

What does qualifying times mean?

Swimming meets can be confusing enough but then you throw in qualifying times as a requirement and it can be even more confusing. I am hoping that this will help explain for our new and old parents what qualifying times their swimmers need and create more awareness.

Most swim meets do not require qualifying times, they are opportunities to earn one. In Alaska, all championship meets have required qualifying times. There are additional meets out of state that swimmers can qualify for. Qualifying times are based off of national time standards created by USA swimming. Our current one, runs from 2017-2020. It is important that you read the top of each page and make sure that you are looking for times based on what yardage of pool they were swum in. Most times swimmers have will be short course yards or SCY. SCM is for short course meters and LCM is for Long Course Meters. It is not likely that your son or daughter will have times for a SCM or LCM.

For each meet, the qualifying times are different and what age groups can participate are different. I have listed them below:

Central Area Championships - December - All ages - Unique to AK - can be found on website
Alaska Summer Championships - July - All Ages - Requires a B time in the age group (13/14, 11/12, etc.)

Age Group Championships - February - 14 and below - Requires a B time in the single age category

Junior Olympic Championships - April - All ages - Requires a BB time in the age group (13/14, 11/12, etc.)

Senior Champs - January - All ages - Requires an A time in the 13/14 age group

Swimmers can earn qualifying times from the January of the year prior up until the sign up date for the swim meet. For example, let's say you want to qualify for age group championships in February of 2018. You must have swum that time at an official swim meet legally anytime from January of 2017 to the signup cut off in February of 2018.

There is a catch! Pay attention to your child's birthday. If your son or daughter, ages up in age groups or age the qualifying times change. This counts all the way up until the date the swim meet starts. For example, Age groups are February 24th to February 26th. If your child's birthday is on February 23rd, that will change the times needed to qualify. Team Unify should stop you from signing up for events that they are not qualified for if they age up that closely to the meet start date.