



Swimming 101 – Frequently Asked Questions

Swimming often appears to be in a world and have a language all its own. Joining this new world can be a confusing and sometimes frustrating experience. As you review these Frequently Asked Questions, our hope is that this new world will start to make sense. If there are still questions you have, please [let us know](#).

1. Do I have to be a good swimmer to join the team?

FAST has a place for everyone – whether it's in lessons, our pre-competitive program, or the swim team. We offer free stroke evaluations to ensure correct group placement. We start right where you are – and teach you the rest.

2. Do I have to try out?

FAST does not do “try outs”. Instead, we have swimmer evaluations to ensure correct group placement. Team evaluations help our coaching staff guide your swimmer into the appropriate group. Evaluations typically last about 15 minutes and can be arranged at any time throughout the year by contacting our [Business Manager](#). There is a place for everyone at FAST!

3. What if I'm involved in other sports?

Several FAST athletes participate and excel in other sports and activities. Each training group offers multiple training sessions throughout the week. However, consistent attendance will offer the best opportunity for improvement.

4. Are meets held every weekend?

No, and it is up to you how many meets you enter based on your schedule. The meet schedule can be found on our website's Events page. This page includes a chart indicating which meets are appropriate for each training group. And, if you cannot attend a recommended meet, simply log in to your FAST account and sign your athlete out of that particular meet.

5. Is there a lot of travel involved?

The FAST Tigers typically host 5 invitational meets each year. Our hosted meets include the FAST Monster Splash, FAST Santa Claus Classic, FAST Mudsock Classic, FAST 500, and FAST Summer Jam. These meets provide quality competitive opportunities for our swimmers, provide opportunities for parents to become involved in our organization and support their children, and promote and build the FAST Tigers community. Most of our away meets are in the Indianapolis area, although there are opportunities for team travel throughout the year. All trips are optional.

6. Where are practices held?

FAST practices and hosts meets in the state-of-the-art **Fishers High School Natatorium, 13000 Promise Road, Fishers, IN 46038**. We are fortunate to train and race in one of the state's premier pools - a beautiful 10-lane, 50-meter pool that can be converted to either two 25-yard or two 25-meter short course formats.

7. Can I join anytime?

Yes, you may join the team any time throughout the year.



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8. Is there a required suit? Do the boys have to wear “speedos”?

FAST Tigers are expected to compete in the team-designated TYR competition suit. There are two style options for girls; two style options for boys. While “speedo-type” suits are available, most boys opt for the knee-length “jammer” suit – whichever style you prefer. All suits and equipment can be purchased through Elsmore Swim Shop (4705 East 96th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46240; www.elsmoreswim.com).

9. What is the cost?

The cost varies based on the training group in which your swimmer is placed and how many swim meets you enter. Registration and hospitality fees are broken into 2 payments when you first join. The annual dues are broken down into monthly payments that are spread out over nine months of the year. The FAST-hosted meets are also our most important fund-raising activity and helps to keep our FAST dues low. Reduced fees are available to families that demonstrate need.

10. Who does the coaching and what are their certifications?

FAST is fortunate to have an outstanding staff of professional, experienced coaches who love what they do. FAST employs trained, professional coaches to plan and oversee our program. The coaches are certified in CPR, First Aid, Coaches Safety Training, and have had Background Checks as required by USA Swimming, the National Governing Body of Swimming in the United States. All coaches are members of USA Swimming.

11. What strokes will my athlete compete?

There are 5 competitive strokes that athletes race: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle, and individual medley. The younger the athlete, the shorter the distance competed. For example, 8 & Under swimmers can race a 25-yard butterfly, while 13-14 swimmers race a 100-yard or 200-yard butterfly.

12. What is butterfly?

Some consider the butterfly to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish.

13. What is backstroke?

Backstroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

14. What is breaststroke?

The breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.



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15. What is freestyle?

In freestyle events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up-and-down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

16. What is an individual medley?

The individual medley, commonly referred to as the IM, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

17. What is the order for a medley relay?

When a medley relay is being competed, four swimmers each swim $\frac{1}{4}$ of the relay. For instance, if the swimmers are competing a 200 Medley Relay, each swimmer will compete a 50 of a stroke. The order for a Medley Relay is Back, Breast, Butterfly, and Free.

18. What do SCY, SCM, and LCM mean?

Meets can be contested as either short course (25-yards or 25-meters) or long course (50-meters). SCY stands for Short Course Yards; SCM is Short Course Meters, and LCM is Long Course Meters. Competitions will designate one of these 3 courses for their meet. Typically, the age group season is divided between Short Course Yards (September – March) and Long Course Meters (April – August). International competitions, including the Olympics, are competed in Long Course.

19. Who are the people on deck in white shirts?

The white-shirted individuals on deck at meets are officials. Officials are present at all competitions to enforce the technical rules of swimming, so 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.

20. What are DQ's?

DQ's are disqualifications and they occur when an official observes an infraction of the technical rules of swimming. The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer. A disqualification means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award in that event. A DQ may result from actions, such as not getting to the starting blocks on time, false starting, performing strokes in an illegal manner, or unsportsmanlike conduct.

21. Are DQ's always bad?

Disqualifications, especially with younger swimmers, are not always bad. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke needs to be corrected. DQ's, especially with younger swimmers, should be treated as a learning experience, not as a punishment. A disqualification alerts the swimmer and coach to what portions of the swimmer's stroke need to be corrected. Disqualifications are necessary to



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keep the competition fair and equitable for all competitors. A supportive attitude on the part of the official, coach, and parent can make a positive situation out of the disqualification.

22. What are some common technical rules violations?

Each stroke has its own technical rules. The complete list of rules can be found in the USA Swimming Rules and Regulations book. Common violations include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. **Freestyle:** Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.
- b. **Backstroke:** Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.
- c. **Breaststroke:** An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.
- d. **Butterfly:** Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

23. What are time standards and why are they important?

Time standards (or cuts) are times that a swimmer must achieve to qualify for certain meets, including end-of-season championship meets like the Age Group Divisional, Age Group State, and Senior State Championships. The following chart represents how time standards and meets go together:

