



GUIDE TO SWIM MEETS AND COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

DOLPHINS PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

Competitive swimming is an excellent way to practice perseverance, discipline and the benefits of hard work. Winning ribbons, medals and trophies is not the main goal. However, lessons in overcoming obstacles, doing your best, making friends, and continuous learning and improvement sets swimmers up for success for years to come.

Parents and coaches have a unique opportunity to work together to support swimmers in a collaborative way. We know how hard the swimmers work and being supported throughout their swimming experience is very important. As coaches, we will provide swimmers constructive feedback on their race. As the parent/swimmer supporter, it is important that you let your swimmer know that you still love and support them regardless of their performance. High five them, make it fun, and find positive aspects of the race/trip/meet/weekend to highlight. Please do not emphasize the negative. It is the coach's job to tie in the opportunities for improvement. As the parent, you are able to help your swimmer celebrate successes and overcome disappointments.

One of the greatest rewards a swimmer can achieve is to learn from each experience/competition/practice. There are many lessons that can be learned if the swimmer is aware. We, as coaches, encourage the swimmer to learn from every competitive swim. This skill will benefit the athlete long after their competitive swimming career is over.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE SWIMMER

We teach our athletes that their competition is an opportunity to be challenged to reach their greatest potential as a swimmer. They should be grateful for the chance to improve in a challenging situation. We do not believe a swimmer should try to beat a specific person; this sets them up for failure in the long run. They should simply look at each racing situation as an opportunity to be pushed to a greater level.

Swimmers are expected to act in a sportsmanlike manner. The coaches teach the child how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has a "great" or "bad" swim. Respect for officials and coaches, congratulating others, encouragement of teammates, discipline of efforts, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised and rewarded. Swimmers are prepared and expected to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This encourages versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore their potential in the wide range of events offered. Often a swimmer's "best" stroke will change season to season as their body matures and technique is learned.

The Dolphins Swim Team has a lot of team pride as being a team with direction and purpose. Therefore at competitions all swimmers should sit together, cheer for one another, be in team uniform and act as a team. When there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is a Dolphin's duty to be prompt and to cooperate fully and with dignity and respect at the presentations. The team shirt or warm-up is to be worn when accepting an award. Politeness and a modest thank you are to be exhibited when receiving the award. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a "thank you." If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete. Do not ham it up; the picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team as a whole.

IS MY CHILD READY FOR SWIM MEETS?

Talk to the coaches. They will tell you if your swimmer is ready for competition. We have a complete list of swim meets for this season on our website. As the host club prepares for their meet, they send out meet info to the coaches (usually a few weeks before entries are due). We post them on the website, along with the entry due date (usually 1 ½ weeks before the meet). Entries **MUST** be made via the Team Unify Site using the "meet sign-up" feature. Each individual is responsible for their own meet sign-up.

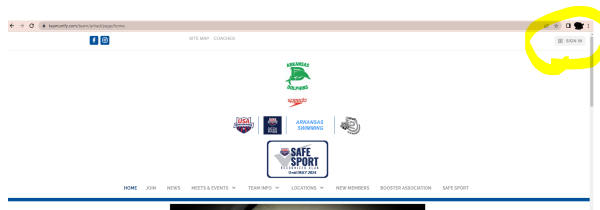
WHICH MEET SHOULD MY CHILD ENTER AND WHAT EVENTS SHOULD MY CHILD SIGN UP FOR?

We will note on the meet information if the meet is for a specific group of swimmers. If there is no specification, then the meet is recommended for all athletes. Event readiness depends on your swimmer's interest and desire for competition as well as their level of ability. Coaches will review the entries of each meet and at that time they may add or take a swimmer out of events. Each meet will allow a swimmer to swim a maximum number of events per day. This information is found in the meet signup information.

HOW DO I SIGN MY SWIMMER UP FOR A MEET?

All entries must be made through the Team Unify account on the team website, <https://www.teamunify.com/team/arlrad/page/home>. Step-by-step instructions, with illustrations, of the online meet signup process are below. Emails will be sent notifying you when a meet is available to be registered for on the website. You will also receive emails notifying you the deadline to sign up for a meet is approaching.

