

## Meet Descriptions

USA Meets are broken down into different categories and tiers to best suit each swimmer's ability. From the beginning age group swimmer to the elite senior athlete there are different level meets to set goals to qualify for and compete at, as well as meets to compete in to achieve those goals. The structural breakdowns of common meets throughout the seasons are as follows:

**Time Trials** – As an opportunity to offer competitive opportunities for our swimmers to better themselves and qualify for higher level meets we offer Time Trials through the season. These meets are held at our own pool and are for our own team. Events are set up and swimmers compete against each other. These events are free and require parents volunteers to help run. All swimmers regardless of group should be in attendance for these meets.

**Open Qualifier** – These are one of the most common meet types through the seasons. Open qualifier meets are those that do not require swimmers to be faster than a certain time or slower than a certain time. Any ability athlete may enter these meets.

**Slower Than Meet** – These meets are primarily for newer swimmers to the team or the sport itself. Although no meets of this type are held in Alaska, they are a common meet down south. Swimmers with a time slower than the listed time standard in the meet information may enter these meets. Athletes who have not swam an event, and thus do not have a time yet, may enter these meets. Athletes are not penalized for swimming faster than the time standard in the meet. These meets are great for all Swimmers just starting out.

**Faster Than Meet** – Swimmers need to qualify for these meets with previous swims where they swam faster than the cut off time. Qualifying times are usually in line with the National Age Group Motivational Time Standards (NAG16). Meets may require 'B' times or 'A' times to have been previously achieved in order to enter these meets. Cut off times are specified in the individual meet info as well as the meet schedule.

**Preliminary/ Final Meet** – Many faster than meets are swam as preliminary/ finals. This means that there are multiple sessions in the same day for the same age group. In prelims all athletes entered in each event compete in various heats in order to qualify to swim at finals. Finals are what every swimmer works to compete at, an opportunity to race all of your competition at once without other heats. Finals are typically held in the evening and consist of the top swims from preliminaries. All finals include a Championship (A) final consisting of the top 8-10 swimmers from preliminaries depending on the number of lanes in the venue. Some events offer a Consolation (B) final of the next 8-10 fastest swims, few meets offer a bonus (C) final and even a D final. Only athletes competing in finals score team points and are eligible for awards. Swimmers can only place in their own final; meaning if a swimmer in the B final swims faster than someone in the A they would not place higher than first place in the B final.

**Championship Meets** – These meets are typically faster than meets held as preliminary/ finals. These are the focus meet of most athletes on the team each season with coaches planning their season work to prepare the athletes to swim their best here. Senior athletes and some age group swimmers have their best

shot of qualifying for the Sectional meet and higher at these meets. Championship meets are always held at the end of the season and are the climax of the season. All athletes that qualify for these meets are expected to attend each day offered.

**Zones** – This is the highest meet that age group swimmers can qualify for. Qualification to the zone championships requires swimmers to achieve ‘AAA’ time standards. Athletes in Age group III and Senior group will typically have goals of swimming at this meet. Swimmers who qualify here travel with the rest of the athletes from the district to compete together as the Alaska All Star team. Each district fills their roster with all their qualifiers and then competes against the other districts. This is a very fun and prestigious meet for age group swimmers. Senior Zones has similar qualifying standards but is open to all age athletes 19 years and younger.

**Speedo Sectional Championship Meet** – Sectional Championship meets are the first tier of National level meets with this one being regional level. This meet has one time standard per event and is not broken down by age, so regardless of their age swimmers can qualify for this meet if they meet the time standard. This meet is held twice a year, in the summer it is held in long course and the spring it is held as short course. Districts that compete at this meet are the Western portion of the western zone, including HI, IE, MT, WY, PN, OR, AK, SR. Qualifying for this meet and higher meets takes considerable dedication and diligent work. Athletes who qualify for this meet will typically qualify for Finals at the high school state championship meet.

**Futures Championships** – The Futures Championships is held at three locations through the country all held on the same weekend. Each site is assigned to a specific portion of the country and only USA Swimming members may compete. Alaska is assigned to the Mount Hood location. This meet is designed to be a bridging gap for swimmers who are close to their Junior National time but are faster than their Sectional time. To qualify swimmers must have swam their qualifying time in a certified pool. Time standards for this meet are specific to this series.

**Arena Pro Swim Series** – The pro swim series are a collection of meets held throughout the country over the course of the year. Qualification to this meet requires winter Junior National qualifying times. Qualification to the meet requires that the qualifying swim be done in a certified pool. Swimmers will compete at the six meets held around the country. Swimmers have a chance at winning prize money based on individual finishes in their races. As per the name the best swimmers in the nation will be competing at these meets. All swimmers nationally and internationally may enter and compete in these meets regardless of age and region.

**Speedo Junior National Championships** – Junior Nationals are held once each season. This is the National championship meet for athletes 18 and younger. Once again these qualifying standards are not broken down by age but rather there is one standard per event and athletes regardless of age can qualify for this meet. Summer long course time standards are faster than winter short course time standards. This is a very prestigious meet for all that qualify and attend. Clubs from the entire nation compete at this meet over the course of a week’s time. Qualifying for this meet takes considerable dedication and focus consistently over the course of many seasons of training. Qualifying for this meet requires the time be swam in a certified USA Swimming pool.

**Phillips 66 National Championships** – This meet is the same as Junior Nationals except there is no limit on age. The time standards are faster than Junior Nationals. At this event athletes will be competing against the best in the nation including those seen on television at the Olympics. This meet is the highest level of competition swimmers can qualify for in the United States with the Exception of Olympic Trials. Athletes must swim their qualifying cuts for this meet in a certified USA Swimming pool. Athletes qualifying for this meet have fully dedicated themselves to swimming for a number of years.

**Olympic Trials** – This is the top meet held in the United States. Athletes compete here to qualify for the USA Swimming Olympic Team. Olympic trials are held once every four years to fill the Olympic roster. Qualifying times for this meet are the fastest qualifying standards in the country. Athletes compete here with their club against the rest of the country. Swimmers who qualify to compete here have fully dedicated years of hard work in the pool and outside of it.