

Commonly Used Swimming Terms - For Competitions

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

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.

Championship Meet - The meet held at the end of a 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. The fastest heat of finals when multiple heats are held.

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 in the final three heats.

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 the 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 25 meters.

Deck - The hard surface around the pool. Only swimmers, coaches, and officials are allowed on deck at a meet.

Disqualified - A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. Also called a DQ.

False Start - When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team.

Flags - Triangular pennants alternating colors suspended on a line stretched over the width of the pool. In a short course pool, they are 15 feet from the wall and in a meter

pool they are five meters from the wall. Used primarily to notify backstrokers that the wall is coming.

Heat Sheet - The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet. The Heat Sheet is used to tell when the swimmer will compete in their events. It is important to have one at the start of the meet to figure out the correct heat and lane.

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

Lane Lines - The floating markers which separate adjacent lanes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.