

Unified Aquatics Club Team Handbook

Unified Aquatics Club

The Unified Aquatics Club (UAC) is a year-round, competitive, USA Swimming age group swim program that offers instruction and training for swimmers of all levels and abilities. We are committed to promoting the sport of swimming, because of its potential to help individuals achieve excellence, not just in sports, but in life. UAC coaches have experience with athletes that have competed in local meets, Junior National competitions and the NCAA Championships. We continue to produce swimmers who gain recognition at Junior Olympic meets as well as achieve national rankings.

UAC Mission

The mission of Unified is to provide every member an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at his or her level of ability, from novice to international competitor.

UAC Pool Facilities

UAC's home pool is located at Columbus School for Girls. The state-of-the art 8-lane indoor pool, completed in 2012, is equipped with a Colorado Timing System and scoreboard. UAC members will have access to locker rooms before and after scheduled practices.

Columbus School for Girls (CSG)
65. South Drexel Ave., Columbus, OH 43209

Governance Structure

USA Swimming (<http://www.usaswimming.org>)

USA Swimming is the national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States. As the National Governing Body, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements policies and procedures, and selects the athletes to represent the United States in international competition.

Each year, USA Swimming establishes time standards, or "cuts" for each of its major meets, from BB or age group meets through Olympic Trials, swimmers are always striving to make their next cut. The established age group time standards are designed to encourage age group swimmers to set goals starting at level B and going up to AAAA times. Age group time standards can be found on the USA Swimming website under "Times."

Ohio Swimming-LSC (<http://www.swimohio.com>)

The Local Swimming Committee (LSC) is the governing body for swimming at the local level. There are 59 Local Swimming Committees in the United States. The LSC is responsible for setting standardized guidelines under which all member teams operate. The LSC sanctions meets, certifies officials, establishes the time standards, and publishes the SWIM GUIDE and meet schedules. The Ohio time standards that are used to qualify for Ohio Championship Meets (Ohio Junior Olympic Meets) can be found on the Swim Ohio website under the "Athletes" tab. Click on "Times & Records."

UAC Programs Offered

Each swim groups' criteria are set by the head coach. Below are the minimum requirements for each competitive swim group. The standards for these groups may change as the team grows. All group changes are approved by the head

coach. As swimmers move up to a new group there will be an adjustment period to allow them to acclimate to the increased work load.

Discovery Group

This is our entry level group. Designed for 5-7 year olds with the primary focus on stroke development, starts, water safety and fun activities. Each swimmer must be able to swim 25 yards of freestyle and backstroke under 50 seconds. Coaches will emphasize the importance of being on a team and showing respect for teammates, the facility and equipment.

Voyager Group

This group is intended for swimmers ages 6-8 with at least one summer of competitive swimming experience. The primary goal will be to learn to swim all four competitive strokes and to improve starts & turns.

Explorer Group

This group is for swimmers ages 7-10 and is designed to improve stroke mechanics in all four strokes, starts & turns. Racing strategy and dryland training will be introduced. Swimmers in this group will have already participated in competitive situations for the primary purpose of skill development (i.e. -time trials, intra squad meets and other entry level competitions).

Challenge Group

Athletes in this group are usually at least 9 years old and have completed the Explorer Group move-up skills list. This group is exposed to training for the first time while trying to prepare for the 200 Freestyle and 200 Individual Medley races. Competing at swim meets is highly encouraged at a rate of about once per month.

Elite Group

Minimum age for entry into this group is 11 years old. Athletes entering this group must display a desire to begin training on a more committed basis. Competition at swim meets is expected in this group. Designed for the most competitive swimmer where endurance, perfect stroke mechanics and pure speed will be the focus. Swimmers will continue to work on decreasing the number of strokes/length or increase tempo with the same number. The Elite Group will learn how to calculate goal splits, distance per stroke and stroke rate to help achieve Championship Time Standards.

