

Swim Terminology

Swimming has its own language. Hopefully the glossary below will be helpful to you.

Age Group Swimming -- Swimmers compete against swimmers in their own age group: 8 and under, 9-10, 11-12, 12-14, 15 and up, senior (12 and over).

Blocks -- The platforms on which the swimmer stands and pushes off to start the race.

Relay False Start -- When one swimmer leaves the wall or block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.

Clerk of Course -- An area where swimmers go to be pre-staged for the upcoming event. Also referred to as the bullpen.

Championships -- There are four championships in the YMCA season. The A meet, AA meet, Zones and Nationals. The system of championship meets are designed so that every swimmer, no matter what level has a final meet in which to participate. Each age group has a qualifying time for each event to determine which championship meet the swimmer may participate in.

Cut Off Time -- See qualifying time

Disqualification (D.Q.) -- Some infraction of the rules committed by the swimmer. This could be a violation of the rules regarding the start, turn, touch, or stroke. When this occurs, no points are scored and the time is not recorded.

Dual Meet -- Swim meet with two teams. Held at our YMCA or another team's Y.

Event -- A race classified by the age, stroke and distance (e.g., Boys 13-14 200- yard Butterfly).

False Start -- When a swimmer leaves the block before the starter has started the race.

Finals -- A session used in most championships in which the top 8 to 16 swimmers from the preliminary heats or races are grouped to have a final race to determine team and individual points and awards.

Heat -- Groups of swimmers all competing in the same event or race. (e.g., there are 12 swimmers entered in the same event. If the pool has six lanes the event will be divided into 2 heats.

Heat Sheet -- A program that outlines the event, heat and lane for each swimmer. Available at invitational and championship meets for a fee.

I.M. -- Individual medley: event divided equally by distance (100, 200, or 400) into the four competitive strokes in the following order: 1. butterfly; 2. backstroke; 3. breaststroke; 4. freestyle.

Invitational -- A large swim meet with four to six teams generally held over a two-three day period. Invitationals are broken into two sessions, morning and afternoon with the age groups split generally 10 and under in one session and 11 and over in the other. Invitationals are major fundraisers for most teams.

Lane -- Specific area to which the swimmer is assigned to swim.

Long Course -- Meet held in a 50-meter pool; occur during the summer

N.T. (No Time) -- An abbreviation to indicate a swimmer who is entered in an event has not achieved a legal time for that event.

Preliminaries -- The heat swam prior to the finals. Also known as "prelims."

Qualifying Times -- A time standard in which a swimmer must swim to qualify for some championship meets (e.g., AA's, Zones and Nationals.)

Runners -- Parents who collect lane slips or cards from each lane at the end of a race and run them to the scorer's table.

Scorer -- The parent workers who score the dual meets.

Scoring a Meet -- The totaling of points awarded to individuals and teams. Teams are awarded points based on the placement of individuals and relays from the team. The number of points and places awarded varies with each type of meet.

Scratch -- The withdrawal of an entry from competition.

Seeding -- The placement of a swimmer in a heat with the fastest swimmer generally swimming in the last heat toward the center of the pool.

Session -- Any portion of a meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, or type of competition (i.e., morning and afternoon, preliminaries and finals.)

Short Course -- A 25-yard or meter pool.

Southwest Cluster League -- The league in which LAKY competes. Information on the league can be found at www.lakotastingrays.com

Split -- A segment of time for part of an event or race. Most common on relays where you have four individual times that equal the relay time.

Sprint -- A high energy burst of speed for a short-distance event.

Starter -- The person who starts the race with a gun or buzzer. Also determines a false start and to recall such a start.

Stroke and Turn Judges -- The officials who see that the swimmer does each stroke and turn properly. If a stroke or turn is improper, these judges will write up a disqualification card and bring the card to the runner or the scorer's table.

Strokes -- The four competitive strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. Each stroke has a proper execution.

Take your Mark -- The command the starter gives the swimmers at the start of each race that tells the swimmer to take his/her starting position.

Timers -- Parents who take the times of each swimmer. There are normally two timers per lane with each having a stopwatch and/or a button hook-up to the automatic timing system.

USS (United States Swimming) -- Another swim league in which LAKY competes. To compete in this league, a swimmer must hold a USS card (requires an annual fee.) The league is governed by slightly different rules than the YMCA swim league.

Warm-ups -- The pre-meet swim required for swimmers to get a feel for the pool and the starting blocks. Warm-ups also enable a swimmer to loosen up and practice events they will swim that day.