



GLOSSARY

A Glossary of those strange and wacky words we use in the sport of swimming. Parents! You may or may not find these words in the English Dictionary, and if you do, their definitions will probably be radically different than the ones listed in this Glossary. Relax and take your time reading. Soon you'll be understanding and maybe even speaking some "SWIMSLANG".

Anchor	The final swimmer in a relay.
Beep	The starting sound from an electronic, computerized timing system.
Blocks	The starting platforms located behind each lane.
Bulkhead	A wall constructed to divide a pool into different courses, such as a 50m pool into two 25 yard pools.
Cap	The latex or lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers.
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 during a practice or warm-up.
Coach	A person who trains and teaches athletes in the sport of swimming.
Club	A registered swim team that is a dues paying member of USS and the local PNS.
Course	Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. (I.e.) Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards or 25 meters.
Cut	Slang term for qualifying time. A time standard that is necessary to achieve in order to attend a particular meet or event.
Deck	The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but an "authorized" USS member may be on the deck during a swim competition.
Deck Entries	Accepting entries into swimming events on the first day or later day of a meet.
Distance	How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards, 100 yards, 200 yards, 400 yards, and 500 yards.
DQ	Disqualification. A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. A disqualification is shown by an official raising one arm with open hand above their head. 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 of part of a stroke, used to improve technique.
Dry land	The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water to enhance swimming performance.
Entry Form	Form on which a swimmer enters a competition. This form needs to be turned into the coach prior to the entry deadline to get signed up and compete in a meet.
Event	A race or stroke over a given distance.
False Start	Occurs when a swimmer is moving at the start of a race and results in disqualification for that event.
Final	The championship heat of an event in which the top 6 or 8 (depending on the pool) swimmers from the preliminaries compete.
Finish	The final phase of the race, the touch at the end of the race.

Flags	Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall. They enable backstrokers to execute a backstroke turn and finish more efficiently by counting their strokes after they pass under the flags.
Gallery	The viewing area for spectators during the swimming competition.
Goal	A specific time achievement a swimmer sets and strives for. Usually these times are standards set to level the swimmers in competitions or qualify for competitions.
Gutter	The area along the edge of the pool in which water overflows during a race and is recirculated through the filtration system.
Heats	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers' time swam, after all heats of the event are completed.
Heat Sheet	The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers seed times in the various events at a swim meet. Heat sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seedings prior to the race plus swimmers can tell the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.
IM	Individual Medley. A swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. Equal distances must be swum of each stroke.
Lane	The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. (i.e.) Lane 1 or 2.
Lane Lines	Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.
Lap	One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.
Lap Counter	The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end.
Leg	The part of a relay event swum by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.
Long Course	A 50 meter pool. Most summer competitions are held at these distances.
Meet	Competition designed to be a learning experience. By implementing what has been learned in practice, the swimmer tests him/herself against the clock to see any improvement.
Middle Distance	Term used to refer to events of 200 yards/meters to 500 yards/400 meters in length.
Meet Director	The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet.
Negative Split	Swimming the second half of the race equal to or faster than the first half.
Officials	The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition. A judge on the deck of the pool at a sanctioned competition who enforces the rules. There are stroke and turn judges, administrative officials, starter, timers, and referees.
Parka	Large 3/4 length fur lined coats worn by swimmers. Usually are in team colors with logo or team name.
Pace Clock	The large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups or swim practice.
Practice	The scheduled workouts a swimmer attends with their swim team/club.

Q Times	Qualifying time necessary to compete in a particular event and /or competition.
Referee	The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions.
Relay	A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team to achieve one time. Each swimmer swims an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1) Medley relay and 2) Freestyle relay
Ribbons	Awards given for swim meets.
Scratch	To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate.
Short Course	A 25 yard or 25 meter pool. Most winter competitions are held at these distances.
Split	A swimmer's immediate time in a race. Splits are registered every 50 or 100 yards/meters and are used to determine if a swimmer is on a determined pace. Under certain conditions, splits may also be used as official times. In a relay, a split is the time for one of the four individuals.
Sprint	Describes the shorter events in competition (25s, 50s, and 100s). In training, a sprint is to swim as fast as possible for a short distance.
Start	The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race.
Starter	The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.
Stand-up	The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.
Step-Down	The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.
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 tight as can be.
Stroke	There are 4 competitive strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle.
Stroke Judge	The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.
Submitted Time	Times used to enter swimmers in meets. These times must have been achieved by the swimmer at previous meets.
Taper	The final preparation phase leading up to a competition.
Timer	The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.
Time Trial	A time-only swim which is not part of a regular meet.
Touch Pad	The large sensitive board (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.
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 the heart rate and respiration.
Warm-up	Low-intensity swimming used by a swimmer prior to a main practice set or race to get the muscles loose and warm and gradually increase heart rate and respiration.
Watch	Stopwatches used to time swimmers during competitions, and are usually electronic. When totally automatic timing equipment is used, watches serve as a back-up method.