Middle School/High School Pre-Season Conditioning

This program is designed to prepare athletes for the upcoming OHSA Swim Season. This group is only for swimmers in grades 7-12 and practices will begin September 13th. Our conditioning program will help swimmers gain strength to help prevent injuries and enhance performance. Practices will cover swimming technique/conditioning, building core stability, developing explosive power and increasing flexibility

Expectations

Attendance & Attitude

Swim practice is the most important facet of the program. Although competition is the test of a swimmer's ability, practice is where the potential and foundation for achievement is established. Practice schedules vary by group.

Swimmers must attend practice on a regular basis in order to give themselves a chance to achieve their potential as a swimmer.

Swim practice provides the swimmer the opportunity to improve and “fine tune” stroke and turn technique and to increase endurance. The swimmer’s attitude towards practice will determine to what extent he or she will benefit. Attitude is also important when it comes to competition. Some swimmers may be intimidated when competing against faster swimmers. They may also react adversely to the psychological stress of competing in a major meet or traveling to unfamiliar facilities. Communicate concerns with your swimmer’s coach.

Swimmers can expect to have “plateaus”, or periods during which their times may not improve or even regress. These plateaus can be discouraging at best and lead to a swimmer wanting to quit swimming. Plateaus in performance are common and talking with other parents and swimmers on the pool deck may help. Once again communication between parent, swimmer, and coach is very important.

Swimmer Expectations

- Come to practice and meets on time and prepared.
- Listen to the coaches and follow instructions.
- Work hard. Give your best effort.
- Bring a positive, winning attitude to practice and meets.
- Be a good teammate. Encourage and support others. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Check your mailbox regularly.
- Wear your team suit, cap, spirit wear to meets and events.
- Show respect for the facilities and equipment. Follow all pool/facility rules.
- Have fun!

Parent Expectations

- Be supportive and encouraging.
- Meet financial obligations on time.
- Communicate questions/concerns directly with your swimmer’s group coach.
- Keep informed on current UAC events by attending the parent meeting, checking the information table at the pool, reading team emails, and checking the team website.
- Volunteer.
- Supervise children who are not swimming at all times during practice and at meets.
- Be realistic in terms of expectations; factor in age and skill level.
- Emphasize performance and effort, not just outcome. Your swimmer only has control over his/her performance. Define and measure success as doing your best and striving to reach your personal goals.
- Please observe practice from the stands – the pool deck is reserved for coaches and swimmer.
- Model the behavior we expect of your swimmers – respect coaches, meet officials, swimmers and parents.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is crucial to the success of UAC. Volunteers are needed to help with swim meets, coordinate special events, fundraise, and serve as booster club members. Getting involved with UAC is a great way to meet people, have fun and teach your child about commitment. Many swim parents develop long-term friendships and enjoy the family-like atmosphere that develops when people work together.

Suits & Equipment

What to bring to practice:

- Girls - nylon, lycra or polyester one-piece, racing style suit
- Boys – jammers or brief style suit
- Towel
- Goggles and swim cap*
- Fins (All groups)
- Paddles (Challenge group and above)
- Snorkels (Explorer Group and above)
- Parka, sweats, sheep skin boots, etc. for winter months

*A UAC swim cap is provided to each swimmer prior to the first meet. The team suit can be purchased at the team suit fitting events typically held in conjunction with the pre-season parent meeting. Competitive swim gear (goggles, work out suits, practice caps, parkas, etc) can be purchased through our team website. Click on the Swim Outlet link under the “Links” tab.

What to bring to a meet:

- Cash for parking (if applicable) and to purchase heat sheets
- 2-3 towels
- Extra goggles
- Drinks- water or energy drinks
- Snacks – energy foods, fruits, veggies, sandwiches, etc.*
- Chair
- Team suit
- Team swim cap
- Parka or warm clothes in cold weather
- Footwear (sheepskin lined boots, sandals, flip flops)
- Some swimmers like to bring sleeping bags or blankets
- EZ Up (Often times we have parent volunteers that are willing to set up team EZ UP's)
- Games, books, cards, etc.

***All food must be tree-nut and peanut free.**

At most meets, the hosting team will run a snack bar with reasonable prices. Hosting teams typically invite swim gear vendors. This is a great time to purchase goggles, work out suits and caps, and any other gear your swimmer may need. Vendors at meets often offer discounted prices on suits and swim gear.

