

Johnston Blaze Swim Club

Parent/Swimmer Handbook 2021-2022

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CLUB OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Johnston Blaze Swim Club shall be to support and promote education, wellness, competition and safety by providing excellence in swim programming for all ages and abilities in the Johnston Community School District and the broader community. The Club is under the umbrella of the Johnston Community School District's community education program and abides by school policies that can be found on the district website.

Johnston Blaze provides a competitive swimming program committed to instilling the spirit of success in its athletes through teaching the value of dedication, achievement of personal goals, and teamwork. It is the goal of Johnston Blaze to provide a high quality comprehensive instructional training program, which will allow swimmers to achieve their potential in swimming. Johnston Blaze strives to develop self-confidence, physical fitness, sportsmanship, and a winning attitude in its athletes.

Community Education works to hire quality staff that enable program areas to grow and provide a continuum of programs for people of all ages, skills, abilities, and opportunities to learn. Coaches are hired through the community education department with guidance from the aquatics coordinator. They are paid district employees that need to meet appropriate requirements dependent upon the position and have the same expectations of customer service, program knowledge and professionalism as do other district positions. Staff is evaluated on a regular basis by their immediate supervisor and/or aquatic coordinator.

SWIM SEASONS

The swim year is divided into two seasons, USA considers two seasons, the winter, or "short course" which runs from September to mid-March and the Summer, or "long course" which runs from April to the end of July. The meets are held in a 25-yard pool. USA meets are generally held in a 50-meter indoor or outdoor pool and other meets are held in a 25-yard/meter pool. Blaze coaches and aquatic coordinators will determine what meets Blaze will attend as a team. Blaze will provide a coach(es) at these meets up to and including the state meet. All meets beyond that point will fall under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Swimming LSC in regards to coaching at those meets.

COMPETITIVE STROKES

The four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle, (2) backstroke, (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age-group of the swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swum by one swimmer called the individual medley. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (medley relay).

BLAZE CLUB TEAMS

The Blaze Swim Club is one team. Within our one team there are several training groups. Team practices will be divided by these training groups. Focus and required performance for each group is available, and will be maintained, on the team website. At meets, athletes will swim according to USA divisions (8-under, 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18).

Anyone can become a member of the Blaze Team if they have achieved level three of American Red Cross swim instruction or can swim 25 yards of freestyle and backstroke unassisted.

The focus of practice will be on stroke development, turns, endurance conditioning and meet fundamentals, the balance of which will be determined by the athletes training group. Athletes will have the opportunity to swim up to six times per week and have the opportunity to swim USA meets.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

The Johnston Blaze Swim Club engages in a multi-level competition program with United States Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.

Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance of improved performance. The coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has both a "good" and a "disappointing" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded by the Johnston Swim Club coaching staff.

Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.

Swimmers are prepared and encouraged to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. Oftentimes, a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as he/she matures and his/her body goes through physical changes.

COMMUNICATION

A large team with different age groups, multiple coaches and many different practice times often needs to communicate in both formal and informal ways. Contact information for the current season can be found at the end of this handbook.

Mail

Written correspondence goes to Blaze Swim Club, PO Box 10, Johnston, IA 50131

Email

Information about your child's swimming, meets, and other swim specific questions should be directed to the head coach.

Information regarding accounts, billing, or registration should be directed to the district aquatic coordinator and/or the Director of Community Education.

Bulletin board

All information regarding team functions is posted on the club bulletin board. You must check them regularly to be aware of deadlines, swim meets and activities. Please try to check the bulletin board each time you are at the pool.