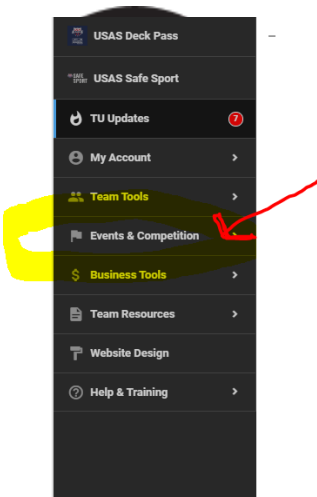
1. Go to <https://www.teamunify.com/team/arlrad/page/home>



Click on “Sign-in” in the upper left corner of the screen.

2. Enter your email address and password and click “Sign in.” you may be redirected back to the home page because you are now signed in.

3. Click on “Events & Competition” on the left side of the screen. click Team Events



4. Click on the name of the meet you want to learn more about.
5. Click on the athlete's name to choose what races your swimmer will swim or to say you will not be attending this event. Click on the drop down menu beside “declaration” and make your choice.
6. If your swimmer is attending the meet, select their races by clicking the box on the left of each event. Coaches will come behind you to “Approve” the entries. If you have any questions or comments, you can enter in the “notes” section.

Day 1 Session 1									
Best Time	Entry Time	Bonus	Exhibition	Approved	Event	Gen	Event	Gen	Event
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32.33Z	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	104	B	12 & Under 50 Free		
<input type="checkbox"/>	41.74Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		106	B	12 & Under 50 Fly		
<input type="checkbox"/>	50.31Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		112	B	12 & Under 50 Breast		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	43.08Z	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	116	M	12 & Under 50 Back		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:30.08Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		120	B	12 & Under 100 Medley		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:00.00Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		124	B	12 & Under 100 Free		
Day 1 Session 2									
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1:31.20Z	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	126	B	Open 100 Back		
<input type="checkbox"/>	32.33Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		128	B	Open 50 Free		
<input type="checkbox"/>	3:45.89Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		130	B	Open 200 Medley		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:00.71Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		132	B	Open 100 Breast		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:00.00Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		134	B	Open 100 Free		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1:52.69Z	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		136	B	Open 100 Fly		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2:28.03Z	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	138	B	Open 200 Free		

7. Click on Save Changes at the bottom right of the screen. If you don't click Save Changes then the meet entry is NOT submitted.

3	4	89	G	10 & Under 100 Breast	
3	4	93	G	10 & Under 50 Back	
3	4	95	G	8 & Under 25 Back	
3	4	99	G	10 & Under 100 Fly	
3	5	105A	G	12 & Under 200 Free	
3	5	109A	G	12 & Under 50 Free	
3	5	113A	G	12 & Under 200 Breast	
3	5	117A	G	12 & Under 100 Back	
3	5	121A	G	12 & Under 200 Fly	

RELAYS

Some meets will offer relays. Relays bring out the Dolphins team spirit and are always a team (and fan) favorite! They are a fun way for swimmers to work together and compete against other teams. Coaches will determine who will swim on relays, and they will email out the relay information a few days before the meet. If your swimmer is registered for a meet that offers relays (usually larger and state meets) please check the relay list for your swimmers name. If your swimmer is listed for a relay team or an alternate, please closely review the meet order of events and your schedule to ensure your swimmer will be available during the time of the relay. If your swimmer is not available for a relay, please communicate with your coach.

Relay teams can also be adjusted up until the time of the race, so please stay alert and check your emails/notifications during meets with relays if your swimmer is on a relay or an alternate. .

Four swimmers are needed to make a relay team, so the number of relay teams entered is based on the number of swimmers available, experience of the swimmer, and time allotted for relays at the meet. At most meets there are two types of relays per age group. There is a freestyle relay and a medley relay. In a freestyle relay the swimmers only swim freestyle. In a medley relay the swimmers will swim a particular stroke. This will be Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly and Freestyle in that order. The coach will determine who will participate in the relay and assign the stroke and order. Always check with the coach before leaving a meet to be sure your swimmer is not in a relay. Coaches will announce relays at the team meeting held after warm-up or the relay list will be posted.