Swim Meets

Participation at swim meets is encouraged for all training groups. Each training group coach will specify which meets are most appropriate for the training group and individual swimmers.

Correspondence related to swim meet entry deadlines and instructions will be sent via email several weeks prior to the meet. **You must log into the UAC website to declare your swimmer's intent to attend or decline the meet by the specified deadline.** Training group coaches will select the events for each swimmer. Please use the notes section of the entry page to indicate preferred events or other important information (e.g., your swimmer is close to making a time cut in a specific event).

A more detailed email, including arrival and warm-up times, will be sent the week of the meet.

Parent Lane Timers

For parents attending meets, each participating team may be required to provide lane timers. **Please remember to sign up for a time slot!** Timing is EASY!

Psych and Heat Sheets

A “psych sheet,” which is an official entry form that displays all swimmers in each event, will be available the week of the meet. The swimmers are listed under each event in order of fastest entry time. This will be posted on the UAC website under the specific meet. At the meet, a heat sheet will be available (usually for a \$5-\$10 fee) which details the heat and lane assignments for each event. Swimmers should use the heat sheet to write their event, stroke, heat and lane on the back of their hand. This will help remind swimmers of their events and ensure they get to the blocks in time.

Swimmer Responsibilities

- **Arrive on time for warm up:** Meet warm up and start times are stated on the meet form. Coaches will also instruct swimmers as to the time they should arrive at the meet for warm up. For most morning sessions UAC starts warm ups around 8:00 am. Afternoon session warm-ups (typically for the older swimmers) start after the morning session is completed. This varies with each meet. Coaches should have a tentative time line and will let afternoon swimmers know when to arrive for warm ups.
- **Check in:** Typically signs are posted directing swimmers where to check in. At the check in table, the swimmer confirms the events they are entered to swim. Often swimmers will write their event numbers on their hand with a sharpie marker to help keep track of their events for the day.
- **Report to the UAC coach:** Our coaches are often rotated at meets. If your coach is not present, report to the UAC coach attending the meet.
- **Warm-up with your UAC teammates:** Coaches will get the swimmers warmed up before the start of the meet.
- **It is the swimmer’s responsibility to be behind the blocks in time for their race.** A bullpen may be utilized for younger age groups (10 and under) at some meets to assist in getting swimmer to the blocks in time for their event.
- **After the Race:** The swimmer reports back to the coach. The coach will analyze the race and then sends the swimmer to warm down or back to the bull pen.

Note: Most UAC families sit together at the swim meets. This is a great way to get to know the UAC families and swimmers. It also builds great camaraderie. Swimmers enjoy cheering for each other.

Hosting a Home Meet

Volunteers are essential to run a swim meet successfully. Previous experience is not required! We will make sure you are comfortable with your responsibility before the meet starts. UAC depends on your support for volunteering in the following ways:

Equipment Setup /Breakdown	Everyone is needed! Help set up easy-ups, timing chairs, lane lines, warning flags, timing system, snack bar, tables, etc; pack up all equipment and restore deck to the original condition.
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Clerk of the Course	Assists meet administrator and officials to keep the meet events running on schedule; keeps track of registered swimmers and the events they are entered in.
Registration/Check-in	Checks swimmers in at the start of the meet.
Scoring	Helps verify finish times during the meet.
Computers	Uses team computers to provide various forms for officials, timers and swimmers; helps seed events and print out reports.
Timing System	Help run the equipment that provides official race times.
Runners	Receives forms from computer area and delivers them to the proper destinations.
Head Timer	Sits near lane timers and starts 2 extra, back-up stop watches for each event.
Lane Timers	Sits in chairs at the end of each lane and uses stop watch to time each event.
Staging	Assists younger swimmers in 25 yard and 50 meter events to find their correct heat and lane.
Announcer	Provides swimmers and spectators with meet information and entertainment; and promotes businesses who sponsor and support Unified.
Pool Marshall	Supervises the pool area where swimmers warm-up and cool-down. (Must be a board member with a current USA Swim card.)
Ticket Sales	Sells meet programs.
Snack Bar	Assists with preparation and sale of snack bar items.
Deck Operations	Assists in keeping deck and bathrooms cleaned and stocked; helps with any deck maintenance necessary to maintain a safe and clean environment.
Awards	Places labels on swimmers' awards and sorts the awards by team.

