

## ***Glossary of Swimming Terms***

**Age Group Swimming:** The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition for its younger members. It is designed to encourage maximum participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning, and develop a rich base of swimming talent. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and 15-18 age groups. Local meets may also include events for 8 and under.

**Anchor:** The final swimmer in a relay.

**Attached:** A registered swimmer who is attached to a registered USA Swimming club team

**Block:** The starting platform.

**Bulkhead:** A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50-meter pool into two 25-yard courses.

**Button:** The manual timing system stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. Timers press the button as a swimmer finished the race.

**Championship Meet:** The meet held at the end of a season that typically has qualification times.

**Check-in:** The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event at a deck-seeded meet. This is typically done by highlighting the swimmer's name at the check-in point when the swimmer enters the facility.

**Circle Seed:** In a prelim/finals meet, the fastest three preliminary heats of each event is specially seeded: the fastest swimmer is in the fastest heat, the second fastest swimmer is in the next to fastest heat, the third fastest seed is in the third fastest heat, the fourth fastest swimmer is seeded in the fastest heat, and so on until the three heats are complete.

**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:** A person who arranges the swimmer in their proper heats and lanes - may escort the swimmers to their lanes. In championship meets, clerk of course also accepts scratches and relay cards as well as disseminates meet information to coaches

**Code of Conduct:** An agreement signed by USA Swimming member that states member will abide by certain behavioral guidelines.

**Competition Suit:** A team-racing suit may be required for competition. This suit is usually 2 to 3 sizes smaller than the practice suit to reduce resistance.

**Cut:** Slang for qualifying time; a time standard necessary to attend a particular meet or event.

**DQ (Disqualified):** This occurs when a swimmer commits an infraction of the technical rules; e.g., alternating kick in butterfly. A disqualified swimmer is not eligible to receive awards, nor can the time be used as an official time.

**Drill:** An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke, used to improve technique.

**Dry Land Training:** Training done out of the water that aids and enhances swimming performance; usually includes stretching, calisthenics and/or weight training.

**False Start:** Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start. In USA Swimming, a false start will result in disqualification.

**Final:** The championship heat of an event in which the top six or eight swimmers from the preliminaries compete, depending on number of lanes in the pool.

**Fly-over Starts:** After the completion of each heat, swimmers remain in the water at the wall until the next heat of swimmers takes off. Used to quicken the pace of the meet.

**IM:** Slang for Individual Medley, an event in which the swimmer uses all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

**LSC:** Local Swimming Committee. Governing body for swimming on a local level. (Indiana Swimming is our LSC)

**Long Course:** A pool 50 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its summer competition in long course.

**National Age Group Time Standards:** Time standards derived from the previous years' results that are broken down by age and sex as well as B, A, AA, AAA and AAAA divisions. These are national designations and may be used for entry or qualifying purposes. Many LSC's have their own time standards as well.

**Negative Split:** Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.

**Practice Suits:** Suits worn by swimmer during practice sessions. They are generally made of nylon, Lycra, or stretch nylon. These suits are usually loose fitting, and many swimmers train with several suits on for the purpose of creating drag.

**Prelims:** Slang for preliminaries, also called Heats or Trials. These are races in which swimmers qualify for the championship and consolation finals in the events.

**Psych Sheet:** A printed order of events for a session with swimmers listed in order of their seed times.

**Senior Swimming:** The program through which USA Swimming provides fair and open competition in National Swimming Championships. It is designed to afford maximum opportunity for participation, provide an educational experience, enhance physical and mental conditioning and develop a pool of talented athletes for International Competition. There are no age restrictions on Senior Competition.

**Short Course:** A pool 25 yards or 25 meters in length. USA Swimming conducts most of its winter competition in short course.

**Split:** A swimmer's intermediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 yards or meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is on the desired pace. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times. In a relay, the time for one of the four individuals.

**Streamline:** The position used to gain maximum distance during a start and/or push-off from the wall in which the swimmer's body is as straight and tight as possible.

**Taper:** The final preparation phase of reduced practice routine. Prior to major competition, an older, more experienced swimmer will shave his/her entire body to reduce resistance and heighten sensation in the water.

**Time Trial:** A time only swim that is not part of a regular meet.

**Timer:** A person who operates a timing system or timing devices (watches or automatic timing system) and records the official time/times for the swimmer in his/her lane.

**Unattached:** is a registered swimmer who is not attached to a registered USA swim team. If a swimmer changes teams, a swimmer must wait 120 days from the last day of the meet in which he/she represented the former team to attach to a new club.

**USA Swimming:** The national governing body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States.

**Warm Down:** Low intensity swimming used by a swimmer after a race or main practice set to rid the body of excess lactic acid, and to gradually reduce heart rate and respiration.

**Warm-Up:** Low-intensity swimming used by swimmer prior to a main practice set or race to get muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.

**Whistle start:** A series of short whistles by the referee that indicate that the swimmers should be behind their pre-assigned blocks ready to swim the next heat. These short whistles also mean that the swimmers who just completed their heat should begin to exit the pool unless fly-over starts are used. When the referee blows a long whistle, swimmers must step up on the blocks and be ready to race. The starter then gives the starting command and sounds the starting device.

## ***General Description of Competitive Swimming Strokes***

In **freestyle** events, the competitor may swim any stroke. The stroke most commonly used is sometimes called the crawl, which is characterized by the alternate stroking of the arms over the water surface and an alternating (up and down) flutter kick. On turns and finishes, some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. Most swimmers do a flip turn.

**Backstroke** consists of an alternating motion of the arms with a flutter kick while on the back. On turns, swimmers may rotate to the stomach and perform a flip turn and some part of the swimmer must touch the wall. The swimmer must finish on the back.

The **breaststroke**, which is the oldest stroke dating back hundreds of years, requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pressed out from in front of the breast in a heart shaped pattern and recovered under or on the surface of the water. The kick is a simultaneous somewhat circular motion similar to the action of a frog. On turns and at the finish, the swimmer must touch the wall with both hands simultaneously at, above or below the water surface.

Some consider the **butterfly** to be the most beautiful of the strokes. It features a simultaneous recovery of the arms over the water combined with an undulating dolphin kick. In the kick, the swimmer must keep both legs together and may not flutter, scissors or use the breaststroke kick. Both hands must touch the wall simultaneously on the turns and the finish. (The butterfly is the newest stroke and was developed in the early 1950s as a variation of the breaststroke. It became an Olympic stroke in 1956 in Melbourne.)

The **individual medley**, commonly referred to as the **I.M.**, features all four strokes. In the IM, the swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

In the **medley relay**, all four strokes are swum. The first swimmer swims backstroke, the second breaststroke, the third butterfly, and the final swimmer anchors the relay with freestyle.

The **freestyle relay** events consist of four freestylers, each swimming one quarter of the total distance of the event.