WHAT TO BRING TO A MEET

- **TEAM SUIT:** If you do not have one — a regular swimsuit will do. If they plan to compete often a team suit is recommended.
- **TEAM SWIM CAP:** Given out early in the season or at the swimmer's first meet of the season. *If the swimmer has short hair and their hair does not cause detriment to the stroke, they do not have to wear a cap.*
- **GOGGLES:** Racing goggles and spare goggles labeled with the swimmer's name on them. Racing goggles are tighter than training goggles and can really only be tolerated for the length of the race.
- **TOWELS:** At least 2 towels.
- **TEAM T-SHIRTS,** sweatshirts, and/or parka to wear between events.
- **BAG CHAIRS:** Some meets provide seating; some do not.
- **SNACKS:** You may bring drinks and snacks for your child. Snacks are sometimes available for purchase at each meet. It is important to keep your swimmer nourished and hydrated during meets. Please avoid candy bars and high sugar content snacks.
- **HIGHLIGHTER**
- **SHARPIE PEN**
- **BALLPOINT PEN**
- **SPARE CLOTHES:** Many indoor swimming pool areas may be rather warm and humid, make sure you bring cooler clothes in case you need them, or dress in layers.
- **QUIET ENTERTAINMENT:** Books, hand-held games, etc. For you and your swimmer.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT A MEET

- Arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of warm-up.
- Look for other team members to establish a team area.
- Purchase heat sheets from the clerk of course, typically found at the front door. Cost ranges from \$5-\$25 (bring cash, just in case they only take cash).
- Send your child over to the coach for warm-up. Look for the coach to be behind one of the starting blocks. Sometimes warm-up lanes are posted in the heat sheet.
- While your swimmer is warming up, locate your child's events in the heat sheet.
- Highlight the event, heat number and lane number your child will be swimming in.
- Your child may want to write their events, heat number and lane numbers on their legs or arms. This is done just before or after warm-up and prior to the start of the meet with your Sharpie. An example of this "grid" is below.

Grid for writing on their leg or arm

E= event H=heat L=lane S=stroke

E	H	L	S
25	3	4	50 free
27	2	1	50 back
41	1	8	50 fly

DURING THE MEET

- The meet announcer will make announcements for each event. They will also announce the last call for a particular event. Please make sure you are listening to send your child down on time.
- Your child should report to the coach before and after each race.
- Two to three heats prior to their race, your child will report behind the blocks to their designated lane that is in the heat sheet. It is the parent's and child's responsibility to see that the child is at the starting block for each event on time. Most teams will not allow parents behind the starting blocks.
- Most USA swim meets do not have bullpens. The swimmer reports directly to the blocks.
- If your child is not on the starting block upon the call for their heat, they will be prohibited from swimming that event. Send them to their lane when they are young or new, but then allow them to take this responsibility as they become more experienced. Parents are not allowed behind the starting area or the coaches' area.
- If a swimmer is disqualified during an event, the official will notify the coach.
- Parents are not allowed to talk directly to an official. If you have a problem understanding an infraction, you should communicate with the coach as long as it doesn't interfere with the coaching of an athlete.
- If you are registered for a meet and cannot attend, please notify the coach by phone - text or voicemail, or send a message with another swimmer. There is no refund for not attending a meet.
- If your child is more than 30 minutes late for the meet warm-up, he or she will not be entered in a relay, unless arrangements have been made a week prior to the meet.
- There will be a team meeting for the swimmers directly after warm-up. Relays will be announced.
- If relays are at the end of the meet, please make sure you do not leave before checking the relay assignment.

ONCE YOUR CHILD HAS SWUM AN EVENT

- Swimmers should ask timers for their times and at most meets the times will be electronically posted.
- We expect swimmers to remember their times and review their posted times. Younger swimmers may need a parent's help.
- Immediately after they have swum, they need to go talk to the coach first.
- When your child talks to the coach after they swim, the coaches will discuss their performance and offer them constructive criticism, positive encouragement and technical advice.
- DQ or Disqualification – When a swimmer does not swim the stroke technically correct, they may be disqualified. Developmental swimmers are frequently disqualified. Parents and children should look at this as a learning experience. As their stroke techniques improve, their frequency of disqualification will drop. Even our more experienced swimmers will occasionally be disqualified.
- Remember your responsibility as a parent is to make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic— you love him/her, appreciate his/her efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure. Be the person in their life that they can look to for constant positive reinforcement. Refrain from offering coaching advice. They will have just received all the coaching they need from their coach.

