Pool & Facility Terminology

Blocks

The starting platforms are located behind each lane. They are used to dive into the pool at the start of a race. Minimum water depth for use of starting blocks is 4 feet. At the WSY the depth where our starting blocks are located is 9 feet.

Deck

The area around the swimming pool, often reserved for only swimmers, officials, and coaches.

Flags

A length of flags that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall. Used by swimmers in backstroke to judge how close they are to the wall.

Lane

The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim i.e. Lane 1 or Lane 2. Pools can have a varied number of lanes. Here at the WSY we have a 6 lane pool.

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.

Long Course Meters

A pool that is 50 meters long. This is an "Olympic Size" pool.

Pace Clock

The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm ups or swim practice.

Short Course Yards

A pool that is 25 yards long. This is the standard distance for most US pools. Our pool at the WSY is a 25 yard pool.

Timing System

Timing system operated electronically during competitive swim meets. The timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer-type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers times.

Equipment Terminology

Cap

A latex, lycra, or silicone swim cap used during a race or workout to protect a swimmer's hair from the effects of chlorine in the water as well as help cut down water resistance. We always recommend having extra caps!

Fins

Large rubber flipper-type devices that fit on a swimmers feet. Used in swim practice, not competition. Training with fins helps athletes train at faster speeds. It also helps build muscle while improving your up-kick, ankle flexibility, overall body positioning, and conditioning.

Goggles

Eyewear worn by swimmers in the pool to protect the swimmer's eyes from the effects of chlorine in the water. Goggles also help you see better underwater. We always recommend having extra pairs of goggles!

Kick Board

A flotation device used by swimmers during practice to keep their arms in place and bodies on the surface of the water. Using kickboards allows swimmers to focus exclusively on a workout for the legs, hips, and stomach muscles.

Paddles

A swim aid, which attaches to the hand. These are generally used in the older age groups to work on stroke technique and strength.

Pull Buoy

A swim aid used to keep the legs motionless. It is a flotation device that is held between the swimmers legs and is generally used by older swimmers. Using pull buoys allows swimmers to focus exclusively on their arms and upper body.

Practice Terminology

Bilateral Breathing

The process of breathing on alternate sides during freestyle, such as breathing every third or fifth stroke.

Build

Specific distances over which you gradually increase your speed. For a build up 100-yard swim, you start at a certain speed, gradually building to maximum or near maximum speed at the end of the 100.

Cool Down

Easy to moderate swimming following an intensive effort or race. The purpose is to rid the body of excess lactic acid and to reduce heart rate and respiration. May also be referred to as "recovery swimming," "active rest/recovery," or "warm-down".

Descending

A set in which the interval (swim time plus rest) decreases with each repeat. A descending interval set of 5 x 100s may have send-offs of 2:00, 1:55, 1:50, 1:45, and 1:40.

OR

A series of the same distance in which your swimming times decrease with each repeat. Your time on a descending set of 4 x 50s on 1:00 may be :46, :44, :42, and :40.

Distance per Stroke (DPS)

The distance you cover with each stroke. The longer your distance per stroke, the more efficient your stroke is. You can calculate this by dividing your distance swum by your stroke count over that distance.

Drill

An exercise designed to improve the technique of a swimmer. Many drills focus on a specific part of the stroke.

Dry land

The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

Individual Medley (IM)

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.

IM Order
IM Order A swim or a set that will be swum in the order of an Individual Medley race: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Reverse IM Order A swim or a set in which you swim in reverse IM order: freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly.

Negative Split

A swim during which the second half is completed faster than the first half.

Pace

Average time for a specific distance within a specific event (a 200 on 3:00 would be a :45 per 50 pace). Usually, you should swim at a pace that you can hold for a long time, rather than changing your pace drastically within a set (unless the set calls for it).

Pull

A swim during which only your upper body is used. Pulling generally implies the use of a pull buoy, a flotation device placed between your legs. Hand paddles are also often used on pulling sets.

Race Pace Training

Swimming in a workout that simulates the speed at which you will compete

Set

A number of repetitive swims (repeats) at specific distances that typically involve an interval or a specific amount of rest. There is a limitless number of sets that vary in the number of repeats, distance, and interval.

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.

Aerobic Set An aerobic swim set might include sustained swimming at a comfortable pace, with short rest, in an effort to build cardiovascular fitness.

Swimmers increase their cardiovascular conditioning by maximizing the amount of oxygen in the blood. The goal is to build cardiovascular conditioning and improve the muscles' oxidative capacity.

Anaerobic Set/Lactate Set An anaerobic swim set could include short intervals, like 25s to 100s at 90-95% of max heart-rate, with longer rest. Anaerobic swimming will help build your lactic threshold. Lactate, also known as lactic acid, is a byproduct produced in the body after cells produce energy without oxygen around. The more anaerobic swims you do, the more adept your body will become for high-intensity workouts.This will help build muscle strength and speed.