Swimmer Incentives & Recognitions

The goal of UAC is for each swimmer to reach their highest potential while enjoying the sport of swimming. We have developed several incentive programs to keep the swimmer motivated.

Winter Warrior Program: This program recognizes swimmers who maintain high attendance levels and participate in meets during the winter season.

T-Shirts and Swim Caps: Swimmers who attend championship meets, Junior Olympic meets, national meets, etc. are given special UAC meet t-shirts and swim caps.

Annual Awards Banquet: In the spring, UAC holds an awards banquet to recognize each swimmer. Outstanding achievements will also be recognized.

The Basics of Swimming

The Course – Competition pools may be short course (25 yards or 25 meters), or long course (50 meters). The international standard (as used in the Olympics) is 50 meters. World records are accomplished in 25 and 50 meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for the 25 yards, 25 meters, and 50 meters.

The CSG pool is a 25 yard pool. UAC swimmers compete in short course (25 yard) meets and long course (50 meter) meets. Typically long course meets are held in the spring and summer.

The Strokes – There are five competitive strokes:

1. **Freestyle** – The competitor may swim any stroke he or she wishes. The stroke most commonly used is the crawl, which is characterized by the alternating overhand motion of the arms and an alternating (up & down) flutter kick. On turns, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn and touch the wall with their feet.

2. **Backstroke** – This stroke consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, the swimmer must touch the wall while on their back. This may be executed by doing a back flip turn (touching with their feet) or simple by staying on the back, touching with their hand, and then turning.

3. **Breaststroke** – This stroke requires simultaneous movement of the arms in the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous thrust of the legs called a “frog” or breaststroke kick. **No Flutter or dolphin kicking is allowed.** On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously. Swimmers are allowed only one underwater pull off the start and turn.

4. **Butterfly** – This stroke requires simultaneous overhead stroke of the arms combined with a dolphin kick. In the kick, **the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors, or use the breaststroke kick.** On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously.

5. **The Individual Medley** – commonly referred to as the I.M. This race features all four strokes. In the I.M., the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to the backstroke, then the breaststroke and finally freestyle. **The swimmer must touch the wall with their hand for the backstroke to breaststroke transition.**

Relays:

1. **Freestyle Relay** – This event consists of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the race.

2. **Medley Relay** – All four strokes are swum by a different swimmer. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.

Starts, Turns and Finishes: Many races are won or lost by swimmer’s performance in the start, turn or finish. At the start, the swimmer is called to the starting position by the official/starter who visually checks that all swimmers are motionless. When all swimmers are set, the gun or starting horn is sounded to start the race. If a swimmer has moved or left too early, that swimmer may be disqualified after the race for a false start. Under the USA Swimming rules, one false start disqualifies the swimmer. Fast flip turns, quick touch-and-goes and tight stream-lines can improve a swimmer’s race times. Finishing strong to the wall and not gliding will also help improve race times.

The Rules: The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equal conditions for competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that no swimmer gets an unfair advantage. Trained officials observe the swimmers during each event to ensure compliance of the rules. If a swimmer breaks any of the rules, he/she will be disqualified. This means that the swimmer will not receive an official time and will not be eligible for an award for that event.

Disqualifications (DQ) are a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:

Freestyle: pulling on the lane line; not touching the wall on a turn

Backstroke: pulling on the lane line; too many pulls into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast; turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race

Breaststroke: an illegal kick such as a flutter or dolphin kick; shoulders not level; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while head is underwater; head not breaking water during each stroke cycle; hands going back past the hips during the race; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish; touch not simultaneous

Butterfly: alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish; touch not simultaneous

Other: not finishing in the same lane as he/she started; not touching the wall on at a turn; swimming past the 15m mark (marked yellow on the lane line) underwater