BEFORE LEAVING THE MEET

- Check relay assignment.
- Clean the area around you.
- Athletes communicate to their coaches to let them know you are leaving.

OUT-OF-TOWN MEETS

- Out of town travel meets are a great opportunity for teammates to build deeper friendships, and to race other competitors they may not know. It also allows them to learn how to handle a new environment. We encourage our athletes to enjoy this aspect of the sport. Each parent is responsible for their child's travel to and from swim meets as well as for overnight accommodations. In situations where a parent is unable to attend a meet with their child, the parent is responsible for making arrangements with another parent to take their child to the meet and to serve as that child's chaperone. It is suggested that the chaperoned athlete offers to share a percent of the expenses with the chaperone.
- Hotel reservations are the individual's responsibility.
- There will be a team hotel listed with the travel meet information. Many of the hotels fill early, so check your travel schedule, and make reservations as soon as you are able to.

MISCELLANEOUS

- **DECK ENTRIES/SCRATCHES:** If you missed the entry deadline, you may be able to deck enter your child if space is available. You will have to check with the Clerk of Course at that meet for availability during warm ups. The average cost of deck entry per meet is double the normal entry fee, plus meet surcharges, and is payable when you deck enter. These fees cannot be charged to your Team Unify account. These will be paid directly to the clerk of course (typically you need cash to pay the entry fees). If your swimmer has not been entered into the meet, you will need to have your child's USA Swimmer number with you to deck enter. If your swimmer and the coach have agreed the swimmer should "scratch" an event (choose not to swim an event in which they have entered), then it is best to notify the clerk of course during warm ups so that another swimmer may take that spot. You will not be refunded for scratched events. If you scratch an event and deck enter another event, you still must pay the deck entry fee for the new event.
- If your child is hesitant to swim in an event that they have entered, please have them discuss it with the coach prior to the event.
- If you have any questions that have not been answered here, please do not hesitate to ask your coach, a board member, or another parent.
- Per Arkansas Swimming Inc. rules, parents are not allowed to go behind starting blocks or timers. If the meet is determined as "closed deck," only swimmers, coaches and approved personnel are allowed on deck.
- Swimming is a team effort. Please cheer on other Dolphins swimmers, sit with the team, and wear your Team t-shirt.
- **ENCOURAGEMENT:** Please stay positive no matter what your child's performance may be. Swimmers tend to be very self-critical and they know when they have not turned in a good performance. It is up to the coach to handle discussion of the performance.
- Please do not approach the coach during swim events, as this is their busiest time.
- Swim Officials will post final results for each event outside of the pool area at the meet. We encourage you and your child to keep a log of your child's best times from each meet. This helps the athlete take responsibility for their performances. You may also look up your child's results on the team website, after the event. There are also many apps available for smart phones to help you track your swimmer's performance. Often, results may be tenths off what you may think, as the final results are determined electronically. If your result is more than 2 seconds off what the scoreboard reported, please notify the coach, as soon as you can and before the meet session is over.
- Please encourage your child to pick up trash around the team rest area and thank the volunteers.

GET INVOLVED!

Volunteering is a great way to meet some other amazing swimming supporters who can become some of your best friends! Almost all officials, meet directors, timers and board members are parents who choose to get involved and volunteer their time...and by and large, they're friendly and appreciative of others who are willing to help! We encourage you to assist them in timing or other needs they may call for. If you are interested in becoming an official, express your interest to the coach. Please make sure you thank the timers, meet officials and coaches for their time and energy. Also help your child clean up the team area. This shows respect for the host team for taking the time to provide this opportunity for your child. Also, familiarize yourself with the team's Volunteer Policy found below.

VOLUNTEER POLICY- ONLY APPLIES TO MEETS HOSTED BY THE DOLPHINS AND STATE CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS

Parent involvement is required for the program to operate smoothly. The volunteer policy applies for the parents of all Dolphins

swimmers who compete in USA sanctioned swim meets. events. The Dolphins have a long, rich history of hosting swim meets that are highly organized and efficient. Efficient and organized meets take “all hands on deck”.

