



## Long Course: What's That?????

We at PEAQ recognize that we have swimmers and families who have different levels of experience with the sport. For those of us who have been around a while, we sometimes toss out pool lingo and terms and forget that for our newest members that this can be confusing. One of the times for potential confusion is when we switch from Short Course Season to Long Course Season. Some of you might be wondering, what's the difference? We came up with an FAQ sheet to help answer some of your questions.

**What is Long Course?** Long Course refers to the type of pool that swimmers compete in. When swimmers are in Long Course Season, the meets are held in a 50-meter pool as opposed to a 25-yard pool that is used in Short Course. Think about the pool that the Olympics are held in (See the image below) when you are trying to picture a Long Course pool. The Olympics and most international meets are held in a 50-meter pool. High school meets and college meets are typically held in a 25-yard Short Course pool.



**Where are the Long Course pools in our area?** There are a few long course pools in the area. PEAQ is very fortunate to have access to three Long Course pools. Our South Hills sites use Scott pool and CV high school pool. If you have been to CV, you might have noticed a bulkhead in the center of the pool. That bulkhead can be lowered, which converts CV pool into a 50-meter pool. Our Pitt site uses the University of Pittsburgh pool, which can also be reconfigured to make it a 50-meter pool. Scott pool is an outdoor 50-meter pool, which is a nice change in the summer months.

**When is Long Course Season?** Long Course typically runs from mid-April through the beginning of August. During this time, our older swimmers will primarily practice in a Long Course pool, while our younger swimmers will practice in a Short Course pool, but they will also have opportunities to practice in a Long Course pool as well.

**Obviously, the size of the pool is different, but what are some other differences?** Due to the fact that the length of the pool is different, a swimmer has fewer flip turns and “walls.” This can make for a slightly different feel to a race for swimmers.

**Can you convert Short Course times to Long Course times?** Yes, Short Course times can be converted, and coaches will sometimes use a mathematical equation to do this if they don't have a Long Course time for a swimmer but do have a Short Course time. However, please keep in mind that a converted time is not always 100 % accurate. It's a good guess, but it's hard to account for some of the differences in the pools, like less walls. Many swimmers get frustrated when they believe they add to a time that has been converted. Please explain to your swimmers that the first time they swim a Long Course event that whatever time they do is their best time, regardless of the conversion. The time they get for that first swim will be their starting point moving forward and the time that they are trying to improve.