Website

The club has its own web page to enhance communication with the parents. The web page is updated as often as needed. All web page communications are also posted on the bulletin board. The website is www.johnstonblaze.com

DISCIPLINE

General Rules

For the safety of swimmers and protection of the organization, the following rules have been adopted by the Blaze Swim Club and govern the pool and locker rooms:

1. No pushing in any area.
2. No running on deck.
3. No one is allowed on the diving boards.
4. No one is allowed in the commons area or other parts of the school.
5. No one is allowed in the pool when coaches are not present.
6. All swimmers will be on time for warm-ups.
7. All swimmers must leave the pool promptly at the end of the practice session.
8. Swimmers are permitted to use the locker rooms for showering and dressing. Be prompt!
9. Swimmers will wait for rides either at the door or on the bleachers.
10. Locker rooms are to be left clean.
11. Misbehavior will not be permitted in any area.
12. No smoking.
13. No drinking alcoholic beverages.
14. No use of controlled substances.
15. No vulgar language or action is permitted.
16. Any other behavior deemed by the coach to be unsafe or unacceptable will not be permitted.
17. All other Summit Pool guidelines are to be followed.
18. No cell phone usage in the locker rooms at any time.

Beginning on the 1st day of practice, the following discipline policy will be strictly enforced.

Infractions

A serious disciplinary problem at Blaze practices or meets is one in which a participant is hampering the smooth flow of the swim club program. This might include a child requiring constant one-on-one attention, inflicting physical or emotional harm to others, abusing staff, or not conforming to the general rules. Blaze Swim Club and the Community Education Department reserve the right to suspend a child from Blaze Swim Club if the participant is endangering him/herself, other participants or staff members.

Termination of Participation

If a participant is not able to adhere to the general guidelines of the Blaze Swim Club, the head coach and/or aquatic coordinator will notify the parents regarding the situation and request that a meeting be arranged to discuss a solution. If the participant's behavior does not improve, the head coach/aquatic coordinator may terminate the participant from the program, thus resulting in no attendance at practices or registration for USA meets through the Blaze Swim Club/Community Education Department. No paid fees will be refunded. The participant may still be a USA swimmer and participate at meets, but will do so with no connection to the Johnston Blaze Swim Club.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

There are three ways to make payments for registration and fees. You can go to the district webpage and click

on RevTrak and make a payment online using V/MC/Discover. You will need to enter the amount you want to pay, information about the swimmer, and for what fees you are paying. You can call the JCE office at 278-0552 and pay over the phone with V/MC or you can walk in to the JCE (Community Education Center) Office at 6600 NW 62nd Ave. and pay with cash/check/V/MC.

Session Fee

Each session has a fee. Participants must have accounts in good standing prior to registering for any session of the Blaze Swim Club. Payments are due in advance of the first practice. Payments may be made in increments as long as full payment is made by first session practice. Payments may be made via cash, check, credit card or debit card. Registration for a session can be done online on the blaze website.

Meet Fees

Participants that wish to swim at meets will be responsible for paying the entry fees that are set by the meet host. In addition, there may be a coaches' meet fee set by community education at some meets to help offset the cost of coaches and other expenses at meets where Blaze attends as a club. All fees are to be paid prior to the meet date or upon invoice.

USA Swimming Fees

Each swimmer must be a member of USA swimming. This membership fee is part of the annual yearly registration fee. There is no refund for the one-time registration fee.

Refunds

Refund request MUST be made through the Community Education Department using the cancellation request form found **HERE**. Telling a coach/swim staff member is not acceptable and refunds are based on the date the office is informed.

Request within the first seven days of a session-full refund minus \$20 administrative fee

Request prior to the end of the fourth week (8th week for long)-1/2 refund will be given minus \$20 administrative fee.

Request prior to the end of the twelfth week (long only)-1/4 refund will be given minus \$20 administrative fee and requires doctor note that swimmer can not swim due to illness/injury.

No refunds will be given on the one-time registration fee or for punch cards.

Financial Assistance

The ultimate financial responsibility lies with you as the parent or guardian. Failure to make payment or follow financial assistance guidelines with co-payments may result in termination from the club.

Scholarships may be available on a limited basis for partial support of the registration fees. All participants must fill out an application to determine eligibility. They must be a student within the JCSD or live within the boundaries of the school district to qualify. Applicants are subject to confirmation of financial records and the same standards as the school district free and reduced lunch program guidelines must also be met. Scholarships are not available for meet entries or other costs associated with the club and participating at meets.

