

SWIMMING TERMS

Block - The platform on which the swimmer stands and pushes off to start each race.

Cap - A latex, silicone, or lycra swim cap used during a race or practice to protect a swimmer's hair from the effects of chlorine in the water as well as to help cut down water resistance from the swimmer's hair.

DQ – Acronym for Disqualification. A disqualification indicates the swimmer involved has committed some infraction of the rules of the start, turn, or stroke of the event being swum. No time is recorded.

Event - An event is a race that includes the stroke and the distance (e g., Boys 11-12 50 yard butterfly).

False start - Occurs when a swimmer leaves the starting block, or is moving on the block, before the starter officially starts the race. In USA Swimming, one false start will result in an automatic disqualification from the race.

Heat sheet - This is a published schedule of the day's events that is displayed on a wall at every meet. A heat sheet tells what event, heat, and lane each swimmer will compete.

Heats - At most meets, there are generally more than enough swimmers to fill each lane. When this occurs, the swimmers are placed in different heats.

Individual Medley (IM) - An event in which the swimmer performs all four competitive strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

Lanes - The lanes are the divided sections of the pool designated 1 through 6 or 8 in which the swimmer swims his practice or races in the meet.

Lane lines - The dividers used to delineate the individual lanes. These are made of individual finned disks strung on a cable that rotate on the cable when hit by a wave. The rotating disks dissipate surface tension waves in a competitive pool.

Official - A judge on the deck of the pool. Various judges watch the swimmer's strokes, turns, and finishes or are timers.

Seed - When a swimmer enters an event, his times are entered into a computer that sorts the times fastest to slowest and puts the swimmers into the appropriate heats, allowing the swimmers to compete with other swimmers with similar times.

Strokes - The four competitive strokes are butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.

Take Your Mark - A command that the starter gives the swimmer at the start of each race signaling the swimmer to take his starting position.

Touch pad - The area at the end of each lane in the pool where a swimmer's time is registered and sent electronically to the timing system and then the scoreboard.

Warm up - A pre-meet swim used by the swimmer before the race to get his muscles loose and ready to race.