

COMMON SWIMMING DEFINITIONS

Age Group Competition - A meet for all registered swimmers up to and including age 18, who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s).

Button Time – The recorded time started automatically and stopped by a button depressed by a lane timer when the swimmer finishes an event.

Consolations or Consols - A finals event consisting of swimmers who place in the second tier of swimmers during preliminaries.

Deck Seeding – a procedure of assigning swimmers to lanes and heats immediately before each event.

DQ – Disqualification.

Event – A portion of a meet competition broken down by stroke and oftentimes by age, gender and relay type.

Final – The portion of a competition in which just the top swimmers of the meet compete. A “final eight” event consists of the fastest eight swimmers from the morning preliminaries.

Heat – A portion of an event. An event may require multiple heats to determine what swimmers make finals.

Heat Sheet – A sheet produced by the Clerk of Course that assigns a swimmers heat and lane placement.

IM – Slang for individual medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four competitive strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

Lane lines – The dividers used to delineate the individual lanes. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable which rotate on the cable when hit by a wave. The rotating disks dissipate surface tension waves in a competitive pool.

Leg – A portion, normally one-quarter, of an individual event or relay event, of the event.

Long Course – A pool configured for swimming with a 50-meter long race course. World records may be set in long course and short course competition. The main USA Swimming long course season is during the summer months. The Olympic Games as well as all major international competitions are conducted long course.

LSC – Local Swimming Committee of USA Swimming, Inc.

Meet Program – A program consists of heat or psych sheets for the preliminary competition of a meet.

Official – A judge on the deck of the pool. Various judges watch the swimmer’s strokes, turns and finishes or are timers.

N/T - No Time. A swimmer uses this when entering an event he/she has no established time for.

Official Time – The time established by an official which is entered into the meet final records.

Preliminaries or Prelims - The portion of a competition that determines which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in the events.

Psych Sheet – A ranking of swimmers by event and time.

Sanction – The qualification of a meet in order for it to be officially recognized.

Seeding – The method of placing swimmers in lanes in order of their entry times.

Senior Competition - A meet for all registered swimmers 15 and over, or those who have met the qualifying time standard for a specific event(s).

Short Course – A pool configured in 25-yard or 25-meter lengths. USA Swimming, Inc. conducts most of its winter competition in 25-yard lengths including the Speedo Junior Championships in the spring. NCAA swimming competition uses the 25-yard format. Most of the world swims short course meters in the winter (25-meter pool). The fastest times swum in a 25-yard pool may only gain U.S. Open or American record status.

Split – A swimmer’s intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 meters (or 25 yards depending on the pool and equipment on hand) and are used to determine if a swimmer is on record pace.

Taper – The resting process in training for swimming competition. During the middle of their swimming season a swimmer may work out 10 to 15 thousand meters (8 to 10 miles) each day. As major competition draws near, the swimmer will “taper” off the distances swum each day. A perfectly designed taper will enable the swimmer to compete at their peak capability and is one of the most difficult aspects of swim coaching.

Time Trials – Events that are offered during the regular competition to allow swimmers a chance of achieving official times.

Touch Pad – The area at the end of each lane in the pool where a swimmer’s time is registered and sent electronically to the timing system and the scoreboard.

Unattached – A term used to identify a swimmers team affiliation in lieu of being officially attached to a team within the LSC.

USS – United States Swimming: the former name of USA Swimming Inc., the national governing body for amateur swimming in America.

Warm-down – Used by the swimmer to rid the body of excess lactic acid generated during a race.

Warm-up – Used by the swimmer before the race to get their muscles loose and ready to race.

Watch Time - The recorded time from a watch started and stopped manually by a lane timer.