



Time Standards

With all the different time standards out there it can be very confusing on what each one means, or what meet uses what standard. Some time standards are put in place to help swimmers and coaches track progress as they move from one age group to another. Other standards are set by a meet host for that specific meet.

USA Swimming Motivational Time Standards: This current list of times will be in place for 2024-2028 seasons. They have been put in place for multiple reasons. One of the biggest reasons is for swimmers to track their progress. This provides them with a way to track their improvement, based on associating a time with a letter. Kids will talk a lot about wanting a B, BB, A...time, which is a way for them to see that they are getting faster. Another use for these times is for meet qualification. Some meets will require that swimmers have at least 2 BB times to swim. This is usually done to separate swimmers out based on current speed and ability.

Open Water Zones (18 & Under): This is one of the few meets we have been a part of that does not use time standards. Our LSC, Gulf Swimming, hosts a qualifying event every year in the spring. Swimmers qualify for Open Water Zones by competing at the Gulf Open Water All-Star Qualifying Event. The top 6 athletes for each age and gender in their specific distance qualify to be on the team.

Gulf Age Group Champs (14 & Under LSC Meet): The time standards for this meet are decided and agreed upon by a committee. These times are set to make this a higher-level meet for age group swimmers. The time standards are put in place to ensure that the competition is near the top end of each age group. Swimmers can qualify in Short Course Yards OR Long Course Meters. Once a swimmer achieves one Age Group Champs qualifying time, they can swim any event at this meet.

TAGS (Texas Age Group Swimming State Championship – 14 & Under): This is another meet where the times are decided by a committee. These times guarantee that those who qualify are at the top of their age group. Any swimmer who achieves a TAGS time standard may swim that event. Unlike Age Group Champs, you must have the qualifying time for every event you swim. This meet has “Bonus” qualifying times as well. This usually means that once a swimmer achieves a specific number of qualifying times, they are awarded a specific number of swims in events they achieved the “Bonus” time.

Gulf Southern Senior Champs: The time standards for this meet are specific to this meet only. Times for this meet can be achieved in Short Course Yards or Long Course Meters. Once a swimmer achieves one qualifying time, they have qualified for the meet and are able to swim any event.

There are many other meets that swimmers can and will qualify for in the future, Sectionals, Futures, Junior Nationals, Nationals, and Olympic Trials. These meets have time standards that are specific to those individual meets and usually only allow you to swim the events you have qualifying times in.