



GLOSSARY OF SWIM MEETS TERMS

Age Group: Swimmers are grouped according to their ages: 8 and under; 9–10-year-olds; 11–12-year-olds; 13–14-year-olds; 15–18-year-olds; Open.

Anchor: The last swimmer in a relay. This position is usually given to one of the fastest or most reliable swimmers on the team.

Blocks: The starting platforms at the ends of the pool from which swimmers start.

Bulkhead: A movable wall used in some pools to divide the pool into different lengths or to separate courses.

Clerk of Course: The person who manages the area where all the competitors line up before their event begins. This job helps keep a swim meet running efficiently.

Course: The designated distance over which the competition is conducted. Long Course (LCM) is 50 meters; Short Course Meters (SCM) is 25 meters; Short Course Yards (SCY) is 25 yards.

Cut: A benchmark time that swimmers must achieve to qualify for the next stage of competition.

Deck Entries: Meet entries accepted at the meet, usually for open lanes. Swimmers must present their USA Swimming identification to be entered.

Disqualification (DQ): More commonly referred to as a “DQ”. This is what happens when a swimmer’s performance is not counted because of a rule(s) infraction. A stroke and turn judge signals this by raising one arm with an open hand.

Drop (Time Drop): When a swimmer achieves a faster time than in a previous swim.

Dryland: Strength and flexibility training that swimmers do outside of the water.

False Start: When a swimmer moves or enters the water before the race begins. This results in disqualification.

Finals: The fastest heats of an event swum again at the end of the meet, determined by results from prelims.

Head Timer: A timer responsible for ensuring accurate backup timing in case of malfunction or missed watch times.

Heat: A group of swimmers who race at the same time. Several heats may be held for one event.

Heat Sheet (Meet Program): A listing of all swimmers by event number and entry time. Also called a Meet Program or Psych Sheet. Increasingly available on apps such as Meet Mobile.

IM (Individual Medley): An event where a swimmer swims butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle, in that order.

IMX: A motivational program that allows swimmers to compare themselves with others in their age group nationally by completing a combination of events each season.

Long Course: A 50-meter pool.

LSC (Local Swimming Committee): An administrative division of USA Swimming with supervisory responsibilities within specific geographic boundaries. An administrative division of USAS with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by USAS. We are a part of the West Texas LSC, for more information, check out the Facebook page “West Texas Swimming” or go to <https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=wts>

Meet Announcement: A document from the meet director or hosting team with information about the meet such as schedule, events, entry procedures, and contacts.

Meet Director: The individual in charge of planning and organizing all aspects of a meet, including possible changes to events, schedule, or scoring.

Meet Mobile: A mobile app widely used for posting heat sheets, results, and updates from swim meets.

Read more about Meet Mobile - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1veMeDhEBtF1AQ6koDR1Q-zP2mxTLoj6V/view>



Meet Referee: The USA Swimming official with authority over all other officials at a meet. Makes final decisions and oversees efficient meet operation.

Mini Prix: A meet designated for younger or less experienced swimmers. These meets will be broken into smaller sessions for swimmers. These meets often have 25's, which are not too common in other "bigger" meets, but are a great way to introduce the newer athletes to competitive swimming.

NT (No Time): Indicates that a swimmer has no official entry time in an event. Such swimmers are usually placed in the earliest heats.

Official: A trained USA Swimming member responsible for enforcing rules and ensuring fair competition.

Open Competition: Events open to swimmers of a given gender regardless of age.

Pad (Touch Pad): A detachable electronic plate at the end of the pool connected to a timing system. Swimmers must touch it properly for their time to register.

Personal Best: A swimmer's fastest recorded time in an event.

Preliminary (Prelims): The session of trial heats that determines which swimmers advance to finals.

Psych Sheets: A listing of swimmers in each event, ranked by entry times.

Relays: Events where four swimmers on a team each swim a portion of the race.

Sanction: A permit issued by an LSC to conduct a meet. All athletes in sanctioned meets must be registered with USA Swimming.

Scratch: Withdrawal of an entry from an event.

Seed: The process of distributing swimmers into heats and lanes according to entry times.

Seed Time: The entry time, usually a swimmer's best official time, used for seeding.

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

Sign-in (Positive Check-in): When swimmers confirm their presence and intent to compete by marking their name on a list before the meet.

Soft Touch: When a swimmer's touch is too light or above the pad sensors, failing to register electronically.

Split: An intermediate time taken during a race, such as per lap or per 50 meters, often used for pacing and strategy.

Starter: The USA Swimming official responsible for starting each heat and calling swimmers to the blocks.

Stroke & Turn Judge: A certified USA Swimming official who ensures swimmers perform strokes, turns, and finishes according to the rules.

Tech Suits: High-performance swimsuits designed to reduce drag. Eligibility to use them may depend on team or meet policy.

Timed Finals: A competition where each event is swum once, and final places are determined by those times.

Time Standard: A time a swimmer must achieve to enter certain competitions. The time a swimmer must have previously achieved in order to compete in that event at a designated competition. Most of the bigger meets (West Texas champs for example) require at least one "B" time to be able to enter and compete at the meet. The USA swimming age group motivational time standards can be found here. COM competes in SCY and LCM events.

https://www.gomotionapp.com/wtcom/UserFiles/Image/QuickUpload/2028-motivational-standards-age-group_008043.pdf

Timer: A volunteer who uses a stopwatch or backup system to record swimmers' times.

Unattached: A swimmer's status when transferring between USA Swimming clubs. During the 120-day unattached period, the swimmer competes individually but not in relays.

Unofficial: A swim that does not score points for the team. Often used to gain times in additional events.

USA Swimming (USAS): The national governing body of competitive swimming in the United States.

Warm Down: Low-intensity swimming after a race to aid recovery.

Warm-up: Swimming and stretching before a meet to prepare the body for racing.