



SWIM VOCAB

Age Group – Swimmers compete in age group categories based on their birthday. Generally, 8&Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, and 17-18. Open events include swimmers of any age. Some swim meets will use different age brackets or single years to swim and/or score events.

Backstroke Flags – The triangle flags at each end of the pool to let the swimmer know the wall is near. A stroke count is the number of strokes between the flags and wall.

Backstroke Start – You start swimming backstroke in the water holding onto the wall or the starting blocks. In addition to the regular start procedure, the Referee will blow a second long whistle for the backstroke events to signal to the swimmers to place their feet.

Blocks – Starting blocks are raised platforms mounted at the end of a pool from which swimmers begin a race. Not to be confused with diving boards, these are stationary and do not spring.

Circle Swimming – Performed by staying to the right of the black line when swimming in a lane, to enable more swimmers to swim in each lane.

Clerk of Course – an area at the meet where swimmers report before their event to be arranged into their heat and lane assignments. The clerk of course is generally located near the starting area.

Cut Times – Some swim meets have qualifying times or “cut times” that swimmers must achieve to swim in the meet. Age Group Champs, Senior Champs, Zones, and NCSAs are examples of meets with cut times.

Disqualified “DQ” – Swimmer did something illegal according to the rules of the stroke set by USA Swimming and they will receive no time or points. Don't get upset if your swimmer gets a DQ. The coaches will know what they did and will work with them at practice.

Dryland – Strength and conditioning that is targeted at increasing strength, flexibility, and coordination. Dryland is part of practice for Silver, Gold, and Senior groups.

Eastern Zone – One of four geographic regions of the country (Eastern, Southern, Central and Western) of USA Swimming. Virginia is in the Eastern Zone.



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Equipment – Used at practice. Can include a kickboard, pull buoy, fins, paddles, snorkel, and headset. Ask your group coach for specific equipment needed.

Event – Describe the race at a meet, for example, Boys 50 Yard Freestyle.

Fifteen (15) Meter Mark – A distinctly colored mark 15 meters from each wall of the pool indicating where a swimmer must break the surface after the start and each turn.

Finish – The end of the race. Timers will stop their watch when any part of the swimmer's body touches the wall.

Head Timer – A volunteer that starts two stopwatches at the beginning of each race. They will watch for lane timers to signal a watch malfunction by raising their hand.

Heat – Groups sets of swimmers for each event. There are usually multiple heats of events and 6-10 swimmers in each heat.

Heat Sheet – Shows you what events, heats, and lanes your child will swim in. Usually posted as a PDF on the Marlins or Host Team website.

Individual Medley "IM" – Equal distant swims of each stroke in this order: Fly, Back, Breast, Free.

Lane Lines – Buoyant ropes help swimmers navigate the pool so that they avoid crashing into other swimmers. Refrain from sitting or hanging on lane lines.

Long Course Meters – Year-round swimmers compete in a 50-meter pool, also referred to as an Olympic Pool. For year-round swimming, we usually refer to our meets swum in the 50-meter format as "long course". Marlins use both the CAC and Fallon Park pool (a 50-meter pool) during the long course season. The long course season is April through July.

Marshal – A volunteer whose responsibility is to enforce warm-up procedures and maintain order in the swimming venue. Safety in the swimming venue is their priority.

Meet – A swimming competition. Swim meets usually last 2 or 3 days and are divided into two or three sessions each day. A typical swim meet session lasts 3-4 hours.



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Meet Invitation – Includes all the information for a meet including warm-up times, order of events, entry fee, cost per event, awards, and location. Meet invites can be found on the host team website, the Marlins website, and often on the Virginia Swimming website.

Meet Mobile – Meet mobile is an app for your phone that has each swim meet's information on it. You can search your child's name and it will show you the events he/she is entered in and the heat/lanes for each event. The meet results are also posted on Meet Mobile.

Motivational Times – USA Swimming has a list of time standards that are separated into male/female, age groups, and events. These are national motivational times used to encourage swimmers.

Officials – Trained volunteers that ensure consistency in all the rules of USA Swimming at swim meets. Types of officials include Referees, Starters, Stroke & Turn Officials, and Administrative Officials.

Pullout – The transition between the dive and the first stroke.

Psych Sheet – A list of which swimmers are entered in each event with seed times, ranked fastest to slowest. Please look over the psych sheet and make sure your swimmer is entered in the correct events.

Relay – Swam with 4 swimmers. One swimmer will swim at a time and when that swimmer touches the wall the next swimmer will dive in and start swimming their leg of the race. Free Relay = 4 swimmers each swim a quarter of the race distance, all freestyle. Medley Relay = 4 swimmers each swim a quarter of the race distance, in this order: back, breast, fly, free.

Runner – A volunteer that gathers timer sheets and DQ slips and takes them to the Administrative Officials or Referee.

Safe Sport – [USA Swimming's Safe Sport program](#), a comprehensive abuse prevention program, consists of a multi-layered approach to keep kids safe, including: required policies and best practice guidelines; mandatory screening, including criminal background checks and employment screening; training and education; monitoring, supervision and mandatory reporting.

Scratch – To withdraw from an event in a competition.



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Seed Time – The swimmer’s fastest time for an event. If the swimmer has never competed in the event or swam it legally, NT (no time) is entered as the seed time.

Short Course Meters – Year-round swimmers across the world (Not U.S.) and summer league swimmers typically compete in a 25-meter pool. The Lancerlot Sports Complex pool is 25 meters in length. The CCA Marlins rarely participate in short course meter meets.

Short Course Yards – Year-round swimmers in the U.S. and high school swimmers typically compete in a 25-yard pool. The Carter Athletic Center is 25 yards in length. For year-round swimming, we usually refer to our meets swum in the 25-yard format as “short course”. The short course season is September through March.

Start – The beginning of a race. The Referee will blow a series of short chirpy whistles to prepare the next heat. The Referee will blow a long whistle signaling the swimmers to step up onto the blocks. The Starter says “take your mark” then swimmers will hear a “beep” signaling the start of the race.

Streamline – A technique used to swim underwater at the start of a race or on a turn to create the least amount of resistance. Arms are positioned overhead, tight to the ears with hands on top of each other.

Strokes – There are four (4) swim strokes. Freestyle “Free”, Backstroke “Back”, Breaststroke “Breast”, and Butterfly “Fly”.

Timer – A volunteer that operates a stopwatch to provide an accurate time for every swim. Timers also make sure the right swimmer is in the right event, heat, and lane.

Touch Pad – An electronic timing device used at swim meets. It is located at the end of the swimming pool underneath the blocks. When a swimmer touches it at the end of a race, their time is recorded.

Turn – Reverses the direction the person is swimming at the wall. Types of turns include open turns, flip turns, crossover turns, and bucket turns.

[USA Swimming](#) – The national governing body for the sport of swimming in the United States.



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Virginia Swimming – The local governing body for competitive swimming in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Warmups – Scheduled time at the beginning of a meet or session for swimmers to swim in the competition pool and prepare for their races.