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Practices for the Blaze Swim Club will be held as scheduled. If the JCSD should cancel school for the day or dismiss early, then there will be NO swim club practice that day. For practices scheduled on days when school is not in session (breaks, weekends, summer), then a message will be left on the community education weather line (278-0552 and then extension 199) concerning practice. Information will also be posted on the Blaze website. If there is another reason that practice can not be held (water/pool issues, etc.) notification will be made via email and/or posted on Blaze website. Therefore it is very important that you have updated and current email addresses listed in TeamUnify.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to practices and meets is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian. The district does not provide transportation for any participants to and from club practices and meets. Coaches will also not provide private transportation to a meet or practice unless the participant is their own child.

BLAZE PARENT ANCHORS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The aquatics coordinator and head coach will seek representation from parents of participants to serve on a parent advisory council. Representation will include three representatives from the 10 and under and three from the eleven and older. This council is advisory in nature. They shall provide input in regards to the Blaze Swim Club to both the aquatics coordinator and head coach.

This council will lead standing and special committees needed to advance the club in regards to meets and other club matters. As committees are determined through the assistance of the council, committee job descriptions shall be created. Chairs of the committees will provide reports to the “Blaze Anchor Council”.

The Anchor Council will hold at least quarterly meetings, led by the aquatics coordinator. Special meetings may be called of sub-committees or the Anchor Council as needed. Minutes will be taken and posted on the Blaze website so that parents can be kept apprised of council activities. Parents may attend any Anchor Council meeting, as they are open to the public.

FUNDRAISING

Any and all fund-raising must be requested through the aquatics coordinator and approved through the community education office. Fundraising will be limited and subject to specific initiatives.

BASIC SWIMMING RULES

Starts

The official will blow one long whistle and this signals the swimmers to get up on the blocks or get in the pool for backstroke. The official will then say the command “take your mark.” It is important that all swimmers come down to the starting position together – there should be no delay due to goggle adjustment/cap etc. Once in the “starting” position the swimmer has to be completely still prior to the horn start – there can be NO movement! The horn will go off and the swimmer begins their race. If there was any flinching or movement just prior to the horn the swimmer can get disqualified from this event and therefore whatever time they swam or whatever place they received would be nullified.

Turns and finishes

Freestyle: feet have to touch the wall

Backstroke: swimmers have to be on their back when they touch the wall. After he/she touches, he/she can then turn around, but he/she must push off on their back. At the finish a swimmer must finish on his/her back. A swimmer may not roll over and grab the wall until they have first touched it.

Breaststroke and Butterfly: Swimmers have to touch with both hands at the same time. A swimmer may not freestyle kick off the wall in either breaststroke or butterfly. When swimming butterfly, both arms must move at the same time making the same simultaneous motion.

MEET INFORMATION

Johnston Blaze coaching staff and swimmers will compete in multiple season meets around the metro area. Meet schedules will be posted on the Blaze website. Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets.

Before the meet starts

Arrive at the pool at least 30 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. You should know your event entries and numbers.

Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.

Find the check-in place and either you or your swimmer will need to check in. This is usually mandatory for the 400 IM, 500 free, and 1,000 free. The USA check-in is usually found around the area marked "Clerk of Course." Usually one will need to circle the swimmer's name and put their initials next to the circled name. Developmental team will check in with their coach.

Once "checked in", write each event-number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming and what event number to listen for.

Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team if Blaze is there as a team. If Blaze is not attending as a USA team, then a coach will be assigned to your child at check-in by the host meet manager.

After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

The meet will usually start about 10-15 minutes after warm-ups are over.

Parents are not allowed on the deck unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.

A program is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool for USA meets. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

Meet Starts

It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming (again, why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.

A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "clerk of course". Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggle. Generally, girl's events are odd-numbered and boys events are even-numbered. Example: "Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, report to Clerk of Course."

Some but not all meet hosts will provide a "Clerk of Course." The people running the "Clerk of Course" will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order. You can expect at least 4-8 heats of each event. If there is no clerk of course it is the swimmer's sole responsibility to report to the pool and get lined up behind the correct lane prior to his or her race.

The swimmer swims their race.

After each swim

He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks) his or her time if for some reason the scoreboard is not working or if the time looks "off." The swimmer should then go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.

Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:

Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again at the "Clerk of Course."

When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. Make sure, however, you, as a parent, check with the coach before leaving to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there.

Food at Meets

The host team generally provides a concession stand. Families may wish to take an insulated cooler or picnic basket to meets. This helps with finances and enables families to take food that they and their swimmers prefer. Swimmers should try and eat breakfast as far ahead of warm-up time as possible and snack nutritiously at break time or immediately after a swimming event.

Items to take to Swim Meets

Swimmer:

Team swimsuit and/or personal competition suit (spare suits are handy)

Swim goggles

Swim caps

Towels

Warm-up suit or sweat shirt and sweat pants

Sleeping bags, if allowed (some pools do not allow due to small areas)

Street clothing and personal articles

A small bag to keep your things in. Remember that personal belongings are easily lost or misplaced at meets.

Please do not bring valuables to a swim meet.

Label all swimmers' belongings. It is also helpful to include the club name to ease of identification. Most pools have a lost and found. Please be sure to check there if your swimmer loses anything.

Parents:

Cash for program

Highlighter

Pen or Pencil

Stopwatch (if you wish, not necessary)

Camera

Dress lightly (most indoor pools are warm and humid)

The following are a list of general rules pertaining to swim meets:

All persons representing the Blaze Swim Club and USA swimming will conduct themselves at all times in a manner to uphold the reputation of the club.

All general practice rules pertain.

All officials working on deck must be USA certified.

All swimmers are expected to attend meet warm-ups.

Competition suits must meet USA Swimming Rules and Regulations.

NUTRITION

Swimmers are totally dependent on you, the parents, for the development of sound nutritional habits.

Swimming demands a tremendous amount of physical and mental energy and these requirements are directly related to the swimmers nutritional habits.

Guidelines for Good Eating

- Eat two or more kinds of whole grain daily (wheat, oats, brown rice, barley, buckwheat, etc.) in the form of cereals, side dishes, pasta, and bread.
- Eat two or more servings of raw vegetables or salad and two or more servings of raw or cooked green or yellow vegetables daily. Potatoes may be eaten every day.
- Eat one piece of citrus fruit and up to three or four fresh fruit servings daily.
- Eat beans or peas one to three times weekly, as you wish.
- Eat three full meals daily. Don't go hungry between meals; snacks are encouraged. For snacks, eat fruit, vegetables and raw salad, or whole grain bread or crackers that are free of oil or sweeteners.
- Flavor with herbs and spices instead of salt. Keep salt intake minimal.
- If you need to lose weight, increase vegetables and decrease grains. If you need to gain weight, decrease vegetables and increase grains.
- Vitamin supplements are recommended as well as sound nutritional habits.

Pre-Competition Meal

- Prepare your own food. It's better for you, less expensive and it eliminates fast, junk food.
- Eat a meal that is composed primarily of carbohydrates. This should be food that the swimmer enjoys but is not high in fat content or hot and spicy.
- If it is a morning meet, rise with enough time to eat breakfast. The meal should not be heavy but sufficient to start off what may be a long day.
- Eat 2 to 4 hours before competition begins, so the body has time to digest the meal.
- For snacks, eat fruit. Food high in processed sugar content is detrimental to a swimmer's performance.
- Meals should not be skipped entirely, because the overall performance of the athlete may suffer.
- Be sure to drink plenty of water during the meet. Do not let yourself become thirsty. A water bottle is required during practice and should be brought to meets.
- Some young swimmers direct their anxieties about the upcoming competition to their stomachs, making it difficult for them to eat a pre-meet meal. In this situation, a liquid pre-meet meal is a sound alternative to solid food.

USA ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

USA swimmers are more than welcome to participate in other meets that the Blaze coaching staff will not attend. Parents are solely responsible for any entries, planning, or communication that is involved in attending a meet that the team as a whole is not participating in.

