

COMMONLY USED SWIMMING TERMS

Age Group Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. There is also the term “Open”. Open events are for any aged swimmer to compete in.

Backstroke A stroke in where the swimmer lies on his/her back. One at a time the arms are raised over the head. They sweep backward into the water in a windmill movement while the feet kick.

Beep The starting sound from an electronic; computerized timing system.

Blocks The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.

Breaststroke A stroke, in which the swimmer lies face down, arms straight out. The arms are pulled back in a half circle until they are even with the shoulders. They are then brought in close to the body with the hands under the face. The swimmer then performs a whip kick as the arms return to the starting position.

Butterfly A stroke performed by the swimmer lying face down. Arms moving in unison. The first “dolphin” two-legged kick is when the two arms are entering the water in front. The arms are then pulled down through the water in a keyhole pattern. Next another two-legged dolphin kick is made followed by the arms coming out of the water at the same time behind the swimmer. Then the arms come back around to the starting point making a full cycle.

Championship Meet The meet held at the end of the season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.

Championship Finals The top six or eight swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the prelims are swum, qualify to return to the Finals.

Circle Seeding A method of seeding swimmers when they are participating in a Prelims/Finals event. The fastest 18 to 24 swimmers are seeded in the last three heats, with the fastest swimmers being in the inside lanes. (i.e.) Lane 4 of the final three heats.

Clerk of Course Adult Volunteer that manages meet operations. This includes organizing relay events, handling scratches and deck entries.

Consolation Finals After the fastest six or eight swimmers, the next six or eight swimmers (depending on the number of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the prelims are swum, qualify to return to Finals. Consolations are the second fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held and are conducted before the Championship heat.

Course Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. Long Course=50 meters
Short Course=25 yards or meters

Crawl A stroke performed in which the swimmer lies face down. Each arm in turn is pulled throughout the water in a windmill fashion from in front of the body to the side and back around. The elbow is bent on the return. The hand enters the water again in front of the shoulder. The feet perform a constant flutter kick throughout the arm stroke process.

Deck Entry When a swimmer is not entered into the meet by entry deadline swimmers might be able to deck enter based on space available in the meet.

Disqualification When a swimmer does not follow one of the rules governing an event his/her swim does not count and is not placed or scored with the other swims in that event.

Dual Meet Any swim meet where two teams compete.

Event Sheet The order of events in a meet.

False Start When a swimmer starts the race early.

Flags Triangular pennants alternating colors suspended on a line stretched over the width of the pool. In yard pool, they are 15 feet from the wall and in a meter pool, they are 5 meters from the wall. Used primarily to notify backstrokers that the wall is coming.

Flip turn A turn used in free style (crawl stroke) and back stroke races where the swimmer performs a somersault just prior to touching the wall in order to change directions.

Freestyle A term given to any stroke, but generally applies to crawl stroke in competitive swimming

Heat When more than six swimmers enter one event the swimmers are divided into subgroups. Each event may then consist of two or more *heats* of that same event.

Heat Sheets A program for a swim meet. Swimmers are listed by their event number and heat. These will be available for the Division and All City meets.

I.M.(Individual medley) A race in which all four of the competitive strokes are swam by one swimmer. The order is butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyles or any other stroke.

Kick Board A Styrofoam or lightweight board used to practice kicking.

Length The distance from one end of the pool to another.

Lane Specific area in which the swimmer is assigned to swim

Lane Lines The floating markers which separate adjacent lanes.

Lap The distance from one end of the pool and back to the starting point.

Medley Relay An event in which all four basic strokes are swam by a team of four swimmers. Each swimmer will swim one of the four strokes. Order of strokes: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle.

Northwest Region of YMCA Swimming Regional governing body for YMCA teams from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington and Wyoming.

Officials The certified adult volunteers who operate the many facets of a swim competition.

Open Turn Is a turn at the wall done by touching the wall with the swimmer's hands, turning to their side, and pushing off the wall with both of their feet (In breast and fly, the swimmer must touch with two hands).

Pace Keeping a strong even movement throughout a race. Without good pacing a swimmer often starts out too fast and uses up too much energy to finish well.

Plunger (Pickle) The button the timers use as a backup for the touch pad in case the swimmer does not make firm contact with the pad.

Positive Check In The procedure required before a swimmer swims in an event in a deck seeded or pre-seeded meet. The swimmers must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.

PSSA Puget Sound Swimming Association is the YMCA League that covers all of Western Washington.

Psyche Sheet An entry sheet showing all swimmers entered into each individual event.

Relay An event where swimmers do not swim individually, but they're part of a four-person team.

Relay Cards Coaches complete the Relay Cards at the meet. Cards are given to the swimmers to be able to take to their lane for relays.

Scratch When a swimmer enters a meet or event and cannot participate. Coaches are to complete Scratch cards and submit to Clerk of Course.

Seed (an event) Refers to how swimmers may be placed to swim in an event. In championship meets swimmers are seeded by their time in an event.

Stamina Refers to staying power. The ability to keep going even when tired.

Streamline Refers to the body's position when pushing off the wall for each stroke. Arms are extended as long as possible over the ears and hands on one another. Face is down in the water. The swimmer then kicks up to the surface before they start the performed stroke.

Timer Adult volunteers assigned to a lane during a meet to record times for swimmer competing. Timers will use a stop watch as a backup for the touch pad as well as use a plunger (pickle).

Touch Pad The removable plate (on the end of the pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.

USA Swimming USA Swimming, Inc. The national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.

Qualifying Times Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category or event.

Warm Down The recovery swimming a swimmer does after practice or a race when pool space is available.

Warm Up The practice and “loosening up” session a swimmer does at the beginning of practice or before the meet/their event.

YUSA Swimming The National Governing body for all YMCA Competitive Swimming