

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

You have just entered a world where a different language is spoken, and we have developed a small primer to help you navigate and orient yourself into the sport of swimming. The glossary will help explain the meaning of scratch; that a negative split is really a positive thing; and DQ does not stand for Dairy Queen.

- Block:** The starting platform swimmers dive off to start their race.
- Cut:** Qualifying time (Q-time). A time standard is necessary to attend a particular meet or event.
- Cool 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.
- Distance:** Term used to refer how far an event is. Measured either in meters or yards.
- DQ:** Disqualified. This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind. Each stroke has rules to swim by & a judge makes sure the swimmers are complying with those rules.
- Drill:** An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke to improve a technique.
- Entry form:** What you fill out to enter your swimmer in a meet.
- False Start:** Occurs when a swimmer is moving before the start is sounded. One false start is a DQ.
- Finish:** The final phase of the race or the touch at the end of the race.
- Flags:** Backstroke flags placed 5 yds. from the end of the pool. The flags enable the swimmer to do a flip turn more efficiently or finish strong without looking backward toward the wall.
- IM:** Individual Medley. An IM is where a swimmer swims all 4 strokes in the following order butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle (fly, back, breast, free).
- Long Course:** Events take place in 50-meter pools. Most summer meets are in long course pools.
- LSC:** Local Swimming Committee. An LSC is the governing body for swimming at the state or local level. There are 59 LSC's in the country.
- Meet:** Competition designed to be a learning experience. Using what they have learned in practice, swimmers test themselves against the clock to see how they are improving.
- Negative Split:** Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.
- Relay:** An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve a single time. There are 2 types of relays; free (all legs are swum freestyle) & medley (each leg is different: back, breast, fly, free)
- Scratch:** Withdraw from an event during competition.

- Seeding:** Distributing the swimmers among the required number of heats &/or lanes, according to their submitted or preliminary times.
- Short Course:** Events take place in 25-yard pools. Most winter meets are in short course pools.
- Split:** Often used by the coaches to teach the concept of pacing.
- Touch Pad:** A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's finish is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.
- USA Swim:** National governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.
- USAS #:** A number assigned to a swimmer upon joining USA Swimming. The membership card with this number may be required at any given meet. Make sure you have your swimmers card with you at all times.
- Warm-up:** Low intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm. Warm up gradually increases heart rate, respiration and helps prevent injury.
- Watches:** Stopwatches are used to time swimmers during competition. When automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a backup timing method.