This policy was established to ensure that meets are able to run smoothly and not to penalize swimmer accounts. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please reach out to the Meet Director. If you have a swimmer who participates in swim *meets hosted by the Arkansas Dolphins*, you are required to volunteer a minimum of:

- 1 Full Session if you athlete competes in 1-2 sessions at that meet
- 2 Full Sessions if your athlete competes in 3 or more sessions at that meet
- 3 Full Sessions if the sum of your swimmers sessions is greater than 4 (you have 3 swimmers swimming in 2 sessions; or you have 2 swimmers in 3 sessions)

Officials who work the meets will fulfill their volunteer responsibilities by being an official.

Fees will be assessed to accounts who do not meet the volunteer requirements at a rate of \$100 per required meet.

New swimmers are exempt from the policy for their first 2 Dolphins hosted meets. On the 3rd Dolphins meet, they will be required to meet the volunteer requirements. Unfortunately, hours worked over at one meet will not carry over to hours not worked at the following meet.

To Register to Volunteer:

Before the meet, watch your emails for the volunteer sign up in Team Unify “Job Sign Up” by the deadline listed for the meet. Once you arrive at the meet, please sign in on the volunteer sign-in sheet that is located at the Clerk of Course table. Finally, stay for the duration of the session you are scheduled to work.

Opt-Out Option

If you would like to “opt out” of all volunteer requirements for the entire swim year, you may elect to pay a \$650 fee. Please email ardolphinsbooster@gmail.com to officially “opt out” of volunteering. That fee will go towards hiring someone to help in your place.

TO REGISTER FOR YOUR COMMITMENT:

STEP 1: Prior to the Meet: Volunteers must sign up online prior to the event! Team Unify has a system for keeping up with your volunteer hours. You must sign up for your volunteer position under “job sign up” by midnight prior to the start of the meet. The jobs are on a first-come, first-serve basis, so please sign up quickly.

STEP 2: At the Event: Volunteers must also sign the volunteer check-in sheet located at the clerk of course/awards table in order to receive credit for their participation. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to sign in. Unless excused by the meet director, the volunteer must remain during the entire length of the session they are working, regardless of when their swimmers’ races are completed.

TYPES OF MEETS

- **DEVELOPMENTAL MEETS:** These meets generally do not have qualifying times. Most of the time they offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each age group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter 5 events per day. Most are just one day meets.
- **INVITATIONAL:** These are usually open meets for swimmers of all levels and abilities.
- **QUALIFICATION MEETS:** These meets have some type of qualification time standards that a swimmer must achieve before entering the meet.
- **STATE CHAMPIONSHIP:** At the end of each meet season (short course for winter and long course for summer), Arkansas

Swimming Inc. hosts the Arkansas State Championships. To participate in this meet a swimmer must achieve a qualifying time standard.

- **ZONE CHAMPIONSHIP:** Zones is held after the State Championship meet in the summer. Arkansas is a member of the Central Zone. A swimmer must achieve an “AAA” time standard to participate. All 14 & under swimmers from teams in Arkansas compete as one team - Team Arkansas. Swimmers compete within their age bracket.
- **SECTIONALS/REGION VIII:** Sectionals is a qualifying meet held toward the end of each season. The United States is divided up into 14 Regions. Arkansas is a member of Region Eight. It includes Missouri Valley, Oklahoma, and Ozark as well as Arkansas. Swimmers compete against each other regardless of age, however this is geared toward our Senior swimmers.
- **JUNIOR NATIONALS:** This competition is for swimmers age 18 and under who have achieved a certain time standard. They compete against athletes across the nation.
- **PHILLIP 66/USA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP (SENIOR NATIONALS)** Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, Seniors is the highest level of competition. Competition is held with the fastest swimmers in the nation regardless of their age.

WHAT IS USA SWIMMING?

As the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States, USA Swimming is a 300,000-member service organization that promotes the culture of swimming by creating opportunities for swimmers and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through clubs, events and education.

