

Parental Power Point Primer

USA Swimming and Hy-Tek developed a system that assigns points to each swim, by gender and age, to help define the quality of a swim. The points range from 1 to 1000 with 800 being the number of points roughly equivalent to a National Reportable time (approximately the top 1% of the swimmers in the U.S.).

This system, with points for all strokes and distances, encourages swimmers to be well rounded and equalizes performances between categories (age and gender). A nine year old girl would need a 30.87 in her 50 free to get 700 points and match her 11 year old brother's time of 27.30. If she swims a 30.50 than she swam "faster" and can happily annoy him with that fact.

What's cool about the Hy-Tek system is it offers immediate positive feedback for even small drops in time. Practically meet-by-meet, swimmers can see their hard work paying off as the points add up. They can set goals by points as well as time and it will give them something to think about during those long sets. Newer swimmers will have the most fun as they typically see significant drops as they improve their technique and physical conditioning. We all like to see steady an improvement in our endeavors and the Hy-Tek system lets you do that.

Athletes accumulate points for every event they swim. So a slower swimmer, who swims all events, can amass more points than a faster swimmer who specializes in one or two strokes.

Coaches now have a tool that can encourage kids to swim the 200 Fly or the 400 IM!

Swimmers may be discouraged by the thought of getting a low number of points but they need to remember that the total will always be more than the swimmer avoiding that race altogether. And while athletes can only earn one time for each event, personal bests displace older, slower times so a point total can still trend upwards.

Let's do some point surfing using my hypothetical 12 year old daughter as an example:

She swims a 29.89 in the 50 backstroke and browses to the [Power Point Chart](http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=754&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en) at <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=754&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en> and checks her time against the spreadsheet for 12 year old girls and gets the number 704. That's a pretty high quality swim. Now she looks at the other swims on the same line (all worth 704 points – remember USA Swimming wants to foster swimming all the events - and notes that her free time would have to be a 26.29 (not her current 27.03) to be considered the same quality level while her 50 fly is almost right on 28.74 shown.

On the flip side, she can look at one of her slower events, a 6:04 in the 500 free, and realize that if she swam that level her 50 backstroke time would be a 33.91 – four seconds slower than she swims it. Generally this is not a big surprise (kids

know their strong events and their weak events) but seeing the specific numbers makes it more concrete and more manageable because they can start chipping away at the fractions of a second and adding to their point total. So what did our hypothetical swimmer do with all this great information? She's decided to age down to 11 rather than continuing on to 13 ☺ . Just kidding.

If our hypothetical swimmer is a boy he can look at this chart:

<http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=755&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>

If you go to this link at USA Swimming you can see more information about Power Points:

<http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1483&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>