

Swim Terminology

Age Group: Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18.

Alternate: In a Prelims/Finals meet, after the finalist is decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalist are designated as alternates. The faster of the 2 being first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moment's notice.

Anchor: The fourth and final swimmer on a relay team. A position of prestige, often reserved for the fastest swimmer on the relay, as they are competing for a better finishing position and a fair chunk of glory.

Blocks: The platform from which swimmers begin races.

Button: The button is a 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. There are usually two buttons per lane. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.

Circling In: Circling your swimmer's name which confirms to the meet officials that your swimmer will be racing. Typically done for longer events, but some meets, you must do this for all events.

Championship Final: The fastest top eight swimmers from the morning or preliminary session. These swimmers are competing for medals and points.

Consolation Final: Usually, these are the 9th to 16th fastest swimmers from the morning or preliminary sessions. Even if a swimmer from this heat posts a time faster than the winner of the championship final, the best they can do is place ninth overall.

Deck: The deck is the area around the swimming pool and is reserved for swimmers, officials and coaches. No one but an "authorized" USA Swimming member may be on the deck during a swim competition. During practice, parents are not allowed on deck.

Deck Entries: Accepting entries into swimming events on the first day or later day of a meet. You must speak to your child's primary coach before deck entering your child.

Disqualified/DQ: A swimmer's event was not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is typically shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head.

Dryland: Dryland is the exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

False Start: When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn. False starts will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team.

Finals: Held at night, they are the championship heats of the events that were held in the morning. Some meets will have a final and consolation heat.

Heat: One flight of swimmers doing an event. For example, in an 8-lane pool, it would be eight swimmers doing the same race. An event of race can have a few or many heats.

Heat Sheet: A document that lists out the order of events at a meet, and includes the heat and lane assignments for each swimmer.

High Point: An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre meet information.

IM (Individual Medley): A swim in which you swim each stroke in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle. Each stroke must be swum for one-quarter of the race distance.

Lane: The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim (example: Lane 1 or Lane 2.)

Pools with starting blocks at only one end: As the swimmers stand behind the blocks, lanes are numbered from Right (Lane 1) to Left (Lane 6).

Long Course Meters (LCM): 50-meter pool. The season is from mid-March through August.

LSC: Local Swim Committee. The local level administrative division of the corporation (USA-S) with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by the Corporation. Fleet's LSC is Gulf Swimming.

Meet Mobile: An app with a small annual fee that allows parents to view their swimmer's events, heats, and lanes. We highly recommend you purchase this app.

NT: No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.

Plunger: See button.

Prelims: The morning or preliminary session of a swim meet. This is where the finalists and consolation finalists are decided for the evening or "finals" session.

Psych Sheet: An document showing all swimmers entered into each individual event in order from fastest to slowest.

Qualifying Times (Cuts): Time standards for competitions. For example, a Gulf cut of 1:10.09 for the 100 yard freestyle for a male swimmer would be the minimum requirement to attend Gulf's SCY Age Group Champs meet.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event at a meet. Oftentimes, heading into a major meet, swimmers will enter every event for which they have qualified in order to keep their options open and then withdraw (or opt not to compete in finals) based on how they feel at the meet. You must speak to your child's primary coach before scratching.

Seed time (or entry time): The time that a swimmer is entered into an event with. This time, usually the swimmer's personal best time in the event, is used to seed the swimmers into heats. For example, if a swimmer has a best time of 0:30 in the 50-yard butterfly, they will be entered with this time, and meet organizers will seed the swimmer alongside other swimmers in the same age group with a similar time.

Seeding: Deck Seeding – After the period of time allocated to circling is over, meet organizers will arrange swimmers in heats and the heats and lanes will be pushed to Meet Mobile and posted around the pool. Pre Seeding - swimmers are arranged in heats according to submitted times, usually a day prior to the meet.

Short Course Meters (SCM): 25-meter pool

Short Course Yards (SCY): 25-yard pool. This is the standard distance for most US pools. The season is from September through mid-March.

Split: The time for a portion of a race, such as each 50 of a 100-yard-race. Coaches will compare the split for the first (or front half) part of a race with the second (or back half) to determine where the swimmer was fastest and slowest. A negative split means the swimmer swam the second half faster than the first.

Taper: Training period designed to produce peak performance by a swimmer in a competition. A taper generally follows a higher-intensity phase and is a period during which a swimmer grows stronger through rest and recovery.

Test Set: The exact same set that is typically done numerous times throughout the year to gauge the swimmer's progress throughout the year or year to year. The first time you do a test set it may be to get your base fitness level and from then on it gauges your improvements through training.

Tiki Hut: The 2 story building on the pool deck at Fleet where the announcers, scorers, and Admin Officials (AO) work during a meet.

Timer: A volunteer, usually a swim parent, who times the swimmer in their assigned lane with a stopwatch. Usually there are 2-3 timers per lane.

Touchpad. The electronic pad that is affixed underneath the starting block. The clock stops when a swimmer touches it at the end of their race. Although there are 2 timers behind the block, this is usually the official time.