Glossary of Terms

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. Some LSCs have divided the swimmers into more convenient divisions specific to their situations: (i.e. 8-under, 13-Over, 15-Over, Junior, Senior.)
Alternate	In a Prelims/Finals meet (ex. JO's); 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 and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place.
Anchor	The final swimmer in a relay.
Backstroke	One of the four competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swum as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter (LSCs with 10-under divisions offer the 25 yd back).
Beep	The starting sound from an electronic, computerized timing system.
Bonus Heat	The heat held during the finals session of a Prelims/Finals meet that is slower than the swimmers participating in Big Finals. The Bonus Heat may refer to Consolation Finals or an extra heat in addition to Consolation finals.
Breaststroke	One of the four competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swum as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter. (LSCs with 10-under divisions offer the 25 yd breast).
Bulkhead	A moveable wall, constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-yard courses (i.e. Belmont Plaza Pool).
Butterfly	One of the four competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, and 200 yards/meter (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yard fly).
Button	The 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 3 buttons per lane. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.
Championship Finals	The top six or eight swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) in Prelims/Finals meet who, after the prelims are swum, qualify to return to the Finals. The fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held.
Check-In	The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck-seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check-in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

Circle Seeding	A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a prelims/finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes. (i.e. Lane 4 in the final three heats.) See rule book for exact method for seeding depending on the lanes in the pool.
Circle Swimming	Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane to enable more swimmers to safely swim in each lane.
Clinic	A scheduled meeting for the purpose of instruction (i.e. Official's clinic, Coach's clinic.)
Code	A set of rules that have been officially published.
Code of Ethics	A Code of Conduct that both swimmers and coaches are required to sign at certain USA-S/LSC sponsored events. The Code is not strict and involves common sense and proper behavior.
Consolation Finals	After the fastest six or eight swimmers, the next six or eight swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the prelims are swum, qualify to return to the Finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the Championship heat.
Course	Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition (i.e. Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.)
Cut	Slang for qualifying time. A time standard necessary to attend a particular meet of event.
Deadline	The date meet entries must be "postmarked" 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.
Deck	The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but an "authorized" USA Swimming member may be on the deck during a swim competition.
Deck Entries	Accepting entries into swimming events on the first day or later day of a meet.
Distance	How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), and 1650 yards (66 lengths). Distances for long course are: 50 meters (1 length), 100 meters (2 lengths), 200 meters (4 lengths), 400 meters (8 lengths), 800 meters (16 lengths), and 1500 meters (30 lengths).
Distance Events	Term used to refer to events over 400 meters/500 yards.
DQ-Disqualified	This occurs when a swimmer has committed an infraction of some kind. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time.
Dive	Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warm-ups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmer's coach.

Drill	A teaching exercise involving a portion of a stroke which is used to improve technique.
Dropped Time	When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time."
Dryland	The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water that aids and enhances swimmers performance.
Entry	An individual, relay team, or club roster's event list in a swim competition.
Entry Form	A form on which a swimmer enters a competition. Usually includes swimmer's name, USA Swim number, team, age, sex, event numbers, and entry times.
Entry Fees	The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the LSC and 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 returned.
Electronic Timing	Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touch pads in the water with buttons (pickles) for back-up times and a computer-type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers. Some systems may have only buttons (pickles) and no touch pads.
Event	A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals 1 preliminary with its final, or 1 timed final.
False Start	When a swimmer is moving or leaves the starting block before the start is sounded. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.
Fastest to Slowest	A seeding method used on the longer distance events. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events will alternate one girls' heat and one boys' heat until all swimmers have competed.
Finals	The championship heat of an event in which the top swimmers from the preliminaries compete.
Final Results	The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.
Flags	Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.
Freestyle	One of the four competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swum as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meter, 100 yards/meter, 200 yards/meter, 400 mtr/500, yd 800 mtr/1000 yds, 1500 mtr/1650 yds (LSCs with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yd free).
Goals	A specific skill or time achievement a swimmer sets and strives for. Can be short term or long term.
Gutter	The area along the edge of the pool in which the water overflows during a race and is circulated