Swimmer Identification Number

USA Swimming Membership Cards will be distributed to the swimmers when they are received from the Iowa Local Swimming Committee of USA Swimming. Each swimmer is assigned a 16-character identification number. You may be asked to provide this number when entering a meet. The format of the identification number is as follows: The first 6 parts are the swimmer's birth date, DDMMYY. The next three spaces are the first three letters of the swimmer's legal first name. The next letter is the swimmer's middle initial, and the final four letters are the first four letters of the swimmer's last name. For example: USA Swimming ID# for swimmer Suzanne Eileen Nelson and born August 27, 1976 = 082776SUZENELS.

Levels of Achievement

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by USA Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8-Under, 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and Senior. The senior classification includes any age registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer's age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet.

Within each age-group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as "C" swimmers. As they improve, they advance from "C", to "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by United States Swimming. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. An example: a "C" breaststroke time, a "B" freestyle time, and a "AA" backstroke time.

Some swim meets set certain qualification standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification.

Levels of Swim Meets

Open/Developmental Meets-These meets generally do not have any qualification time standards. Most of the time these meets offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter from 3-5 events per day.

Q Minus Meet-

Qualification Meets-These meets have some type of qualification time standard(s) that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet.

All-Star Meet – This is an annual meet that any swimmer can apply to participate in. However, Team Iowa will only send the fastest five available applicants to swim in each event. The All Star Meet is a multi-state, short course meet held during the winter season.

State Championships-At the end of each short course (winter) and long course (summer) season, a State Championship meet is sanctioned by Iowa Swimming, the governing body of swimming in the state of Iowa. Iowa swimming sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets. Generally, the standards fall between the national "A" and "AA" time standards. There are two championships held each season: the Age Group Championship for swimmers 12-Under and the Senior Championship open to any swimmer in the state who has met the qualifying standards regardless of age.

Zone Championships - After the state championships are held in the summer, a swimmer may qualify to participate in the Central Zone Championships by swimming a national "AAA" time. This is an all-star meet where swimmers compete as a member of the Iowa Zone team competing against other states from the Midwest.

Speedo/USA Junior National Championships-One of the highest levels of achievement Iowa swimmers strive for is the participation in the Junior National Championships. USA Swimming sponsors an eastern United States Junior National meet and a western United States Junior National meet each season.

Phillips 66/USA National Championships (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 for our senior swimmers is the USA National Championships.

VOLUNTEERS

Meet Related Volunteer Needs when Hosting

Event Committee: Assist Computer Chair

Clerk of Course: Line up swimmers and take to pool in correct order.

Concession Food Coordinator: Concessions are operated through the Johnston Athletic/Activities Department. Coordinator will schedule volunteers to work concessions.

Dual Meet Manager: Identify and coordinate meet workers for home dual meets.

Meet Awards: Responsible for coordinating volunteers to label awards and distribute to teams.

Officials Chair (USA): Develop and train team officials (referees, starter/recall, stroke & turn) by offering classes for USA Swimming certification and registration. Identify and coordinate referees, starters and stroke & turn officials for all home and championship meets.

Safety Chair (USA): Ensure that deck safety rules are followed and that safety marshals are aware of their responsibilities at home meets, including the need to fill out incident reports on all injuries. Maintain up to date first aid kits.

Team Related Activities

Fall Event & Recognition Day: Arrange beginning-of-year fall event to promote team unity, spirit and fun for all squads. Set date and time for Recognition Day in May and coordinate food, trophies and any special awards.

Annual Team Awards: Responsible for working with staff on event to recognize athletes at end of season.

Team/Individual Pictures: Coordinates team picture day for the year.

SWIMMING GLOSSARY

Age Group Swim Meet: All USA registered swimmers 18 years old or younger who have met the qualifying time standard for specific events are eligible to participate in their age category. Age on the first day of the meet shall govern the entire meet.

Anchorman: The swimmer who swims the last leg of the relay.

Backstroke: One of the four primary competitive swimming strokes. It is performed with the swimmer on his back and the race starts with the swimmer in the water.

Backstroke Flags: A set of flags placed 15 feet from the end of the pool and 8 feet above the water. Used to warn the swimmer of a turn or finish coming up.

Butterfly: One of the four primary competitive strokes. The butterfly is an outgrowth of the breaststroke, swum in the Olympics for the first time in 1965.

Conforming Time: Qualifying time standard that corresponds to the course that will be competed in a meet.

