

## Differences of Swimming Long Course Meters and Short Course Yards

Long Course Meters swimming is vastly different from Short Course Yards. It is in many ways more difficult, but is beneficial as well. If your swimmer is new to LCM, then there are few things you should know before they dive in.

Here are few of the challenges: Distance- The pool is longer and then some. The pool is double the distance of the standard 25 yard pool, plus another 4.68 yards. The extra distance only adds up on each lap meaning extra strokes and more time in the pool for each race.

Less walls- The 25 yard pool gives twice as many opportunities for momentum building turns. Swimmers lose momentum as they get further away from their starting point. We fight this fact by teaching good technique, reducing friction and water resistance, and any tools we have at our disposal, but ultimately this affects everyone.

Times- Times will seem slow. For example, a strong senior male 50 freestyler that posts around 21 seconds in the short course pool, would likely swim around 24 high in the long course format. Again, this gap in times between the course only widens with different ages, distances, and strokes. It is not uncommon for a very good breaststroker to add 10 to 20 seconds in a 100 breaststroke, especially early in the season.

Increased work load- Long Course and Short Course events are completely different. For example, in a 100 yard Fly a senior athlete will swim no more than 7 consecutive strokes before a wall. In the 100m FL swimmers will swim up to 18-20 strokes in a row before having the opportunity to turn. This is why converted times are inaccurate.

Converted times- These are largely meaningless. US Swimming does not recognize converted for good reason, they are wildly inaccurate. The computer can be set up to convert best times from short course into long course times. These converted times are used for meet entries so that meet management can make a best estimate of the timeline for their meet. They are also used for seeding. Swimmers rarely beat their converted times, especially in the first meets of the season. Keep in mind that the converted time is based on their best time in Short Course. In most early season meets, swimmers are probably not ready to beat their best times, especially for senior swimmers. Swimmers new to long course rarely go as fast as converted times because they are not used to the differences.

So why swim long course?

Here are some benefits:

It is pure- Long course is all about the swimmer and their efficiency in the water. A good start and turn will only benefit the swimmer so much in LCM. The swimmers with the most efficient stroke technique will be the most successful. Competing in LCM makes them really evaluate what they are doing in the water. It can only serve to make them better swimmers when we get back to the short course pool.

It is universal- The rest of the world swims long course meters. The US Olympic Trials and the Olympics are in this format.

It is challenging- Adapting to the vast challenges of long course will only serve to make them better swimmers. The playing field is equal, and everyone is dealing with the same things.

Hopefully this helps to clear up any confusion regarding the differences between long course and short course. ECA has had a lot of success in both courses. We do our best to prepare the kids for their long course meets, but ultimately the swimmers will improve in this venue as they gain valuable meet experience.