	through the filtration system.
Heats	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers time swum, after all heats of the event are completed.
Heat Sheet	The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the swimmers times are entered many weeks before the meet. Heat sheets (or programs) are sold at the meet.
IM	Individual Medley. A swimming event using all four of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle. Equal distances must be swum of each stroke. Distances offered: 100 yards, 200 yards/meters, and 400 yards/meter.
J.O.	Junior Olympics. An age group championship meet conducted by the LSC.
Jump Start	An illegal start done by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th member of a relay team. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.
Kick	The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to "yell" to encourage swimmers during a race.
Kick Board	A flotation device used by swimmers during practice. A lightweight object used with great accuracy by coaches.
Lane	The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim (i.e. 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).
Lane Lines	Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.
Lane Markings	The guide lines on the bottom of the pool and in the center of the lanes running the length of the pool.
Lap	One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.
Lap Counter	A set of display numbers used to keep track of laps during a distance race longer than 500 yards. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the counter are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by bright orange. (Also, the title given to the person who counts for the swimmer.)
Late Entries	Meet entries from a club or individual that are received by the meet host after the entry deadline. These entries are usually not accepted and are returned to sender.
Leg	The part of a relay event swum by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.
Length	The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See lap.

Long Course	A pool 50 meters in length.
Long Distance	Term used to refer to events of 800 meters/1000yards, to 1500 meters/1650 yards.
LSC	Local Swimming Committee. The local level administrative division of USA Swimming with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by USA Swimming.
Marks	The command to take your starting position (i.e. Take your mark).
Marshall	The official who controls the crowd and swimmer-flow at a swim meet.
Meet	A competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer races against the clock to determine improvement.
Meet Director	The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet.
Middle Distance	Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters to 400 meters/500 yards.
NAGTS	National Age Group Time Standards.
National Reportable Times (NRT)/Top 16	Time standards set for both short and long courses to give national recognition to the fastest 16 swimmers in each stroke, distance, gender, and age group. Achieving these standards allows a swimmer's time to be submitted for consideration each year. They do not guarantee achieving a Top 16 ranking.
Nationals	USA Swimming National Championship meet conducted in March/April and August.
Negative Split	Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.
NGB	National Governing Body.
Non-Conforming Time	A short course time submitted to qualify for a long course meet, or vice versa.
NT	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swum that event before.
Observed Meet	A meet that is not conducted according to USA Swimming rules (high school, YMCA) where a request for observation has been processed and approved in advance. Sufficient USA Swimming officials are present to certify that the athletes' swims are in compliance with USA Swimming technical rules.
Observed Swim	A swim observed by assigned USA Swimming officials for conformance with USA Swimming technical rules in a meet conducted under other than USA Swimming rules.
Officials	The certified judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition that enforces USA Swimming rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starters, timers, and

	referees.
Officials Decision (Judges Decision)	A judgment call made by the official when visual evidence of a winner is not consistent with the timers' watches.
Olympic Trials	The USA Swimming sanctioned long course swim meet held the year of the Olympic Games to decide what swimmers will represent the USA on our Olympic Team. Qualification times are faster than Senior Nationals.
Open Water Swims	A freestyle event conducted in a natural body of water, such as a lake, river or ocean.
OT	Official Time. The swimmers event time recorded to one hundredth of a second (.01).
Open Competition	Competition which any qualified club, organization, or individual may enter.
Parka	Large 3/4 length fur lined coats worn by swimmers. Usually are in team colors with logo or team name.
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 check their pace or maintain intervals during practice or warm-ups.
Paddle	Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice.
Positive Check In	The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a deck seeded or pre seeded meet. The swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.
Practice	The scheduled workouts swimmers attend with their swim team/club.
Prelims	Short for preliminaries. Also called Heats or Trails. Those races in which swimmers qualify for the championship, consolation finals or semi-finals.
Prelims-Finals	Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. 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. A swimmer who has qualified in the Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if their finals time would place them so. The converse also applies.
Proof of Time	An official meet result, OVC, or other accepted form. Swimmers/Coaches must supply proof of time with some meet entries, and other meets it is not required unless a swimmer misses a cut of time at the meet.
Psyche Sheet	An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event. Sometimes referred to as a "Heat Sheet" or meet program. However, a "heat sheet" would show not only every swimmer in an event, but also what heat and lane they are swimming in.
Pull Buoy	A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.

