



Glossary of Common Swimming Terms

AGE GROUP SWIM MEET - all USA Swimming registered swimmers, 13 years of age and under, who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s) are eligible to participate in their age category. Age on the first day of competition shall govern the entire meet. (See also: Senior Swim Meet)

AGE GROUP SWIMMER – all USA SWIMMING registered swimmers age 13 and under. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent.

ATTACHED – A registered swimmer who is attached to a registered USA Swimming swim team.

BACKSTROKE FLAGS – Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately five yards/meters from the wall that notify backstroke swimmers that they are approaching the end of the pool.

CAC - the official abbreviation for the Calvert Aquatics Club for use on all entry forms for meets.

CHAMPIONSHIP MEET – A meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are necessary for meet entry.

CHECK-IN (POSITIVE CHECK-IN) - The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

CIRCLE SEEDING - A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes.

CIRCLE SWIMMING – Swimming to the right of the black line so that swimmers swim in a circle in the lane. This type of swimming is done at practice and meet warm-ups.

CLERK-OF-COURSE - an area at the meet where swimmers report before their event to be arranged into their heat and lane assignments. The clerk of course is generally located near the starting area. Not all swim meets have a clerk-of-course, and swimmers are to report directly to their lane and confirm with the lane timer.

DECK SEEDING - a procedure of assigning swimmers to proper lanes and heats immediately before each event at the Clerk of Course on the deck. (See also: Psych Sheet).

DIVE OVER STARTS – Start procedures at a meet in which swimmers of the previous heat remain in the water, close to the wall, during the start of the next heat.

DQ (Disqualification) – The loss of time due to an infraction of the rules that govern the meet. Mostly due to an improper stroke or turn.

ENTRY TIMES - Times filed with an entry, as having been previously achieved.

EVENT – Any race or series of races (heats) in a given stroke and distance. For competitive limits, one event equals one preliminary or one timed final, or one preliminary plus the corresponding final.

FINALS (CHAMPIONSHIP OR CONSOLATION) - the session of a meet where the meet winner is determined. It is generally swum in the evening. Finalists are determined by the fastest swimmers in the preliminary rounds (generally swum earlier in the day).

HEAT – A division of an event used when there are too many swimmers to compete simultaneously in one event.

HEAT SHEET - a listing of all swimmers by event number, heat, and lane assignments in the meet. These are available for purchase at the meet. Funds go toward offsetting the costs of running a meet.

IM (INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY) – A race done by an individual swimmer consisting of one leg of each of the competitive strokes - butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and any other stroke (generally freestyle), in that order.

INVITATIONAL COMPETITION – For those swimmers, organizations and clubs invited by the host club.

JUNIOR SWIMMER- CAC swimmers ages 11+ that continue advanced technical instruction with more emphasis on aerobic and anaerobic training.

LSC (Local Swimming Committee) – An administrative division of USA Swimming with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by USA Swimming.

LONG COURSE - a type of competitive pool, which measures 50 meters in length. The standard size for all international competition and all world record swimming is the 50-meter course. Typically meets conducted from the end of April through August are swum Long Course.

MASTERS SWIMMING – A program for swimmers aged 18 and older. Masters swimming is open to all levels of experience and includes people learning to swim for fitness, all the way to triathletes.

MEET- A series of events held in one program hosted by a swim club.

MARYLAND SWIMMING - the name of the Local Swimming Committee (LSC), charged by USA SWIMMING to govern competitive swimming in the

state of Maryland.

NO SHOW (NS) – Failure of a swimmer to report to the blocks and compete after checking in.

NO TIME (NT) – Abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swum that event before and does not have an official time of records.

NOVICE SWIMMER – CAC groups A, B, C, D that are beginner level swimmers ages 5-10 that work on general development of strokes and start the technique refinement.

OPEN COMPETITION – competition which any qualified club, organization or individual may enter.

OPEN SWIM MEETS – swimmers of all ages may participate and have no qualifying time

PRELIMS (PRELIMINARIES) - in certain meets, the qualifying rounds held for each event to determine the finalists.

PSYCH SHEET- a ranking by seeding times for all the swimmers entered in each race of a meet, sometimes used at meets in place of a heat sheet.

RULEBOOK – “rulebook” refers to the ***USA Swimming Rules and Regulations***.

REFEREE - the USA Swimming official who has the authority over all other officials at the meet. He makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the meet.

SANCTION – A permit issued by an LSC to conduct an event or swim meet.

Note: ALL athletes participating in any USA Swimming sanctioned swim meet must be registered USA Swimming members.

SCRATCH – To withdraw an entry from competition in an event.

SEEDING TIMES - the time a swimmer uses to enter a meet. This time, which is written on the entry card, determines one's heat and lane in the particular event.

SENIOR SWIM MEET - all USA SWIMMING registered swimmers who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s) are eligible to compete.

SENIOR SWIMMER – all USA SWIMMING registered swimmers age 15 and over

SHORT COURSE - a type of competitive pool, which measures 25 yards or 25 meters in length. Typically meets conducted from October through the end of March are swum Short Course.

SPLIT - a per lap time that coaches often record for teaching the concept of pacing. For instance, a swimmer's time for each 25-yard leg of a 100-yard event is his split.

STARTER - the USA SWIMMING official at a meet responsible for starting each heat and calling the next to the blocks.

STROKE and TURN JUDGE - a certified USA SWIMMING official, who

determines the legality of swimmers' strokes and disqualifies those who do not conform to USA SWIMMING rules.

SWIM-A-THON - a swim to raise funds in which each team member solicits pledges per length for a maximum 200 lengths or 1 hour time period. A portion of the proceeds goes to USA Swimming and the rest to the team.

TIME STANDARDS - certain qualifying times which have been set up annually by USA SWIMMING for all events in all levels of meets to insure that all competitors are of reasonably the same ability in their respective meets. The swimmer's goals should be betterment of his time progressing from the "B" standard to the Nationals.

TIME TRIALS – An event or series of events separated from the main competition at which swimmers may achieve or better a required time standard.

TIMING PLUNGER – The manual timing system stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.

TOUCH PAD – A large pad at the end of each lane that registers a swimmer's touch and communicates electronically to the timing system.