in a Senior event. In YMCA Competition, a swimmer must be 12 years old (as of December 1) to compete in a Senior/Open Event. Senior Nationals: Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, the highest level of competition is the Phillips 66/ USA National Championships. Swimmers with qualifying time standards compete against America's best swimmers in the spring and in the summer.. Swimmers can qualify for national teams that represent the US in international competition by their performances at Senior Nationals.

Short Course: A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. SEAY swims most of the winter competition in short course.

Split: A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 yards or meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is on record pace. Under certain conditions, a lead off split, the time for the first swimmer in a relay or the time for an initial distance for an individual swimmer, may also be used as official times. In a relay, the time for one of the four individuals.

Sprint: Describes the shorter events (50 and 100 yards/meters). Also, in training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

Stand-up: The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.

Starter: The official responsible for starting each heat of an event.

State Qualifier: A swimmer who has made the necessary cut off times to enter the State meet.

Step-Down: The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication that everything is not right for the race to start.

Streamline: The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/ or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as tight and narrow as it can be.

Stroke Judge: The official who determines that the strokes of all competing swimmers conform to the rules.

Taper: Also known as Rest. The final preparation--the resting phase--at the end of the season before the championship meet. Prior to major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer may shave his entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water.

Time Trial: A time-only swim which is not part of a regular meet.

Touch: The swimmer's contact with the wall at the end of a race. Butterfly and breaststroke turns and finishes require a two-hand touch.

Touch Pad: A large, sensitive, electronic board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and recorded by the timing system.

Turn: A reversing of direction by the swimmer at the end of the pool.

Open Turn--Usually done with the head coming out of the water and taking a breath. The feet and legs stay underwater. It is slower than a flip turn.

Flip Turn--The head is usually below the surface of the water and the legs are brought out of the water during the turn. It is much faster than an open turn.

Unattached: USA-registered swimmer who does not represent any particular USA registered club.

United States of America Swimming: National governing body of competitive swimming in the United States, abbreviated "USA".

USA Card Number: Unique number assigned to a swimmer when she/ he joins USA Swimming. The card may be required at any given competition. The number consists of the swimmer's date of birth (mmddyy), the first three letters of the LEGAL first name, the first letter of the middle name, and the first four letters of the last name. If the first or last names do not have enough letters or if the swimmer does not have a middle name, an asterisk (*) will be used to fill in the blanks.

Warm Down: Low-intensity swimming used by swimmers after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

Warm-Up: Low intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

Watches: Stopwatches used to time swimmers during a competition, usually electronic. When totally automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.

Zones: At the end of the long course season, in August, swimmers with AAA times compete in a championship age-group meet. Swimmers achieving an A time in the longest distance freestyle event in their age group may compete in the Open Water portion of the Zone Competition. The United States is divided into 4 major zones: Eastern, Southern, Central, and Western. WAM, as part of the Wisconsin LSC, competes in the Central Zone.