

The following excerpt is taken from the Swim BC Swim Guide.

11.4.2 THE OFFICIALS

Officials are present at all competitions to implement the technical rules of swimming and to ensure that the competition is fair and equitable. Officials attend clinics, pass a written test, and work meets before being certified. All parents are encouraged to get involved with some form of officiating.

Timers - operate timing devices (watches or automatic timing systems) and records the official time for the swimmer in his/her lane.

Turn Judges - observe from each end of the pool and ensure that the turns and finishes comply with the rules applicable to each stroke.

Stroke Judges - observe from both sides of the pool, walking abreast of the swimmers, to ensure that the rules relating to each stroke are being followed. The position of Stroke Judge and Turn Judge may be combined into one position called the Stroke and Turn Judge.

Relay takeoff Judge - stand beside the starting blocks to observe the relay exchange, ensuring that the feet of the departing swimmer have not lost contact with the block before the incoming swimmer touches the end of the pool. Turn judges often accomplish this task.

Clerk of the Course - arranges the swimmers in their proper heats and lanes.

Starter - assumes control of the swimmers from the Referee, directs them to "take your mark" and sees that no swimmer is in motion prior to giving the start signal.

Referee - has overall authority and control of the competition, ensuring that all the rules are followed. Assigns and instructs all officials, and decides all questions relating to the conduct of the meet. Violations of the rules are reported to the Referee, and the rules require that every reasonable effort be made to notify the swimmer or his coach of the reason for disqualification.

11.5.1 What is Swim BC?

Swim BC is the provincial governing body for amateur competitive swimming and was incorporated in 1963. As the provincial governing body for the sport, Swim BC is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in British Columbia. In this capacity, Swim BC formulates rules (other than direct technical rules), implements policies and procedures, regulates the provincial championships, disseminates safety information, administers a multitude of funding programs, and selects athletes to represent British Columbia at National and Regional Games.

11.5.2 How is Canadian Swimming Organized?

International: The International governing body of all aquatic sports is FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation).

Swimming Canada (SNC - Swimming/Natation Canada) is affiliated to FINA through the Aquatic Federation of Canada (AFC).

National: Swim BC is a Provincial Sport Organization (PSO) which represents British Columbia to SNC, in conjunction with all other provinces. In turn, Swim BC represents the interests of SNC to the province.

11.6 GLOSSARY OF SWIMMING TERMS

Age Group Provincial Championships: Often referred to as “AAA’s”. BC’s premiere swimming championships. To enter the meet, swimmers must have attained an “AAA” qualifying time. They are held Short Course in Winter and Long Course in Summer.

Age Group Swimming: The program through which Swim BC provides fair and open competition for its developing members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. The Provincially recognized age groups for records classification are 11&12, 13&14, 15-17, and Senior/Open. For Provincial Championship meets, starting in the 2007-2008 season, SwimBC has had 10&Under, 11&U, 12&U, 13&U, 14&U, 15&U, 16&U and either 18&U or Senior/Open as the age groups awarded at these meets. Regional and invitational meets may offer other age grouping besides those listed above, as well, subject to approval (by meet sanctioning) from SwimBC.

Block(s): The starting platform. Bulkhead: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25- meter courses.

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

Coach: A person who trains and teaches athletes in the sport of swimming.

Code of Conduct: An agreement signed by a swimmer prior to travel stating that the swimmer will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

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

Distance: Term used to refer to events over 400 meters.

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

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

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

Entry Form: Form on which a swimmer is entered for a competition. Typically requests the swimmers registration number, sex, event number and entry time. Usually completed by the coach or Team Manager.

False start: Occurs when a swimmer moves prior to the sounding of the start command.

Final: 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.

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

Flags: Backstroke flags placed 5 meters from the end of the pool. They enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn more efficiently by counting their strokes.

Goal: A specific time or skill achievement a swimmer sets and strives for.

Gutter: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows and is re-circulated through the filtration system.

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

Provincial Trials: Often referred to as “AA’s” or Junior Provincials. A provincial competition for swimmers who have achieved “AA” qualifying standards but have not reached “AAA” qualifying standards. They are held in short course in Winter, and long course in Summer. Virtual Trials is the merging of all Regional Championship meet results to give the effect of a Provincial Trials meet. This meet may be used to qualify entries for Provincial Championship meets.

Lap Counters: 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. Swim BC conducts most of its summer competition in long course.

Long Distance: 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. FINA sanctioned events are any event up to 25 kilometers in distance.

Meet: A competitive opportunity organized to bring swimmers of a similar competitive ability together. Implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmers test themselves against the clock and competition to see how they are improving.
Middle Distance: Term used to refer to events of 200 meters to 400 meters in length.

National Championship: Often referred to as senior championships in which Canada’s top swimmers compete. A qualifying standard must be achieved but there is no age restriction.

National Age Group Championship: A national competition held once a year open to swimmers aged 18&U. A qualifying standard must be achieved.

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 Swim BC, SNC and FINA rules. There will be 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.

Prelims: Slang for preliminaries, also called Heats or Trials. Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in an event.

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

Relay: An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event in a competition.

Senior Swimming: The program through which SNC provides fair and open competition at SNC designated meets and Senior National Championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning and develop a pool of talented athletes for International Competition. There are no age restrictions on Senior competitions.

Short Course: A pool 25 meters in length. Swim BC conducts most of its winter competition in short course.

Split: A swimmer’s intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is “on pace”. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times. In a relay, a split time describes the time for one of the four individuals.

Sprint: Describes the shorter events (50 and 100). In training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

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 elongated as it can be.

Taper: The final preparation phase for a peak meet. A typical taper phase will involve reducing training volume and increasing training intensity. Rest is also critical at this phase. Prior to a major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer will shave their entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water. Called "shaving down", this advanced technique for race preparation is designed to reduce all possible drag effects.

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

Touch pad: A large touch sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's touch is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

Warm down (Swim 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 swimmer prior to a main practice 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.