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## **Championship Season Frequently Asked Questions**

One of our goals as a team is to qualify and send as many swimmers as possible to Illinois and USA Swimming Championship meets. The most common championship meets include Regionals Championships, Age Groups Championships, Zones, Senior Championships, and Sectional Championships. These championship meets are a special experience and extremely important in the athletes' development. When a swimmer works hard to qualify it is expected that they attend their respective meet.

### Who participates in championship meets?

Swimmers of all ages compete in championship meets. As long as the individual has met the minimum qualifying time standard, they are expected to compete in their respective competition.

### What is the progression of championship meets?

For age group and high school swimmers, many begin their championship attendance in the Regional meet. These time standards traditionally fall in between the "BB" and "A" minimum National Age Group Motivational Times.

Once a swimmer has reached the Regional level, the goal is to progress towards Age Group or Senior Championships. In the state of Illinois, Age Group and Senior Championship time standards traditionally fall between the "AA" and "AAA" minimum National Age Group Motivational Times.

These championship minimum qualifying times get faster as the swimmer progresses towards the national championship levels.

### What are championship time standards?

Championship time standards are the minimum time required to be eligible to compete.

### [Illinois Swimming Time Standards](#)

### Are championship time standards the same in each state?

Each state has different championship time standards. Each state's Age Group and Senior Committees, normally using data from previous championship meets, set these time standards. These standards tend to change on a yearly basis.



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### How are individual events determined?

Individual events are determined based on the minimum time standard achieved by the swimmer. In some cases, a swimmer may have just one individual event and in other cases, they may have multiple individual events.

When an individual has multiple individual events, the coach will then determine which events will potentially help the individual and/or the team's final placing at the end of the meet.

### What happens if I have Regional qualifying times and State qualifying times?

Many swimmers will go into championship season with Regional and State qualifying times. When this happens, the coach will determine which meet would be most beneficial to the swimmer to compete. A swimmer may compete one day at Regionals, but taper for the State meet. In most cases, if a swimmer has three or more state qualifying times, the swimmer will taper for the State meet.

Ultimately, these are unique situations for each individual. The coach will communicate with the swimmer at the appropriate time to determine which meet they will compete at the end of the season.

### How are relays determined?

Relays are determined by individual times. Before entries are submitted, our coaches diligently go through the times for each age group and gender. Once they have a list of potential candidates, the individual times are compiled to achieve the minimum relay championship time standard.

Once a relay is qualified, the coaches then determine which individuals will compete and in which order. In the end, it is the coaches' discretion on who competes on a respective relay.

### What are the Zones and Sectionals meets?

As a member of Illinois Swimming, we are a part of the Central Zone. The Central Zone is one of the four zones of USA Swimming. The Local Swimming Committees that are part of the Central Zone are Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Lake Erie, Michigan, Midwestern, Minnesota, Missouri Valley, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Ozark, South Dakota and Wisconsin.



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Age Group swimmers that achieve AAA or Zone qualifying time are eligible to compete at the Zones meet. This is essentially an all-star meet for swimmers to compete as Team Illinois against other states. This meet is held once a year at the end of the summer season.

Traditionally, Sectionals is a meet for high school and collegiate level swimmers (although 14 & under swimmers do compete as well). This meet is held in the short course and long course seasons. The qualifying times for the Sectional meet is normally faster than the standards set for the State meet. Like the Zone meet, Sectionals is a meet that feature many of the Central Zones states.

### What kind of suit should I wear for championship meets?

A majority of swimmers at championship meets will wear what are referred to as technical suits. Technical suits have a variety of names, most known as "fastskins." These suits are made of materials that are intended to compress the body and help the athletes move through the water faster.

While it is recommended that each championship swimmer buy a tech-suit, these suits are significantly more expensive than normal practice and competition suits.

### What is taper?

Taper is the time of season just before a championship meet. During taper, the swimmers are given more rest and fewer yards than they are used to during the season. Each group and age range will differ in how long their taper will last. Normally, the older the swimmer, the more rest they receive. With more rest and less yards, this allows the swimmers to focus on specifics and more speed work. In the end, taper helps the swimmers feel rested and prepared leading into their most important meets of the season.

### Do I have to shave for my championship meet?

We encourage all swimmers ages 11 and over to shave for championships meets. Shaving the entire body that is not covered by the suit gives the swimmer a numbing feeling in the water, which gives a sense of moving through the water faster. This is a practice used by most teams at championship time.

While it is encouraged, it is not mandatory to shave for championship meets.