Qualifying Times (Q-Time)	Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer.
Race	Any single swimming competition (i.e. preliminary, final, timed final.)
Referee	The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions.
Registered	Enrolled and paid as a member of USA-S and the LSC.
Relays	A swimming event in which four swimmers compete together as a team to achieve one time. Each swimmer completes an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle.
Scratch	To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.
Sectionals	Nickname for Speedo Championship Series . Open "senior level" meets held in the spring and summer. Each Zone may hold up to four meets. Qualifying times, sites, dates and meet rules are determined locally.
Seed	Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.
Seeding	Deck Seeding - swimmers are called to report to the Clerk of the Course. After scratches are determined, the event is seeded. Pre Seeding - swimmers are arranged in heats according to submitted times, usually a day prior to the meet.
Senior Meet	A meet that is for senior level swimmers and is not divided into age groups. Qualification times are usually necessary and will vary depending on the level of the meet.
Senior Nationals	A USA Swimming National Championship meet for swimmers of any age as long as the qualification times are met.
Session	Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, type of competition, or age group.
Short Course	A pool 25-yards or 25-meters in length.
Split	A time recorded from the official start to the completion of an intermediate 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 a distance event.
Stations	Separate portions of a dryland or weight circuit.
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 insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.
Starting Blocks	The starting platforms located behind each lane.
Stand-up	The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.
Step-Down	The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.
Streamline	The position used by swimmers when starting or pushing off the walls designed to reduce water resistance.
Stroke	There are 4 competitive strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Freestyle.
Stroke Judge	The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.
Submitted Time	Times used to enter swimmers in meets. These times must have been achieved by the swimmer at previous meets.
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 ties stand.
SWIMS	USA Swimming system that keeps track of every time swum by all swimmers. Available through the USA Swimming website.
Taper	The final preparation phase for a swimmer with the slow gradual reduction of work loads and intensities in preparation for the season ending competition meet, like JO's.
Timed Finals	Competition in which only heats are swum and final placing are determined by those times.
Time Standard	Performance requirements to enter a swimming competition. National standards are determined by USA Swimming. Local swim meet standards are determined by the LSC.
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.
Time Trial	An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.
Top 16	A list of times compiled by the LSC or USA-S that recognizes the top 16 swimmers in each age group (boys & girls) by each event and distance. The number 16 was arbitrarily chosen because it would normally fill the finals and consoles heats at a swim meet.
Touch Out	To reach the touchpad and finish first in a close race.

Touch Pad	The removable touch sensitive board at the end of each lane where a swimmer's finish is registered and sent electronically to the timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.
Transfer	The act of leaving one club or LSC and going to another. Usually 120 days of unattached competition is required before swimmer can represent another USA-S club.
Unattached	An athlete member who competes, but does not represent a club or team (abbr as UN).
Unofficial Time	The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after the race. After the time has been checked, it will become the official time.
USA-S	The governing body of swimming--USA Swimming.
USA Swimming	The national governing body for competitive swimming in the United States.
USA-S ID Number	A 16-part number assigned to a swimmer after they have filled out the proper forms and paid their annual dues. The first 6 parts are numbers of a swimmer's birth date: Day/Month/Year using zeros as place holders. The next three spaces are the first three letters of the athlete's legal first name. The next letter is the middle initial, followed by the first four letters of the swimmer's last name (i.e. USA-S ID# for swimmer Suzan Eileen Nelson, born Aug.27, 1976 = 082776SUZENELS.)
Warm-down	The low intensity swimming used by swimmers after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid and gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.
Warm-up	The low intensity swimming used by swimmers prior to a main practice set or race to get the muscles loose and warm. Warm up gradually increases heart rate, respiration and helps to prevent injury.
Watch	The hand held device used by timers and coaches for timing a swimmers races and taking splits.
Weights	The various barbells, benches, machines, etc. used by swimmers during their dryland program.
Whistle	The sound a starter/referee makes to signal for quiet before they give the command to start the race.
Yardage	The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.
Zones	The country is divided up into 4 major zones: Eastern - Southern - Central - Western. At the end of the long course season (in August) the Zone Administration sponsors a championship age group meet. The Zone meets are the highest level of age group competition available to USA Swimming age group swimmers.