

Swim Glossary

Swimming has its own language. Here is a glossary of commonly used terms:

- **Age Group** In USA swimming, all levels where competition is divided by age.
- **Backstroke Flags** String of small flags hung across the pool 5 yards from each end. Used by backstrokers to count their strokes to the end so they don't have to look for the wall.
- **Clerk of Course** The meet official who handles most of the administrative duties on the day of the meet such as deck entries, scratches, etc.
- **Championship Finals** The top 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the finals.
- **Deck Entry/Deck Entering** Signing up to swim on the day of the meet. A deck entry is usually not eligible for awards & not even allowed at many competitions.
- **DQ** Disqualification
- **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 swam, after all heats of the event are completed.
- **Heat Sheet** The pre-meet printed listing swimmers seed times in the various events at a swim meet. Heat sheets are generally sold at the admissions table for \$5-\$7. They are used to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for and when they swim. Heat sheets show the seeding prior to the race plus swimmers can see the order of events and get a rough idea how long the meets sessions will last.
- **IM** Individual Medley. Swimmer performs an equal distance of all four strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.
- **Long Course/Long Course Meters/LCM** Races swum in a 50-meter (Olympic sized) pool. Used primarily during the spring and summer seasons (April-August).
- **NT** No time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to indicate that the swimmer has not swum, or does not have an official USAS time in, that event.
- **Pace** The speed at which one swims. Speed and strategy vary according to distance.
- **PNS** Pacific Northwest Swimming is a local swim committee (LSC) which includes swim clubs within the geographic territory of Washington State, with the exception of

some counties in eastern and southern Washington. PNS is one of the 14 LSCs that comprise the Western Zone of USA Swimming.

- **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. Ex: Most 500 free(s) have positive check in. Typically, it is the longer distances that require a positive check in. Swimmers are, ultimately, responsible for making sure this is done.
- **Prelims-Finals** Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. The fastest 6 or 8 (Championship Heat) swimmers and the next fastest 6 or 8 (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.
- **Psych Sheet** A document that lists all swimmers in each event in order from fastest to slowest time. It is not broken down into heats.
- **Pull Buoy** A foam device used to keep the legs still so that more focus may be placed on the arms.
- **Sanction** A document that lists all pertinent information about a meet. It will be posted when available on our Meets tab.
- **Scratch** To withdraw from a race by announcing to the Clerk of Course the intention not to swim one or more races. It is best to seek coach approval before scratching an event.
- **Set** A repetitive series of swims, typically done at practice.
- **Short Course/Short Course Yards/SCY** Races swum in a 25-yard pool. Used primarily during the fall and winter seasons (September-March). Length determination that is most used by colleges. (Note: Some races are also swum in a 25-meter pool and recorded as SCM).
- **Taper** The resting phase of a swimmer training cycle at the end of the season, and before a championship meet.
- **Timeline** A document listing the estimated start time (time of day) of each event. It is often found in the heat sheet packet.
- **Turns** A transition from one length of the pool to another.

- **USA Swimming** United States Swimming. The national organization that SAS belongs to.
- **USA Swim Time** A time achieved at a USA Swim sanctioned meet. This is also known as an "official time."