Consolation: (see Finals) Competition for the fastest swimmers who failed to qualify for the finals.

Course: Designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Meets may be conducted in short course yards (25 yards), short course meters (25 meters), or long course meters (50 meters).

Disqualified (DQ): The swimmer's time is not considered in the competition due to an improper stroke technique, false start, etc. This is determined by the stroke and turn judge, starter, or referee.

Dolphin Kick: The kick used in the butterfly.

Dual Competition: Competition between two clubs.

Event: Any race or series of races in a given stroke or distance.

False Start: An error in which the swimmer leaves the starting blocks too soon, resulting in a disqualification.

Forward Start: A forward entry facing the length of the pool.

Heat: A division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time.

High Points: The award given to the boys and girls in each age group who earn the highest number of points during the meet. Not all swim meets offer high point awards.

Individual Medley (IM): An event where one swimmer performs all four major strokes.

Initial Distance: The first portion of a race, which an official time may be recorded, but which is not in itself a completed event.

Lane: The specific lane in which the swimmer is assigned to swim, i.e. lane one.

Lap: Two lengths of the pool.

Lap Counters: A box of cards or plastic numbers used to let distance swimmers know how far they have swum.

Leg: The part of the relay event that is swum by a single team.

Length: One length of the pool.

LSC: Local Swim Committee.

Meet Approval: A permit issued by an LSC for meets to a registered USA group member to conduct a meet in conformance with all USS rules.

Meet Sanction: A permit issued by an LSC for meets to a USA group member to conduct a meet in conformance with all AUSS rules.

Medley relay: Four swimmers on each team each swim one fourth of the total prescribed distance in the order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

Negative Split: A faster swim the second half of the race than during the first half.

Non-conforming Time: Qualifying time standard that does not correspond to the course that will be completed in a meet.

Observed Swim: A swim observed by an assigned USA official for conformance with USA technical rules in a meet conducted under other than USA rules.

Official Verification Card: A three-copy form certifying a national qualifying time by a swimmer and issued by a verifying official where the meet was held. OVC's shall be used for any time that equals or betters a national time standard or international trials time standard.

Place Judges: Two place judges, one on each side of the finish line, who will record the order of finish for all swimmers by lane.

Prelims (trials): In certain meets, the qualifying rounds for each event to determine the finalists.

Program: The order of events offered at a swim meet.

Proof of time: A requirement at some meets to make certain that swimmers have legally met the entry time standards for that meet.

Pyramid Seeding: In trials or preliminaries of trials-finals meets, the swimmers in the top 3 heats are intermingled so that the fastest three swimmers are in the middle lanes of the last 3 heats, the next 3 in the lane next to that in each of those heats, and so forth. This is also called "circle seeding." In finals, those finishing fastest by time swim in the top 1 or 2 heats (Final and Consolation Final).

Referee: The USA official who has the final authority over all other officials at the meet. He makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the meet.

Scratch: Withdrawal of an entry from competition.

Seed: To distribute the swimmers among the required number of heats and or lanes, according to their submitted times or preliminary times.

Split Times: Time recorded from official start to completion of an intermediate distance within a longer event.

Session: Any portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, or type of competition, i.e., preliminary and finals, morning, afternoon, or evening, senior and age group.

Starter: The USA official responsible for starting each heat and calling the swimmers to the blocks.

Stroke and turn judge: A USA official, who determines the legality of swimmers' strokes, turns and finishes and disqualifies those who do not conform to USA rules.

Submitted Times: Those filed with an entry, as having been previously achieved.

Timed Finals: Competition in which only heats are swum and final placing is determined by the times performed in the heats.

Time Standard: The time standard for any event in a meet is the cut-off time for that event.

Touch pad: An electronic pad which stops a clock when the swimmer touches it at the end of the race. This is usually the official time, although corrections are made if the swimmer misses the pad.

Unattached: An athlete member who competed but does not represent a club member of USA.

USA: USA Swimming. The national governing body for swimming in the United States.

Warm-up: A period of time before competition and workout where one swims slowly to stretch muscles to prevent injury.

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