USA Swimming was conceived in 1978 with the passage of the Amateur Sports Act, which decreed that all Olympic Sports would be administered independently. Prior to this Act, USA Swimming was the Competitive Swimming Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. USA Swimming headquarters were moved to Colorado Springs in 1981. As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is charged with the responsibility to formulate rules, conduct national championships, disseminate safety and sports medicine information, select competitors to represent this country in international competition, ensure the development of its member clubs and age group swimmers. Revenues of the USA Swimming budget come from registration dues from athletes and membership fees from non-athletes and clubs, corporate sponsorship, United States Olympic Committee development funds, event income, publications, and promotional merchandise. Athletes must pay an annual registration fee to USA Swimming to compete in USA Swimming sanctioned meets. Athletes receive a membership card and have both liability and secondary medical insurance coverage and a subscription to Splash magazine. Visit usaswimming.org for lots of information about swimming, nutrition and to access your USA Swimming account, which will let you track your swimmer’s progress and see their results.

USA SWIMMING LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT/MOTIVATIONAL TIME STANDARDS

There are seven different age group classifications: 8 & under, 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and senior. The senior classification includes any age-registered swimmer who has achieved a prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every meet. The swimmer’s age on the first day of the meet will govern the swimmer’s age for the entire meet. Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times, referred to as Motivational Time Standards. All swimmers begin as “C” swimmers. As they improve they advance from “C” to “B”, “BB”, “A”, “AA”, “AAA”, “and AAAA.” United States Swimming publishes the times required for each ability level each year. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels. Some swim meets set certain qualifying standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification

HELPFUL TERMS & TERMINOLOGY

AGE GROUP SWIMMING: The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and 15-18. Local meets may also include events for 8 and unders, and single age categories.

APPROVED MEET: An officially sanctioned USA meet.

ASI: Arkansas Swimming, Inc. The local swim committee, which acts as the USA Swimming governing body for the state of Arkansas.

ALTERNATE: In a prelim/final meet, after the finalists are decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalists are designated as alternates, the faster of the two being the first alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often at a moment's notice.

ANCHOR: The final swimmer in a relay.

BACKSTROKE FLAGS: Lines of flags placed above the lanes at each end to signal the backstroker that they are five yards or meters (depending upon the course) from the wall.

BULKHEAD: A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-yard courses.

CHECK-IN: The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded event or meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check-in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host. Often required for distance events.

CLOSED START: The time when an official lowers their hand to close the event and give the starter permission to start the event. A swimmer will be disqualified if they are not in position at this time.

COURSE: Designated distance over which the competition is conducted.

CUT: Slang for "qualifying time," or time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

DECK ENTRY: Accepting entries into swimming events where space is available on the day of the meet. Most meets require this to be done during the warm ups of that day's event.

DECK-SEEDED EVENTS: Events that are seeded only after a swimmer has checked in for the event. This procedure allows all lanes to be full, which allows swimmers the best racing opportunities. There is a penalty if you check in and do not swim. Swimmers also will not be allowed to swim if they do not check in for deck-seeded events.

DISTANCE: Term used to refer to events over 400 meters/500 yards.

DISQUALIFICATION (DQ): This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind; e.g., freestyle kick in butterfly. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time. An official raising one arm with an open hand above their head shows a possible disqualification.

DRYLAND TRAINING: Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching,

calisthenics and/or weight training.

EVENT: Any race or series of races in a given stroke or distance.

FALSE START: Occurs when a swimmer is moving before the start gun or horn is sounded. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in DQ after the event concludes.

FINALS: The concluding session of a prelim/final meet in which the fastest swimmers from prelim heats return to race again, usually in the evening.

GUTTER: The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is circulated through the filtration system.

HEAT: The way the event is organized in order to provide an opportunity for all pre-registered swimmers to compete.

HEAT SHEETS: The swim meet program that includes information such as the name of the events, heats, lanes and swimmers.

IM: An acronym for Individual Medley event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

INTERVAL: A specific elapse of time for swimming or rest used during training.

LANE: The specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim, i.e., lane 1, lane 2, etc.

LANE MARKERS, LINES OR ROPES: Continuous floating markers extending from one end of the pool to the other.