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.

Warm Up

A period of swimming in which you acclimate and warm your muscles for faster swimming, which is important to prevent injury. During warm up, you should generally experience an increase in heart rate and respiration.

Meet Terminology

Age Group

Division of swimmers according to age. The USA Swimming National Age Group divisions are: 10&under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18 (sometimes split into 15-16 and 17-18). YMCA Swimming Age Group divisions are: 8&under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15&over.

Disqualification (DQ)

Happens at a meet when a swimmer does not swim a stroke according to the guidelines set forth by USA Swimming. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with an open hand above their head. If a swimmer is disqualified from an event, the finish time is not recorded.

Deadline

The date meet entries must be received by, to be accepted by the meet host. Making the meet deadline does not guarantee acceptance into a meet since many meets are "full" weeks before the entry deadline.

Entry

An individual, relay team, or club roster's event list in a swim competition.

> **Entry Fees** The amount per event that a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the type of meet.

> **Entry Limit** Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they cannot exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries will be returned. Some meets may also limit the total number of events an individual can compete in.

Event

A race or stroke over a given distance.

Final Results

The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.

Heats

All of the swimmers entered in the event are divided into heats, or groups of swimmers. The results are compiled by the times swum, after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Sheet

An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event. Sometimes referred to as a "Psych Sheet" or meet program.

Illegal

Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification.

Individual Medley (IM)

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. Distances offered: 100 yd, 200 yd/m, 400 yd/m.

Lap Counter

The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

Meet Director

The official in charge of the administration of the meet.

Meet Sheet

The officially approved informational sheet for each swim meet. The meet sheet will include information about the location, rules, events, and other logistical details of the competition.

NT - No Time

The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swum that event before.

NS - No Swim

In results, NS indicates that the swimmer did not compete in the event.

Official

A certified adult judge on the deck of the pool. Various judges watch the swimmer's strokes, turns and finishes or are timers.

Qualifying Times/Time Standards

Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer.

Referee

The official who has the authority over all other officials at the meet. They make all final decisions and see to the efficient running of the meet.

Relay

A swimming event in which four swimmers participate as a team. Each swimmer completes an equal distance of the race.

Medley relay
One swimmer swims backstroke, one swimmer swims breaststroke, one swimmer swims butterfly, one swimmer swims freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200 yd/m and 400 yd/m distances.

Freestyle relay
Each swimmer swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 200 yd/m, 400 yd/m, and 800 yd/m distances.

Leg
The part of a relay event swum by a single team member.

Scratch

The process by which a swimmer withdraws from an event that they have entered in. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if these are not followed, a swimmer can be disqualified from later events.

Seed Time

The time a swimmer uses to enter an event. It is the swimmer's personal best time in that event and determines the placement of heat and lane for a swimmer.

Split

A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are generally registered every 50 yards, depending on the pool and the equipment on hand, and are used to determine if a swimmer is on pace, as planned.

Start

The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race.

Starter The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and ensuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

The starter will often blow **a series (3-4) of short whistles to let the swimmers know to approach the blocks and prepare to swim**, followed by the announcer or starter/referee announcing the event/distance/heat

Step Up/Step In The command given by the starter to signal to the swimmers to step up onto the block (free/breast/fly) or step into the pool (back). **Often replaced with one long whistle.**

Take Your Mark The command given by the starter to signal to the swimmers to immediately assume their starting position. When all swimmers are stationary, the starter shall give the starting signal.

Horn A sounding device used to start races. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system.

Stand The command given by the starter to signal to the swimmers to relax from their starting position. Typically given if swimmers display extra movement or do not assume their starting position.

Step Down The command given by the starter to signal to the swimmers to step down off the blocks. Usually this command is an indication everything is not right for the race to start.

Swim Meet

A large gathering of athletes for a swimming competition.

Championship Meet A meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.

Dual Meet Type of meet where two teams/clubs compete against each other. Typically a YMCA Swim Meet.

Trials/Finals Meet (or Prelims/Finals Meet) Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. Generally, the fastest six or eight (Championship Heat) swimmers, and the next fastest six or

eight swimmers (Consolation Heat) return in the evening to compete in the Finals.

USA Sanctioned Swim Meet A meet that is approved by the Local Swimming Committee (LSC) in which it is held. Meet must be conducted according to USA Swimming rules. All participants, including coaches, athletes and officials, must be USA Swimming members.

YMCA Swim Meet (Y Meet) A meet that is approved by Y and must be conducted according to the rules that govern YMCA Competitive Sports and the National YMCA Swimming standards. All participants, including coaches, athletes and officials, must be Y Swimming members.

Team Records

The statistics a team keeps, listing the fastest swimmer in the clubs history for each age group/each event.

Timer

The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.