LANE MARKINGS: Guidelines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of each lane extending from one end of the pool to the other.

LAP COUNTER: A set of plastic display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race. (Also, the person who counts for the swimmer, stationed at the opposite end of from the start.)

LEG: The part of a relay event that is swum by a single team member.

LOCAL SWIMMING COMMITTEE (LSC): An administrative division (e.g. Arkansas Swimming, Inc.) of the National Governing Body (USA Swimming) with the supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by USA Swimming.

LONG-COURSE: 50-meter pool.

LONG DISTANCE: Term used to refer to events of 800 meters/1000 yards, to 1500 meters/1650 yards in lengths.

MEDLEY RELAY: A group of four swimmers each swimming different strokes in an event in the following order: back, breast, butterfly, and free.

MEET: A series of events held in one program.

NO TIME (NT): Seed time is entered as "No Time" if a swimmer has never swum an event before.

OFFICIAL: A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, and referees.

OPEN COMPETITION: Competition any club, organization or individual may enter.

OVC: Official Verification Card. A 3-copy form for certifying a national qualifying time made by a swimmer and issued only by a verification official of the area in which the meet was held.

PACE CLOCK: The large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can check the time taken for each set distance and count off rest time before starting again.

PRELIMINARIES/PRELIMS/FINALS: In a preliminaries and finals meet format, the object of the preliminary swim is to qualify for the evening finals session. If the swimmer places among the top 8 (in an 8-lane pool) after their morning swim, they qualify to swim the same event in the championship finals in the evening session. If a consolation heat is offered, the swimmers placing 9-16th will swim in the finals in the consolation heat. A consolation swimmer may not move into the championship places (1-8) even if the time is faster.

PROOF OF TIME: An official meet result, OVC, or other accepted form. Swimmers/coaches must provide proof of time with some meet entries, and in other meets it is not required unless a swimmer misses a cut off time at the meet.

PSYCH SHEET: A printed order of events by session with swimmers listed in order, usually fastest to slowest according to their entry times. It does not show heats.

Q-TIME: Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and/or competition. A “cut.”

QUALIFYING HEATS: Another name for preliminaries — a number of heats are swum to qualify the fastest swimmers for the finals where final placing for the event will be determined.

RELAY: An event in which 4 swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time.

SANCTION: A permit issued by an LSC to a USA Swimming group member to conduct an event or meet.

SCRATCH: To withdraw from an event in a competition after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, a swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

SEEDING: Swimmers are arranged in heats in events according to submitted times and heat sheets are prepared prior to the day of competition.

SHORT COURSE: A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter (October to March) competition in short course yards.

SPLIT: A time recorded from the official start to the completion of an initial distance within a longer event. Also the time for one of the four individuals in a relay. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times, for example, the lead off swim in a relay, or the lead off portion of an event, if prior arrangements are made.

SPRINT: Describes the shorter events (50 and 100). In training, to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.

STARTER: The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race (by sounding the horn) and ensuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

STARTING BLOCKS: Platforms from which the swimmer enters the water at the beginning of an event.

SWIM MEET: An event that provides competition for swimmers.

SWIM-OFF: In a prelims/finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise the tie stands.

STREAMLINE: The position used by swimmers when starting or pushing off the walls designed to reduce water resistance.

“TAKE YOUR MARK”: The starter’s command to swimmers to which they must respond by at once assuming a starting position.

TAPER: The final preparation phase sometimes referred to as “rest,” prior to major competitions.

TIME TRIAL: A time-only swim, which is not part of a regular meet.

TIMED FINAL HEATS: Each swimmer swims that particular event one time and final placing is determined by the times performed in those heats.

TIMERS: The volunteers sitting behind the starting block/finish end of the pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the back-up buttons for the timing system.

TOUCH PAD: A large sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer’s finish is registered and sent electronically to the timing system.

UNATTACHED: An athlete who competes but does not represent a club.

USA SWIMMING NUMBER: A number assigned to a swimmer after they have filled out the proper forms and paid USA annual dues.

WARM DOWN: Low intensity swimming used by swimmers after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

WARM UP: Low intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm. Warm up gradually increases heart rate, respiration and helps to prevent injury.