

Glossary of Swimming Terms

Admission	Certain swim meets charge for spectators to view the meets. These are usually the larger more prestigious meets. Sometimes the meet program (heat sheet) is included in the price of admission.
Age Group	Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18.
Anchor	The final swimmer in a relay.
Backstroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50m, 100m, and 200m.
Banner	A team sign that is displayed at swim meets. Banners are usually made from nylon material and carry the Team Logo and possibly the name of a popular team sponsor.
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.
Bottom	The floor of the pool. Bottom depths are usually marked on the walls or sides of the pool.
Breaststroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50m, 100m and 200m.
Bulletin Board	One of the most important communication devices for a swim club. Bulletin boards are usually in the entrance ways of pools and have timely information posted for swimmers and parents to read.
Butterfly	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50m, 100m and 200m.
Button	The manual Timing System stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touch pad malfunctioned. The button is at the end of a wire, plugged into a deck terminal box. There are usually 3 buttons per lane. It is the timers responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.
Cap	The latex or lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers. The colors and team logo's adorning these caps are limitless. National Caps, County Team Caps, award caps, plain practice caps, etc.

Cards	A card that may either be handed to the swimmer in the marshalling area or given to the timer behind the lane. Cards usually list the swimmers name, ASA number, seed time, event number, event description, and the lane and heat number the swimmer will swim in. Backup times are written on these cards. Each event may have a separate card.
Carbohydrates	The main source of food energy used by athletes. Refer to a Nutritional Manual for more information.
Chlorine	The chemical used by most pools to kill the bacteria in water and keep it clear and safe to swim in.
Club	A registered swim team that is a dues paying member of the ASA.
Code	A set of rules that have been officially published.
Colorado	A brand of automatic timing system.
Course	Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. (Ie) Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 meters.
Deadline	The date meet entries must be "postmarked" by, to be accepted by the meet host. Making the meet deadline does not guarantee acceptance into a meet since many meets are "full" weeks before the entry deadline.
Deck	The area around the swimming pool reserved for swimmers, officials, and coaches. No one but an "authorised" Chesterfield Swimming member may be on the deck during a training session or swim competition.
Dehydration	The abnormal depletion of body fluids (water). The most common cause of swimmers cramps and sick feelings.
Disqualified	A swimmers performance is not counted because of a rules infraction.
Dive	Entering the water head first. Diving is not allowed during warm ups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmers coach.
Dropped Time	When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".
Dry land	The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.
Dry Side	That part of the Code book (rule book) that deals with the "Administrative" Regulations of Competition.
Entry	An Individual, Relay team, or Club roster's event list into a swim competition.
Entry Secretary	The host clubs designated person who is responsible for receiving, and making sure the entries have met the deadline, or returning the entries if the meet is full. This person usually will find discrepancies in the meet entries and notify the entering club to correct any errors.
Entry Fees	The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on Club and type of meet.
Entry Limit	Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they can not exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Electronic Timing	Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touch-pads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hook up cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers name, club and time.
Eligible to compete	The status of a member swimmer that means they are registered and have met all the requirements.
Equipment	The items necessary to operate a swim session or conduct a swim competition.
Event	A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals 1 preliminary with its final, or 1 timed final.
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, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.
False Start Rope	A recall rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. The rope is about 15m from the starting end on meter pools.
Fees	Money paid by swimmers for services. (I.e.) Practice fees, registration fee, ASA membership fee, etc.
FINA	The international, rules making organization, for the sport of swimming.
Finals	The top 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims swim, qualify to return to the Finals.
Final Results	The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.
Fine	The monetary penalty assessed a swimmer or club when a swimmer does not achieve the necessary time required to swim in an event, and cannot prove they have done the time previously.
Fins	Large rubber fin type devices that fit on a swimmers feet. Used in swim practice, not competition.
Flags	Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 5metres from the wall.
Format	The order of events and type of swim meet being conducted.
Fund Raiser	A money making endeavour by a swim team/club usually involving both parents and swimmers.
Freestyle	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m.
Gallery	The viewing area for spectators during the swimming competition.
Goals	The short and long range targets for swimmers to aim for.
Goggles	Glasses type devices worn by swimmers to keep their eyes from being irritated by the chlorine in the water.
Gun	The blank firing pistol that may be used by the starter to start the races.

Handbook	A reference manual published by teams/clubs or other swimming organisations.
Hats	See "caps".
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 Award	A ribbon or coupon given to the winner of a single heat at an age group swim meet.
Heat Sheet	The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the coaches submit swimmers times many weeks before the 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 seeding 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.
Horn	A sounding device used in place of a gun. Used mainly with a fully automatic timing system.
Illegal	Doing something against the rules that is cause for disqualification.
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 swam of each stroke. Distances offered: 100m, 200m, 400m.
Insurance	British Swimming offers "accident insurance coverage" which is automatic when swimmer, coach, official, pays their ASA membership fee.
Interval	A specific elapsed time for swimming or rest used during swim practice.
Invitational	Type of meet that requires a club to request an invitation to attend the meet.
Jump	An illegal start done by the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th member of a relay team. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.
Kick	The leg movements of a swimmer. A popular word to "yell" to encourage swimmers during a race.
Kick Board	A flotation device used by swimmers during practice.
Lane	The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim. (i.e.) Lane 1 or Lane 2. Pools with starting blocks at only one end: As the swimmers stand behind the blocks, lanes are numbered from Right (lane 1) to Left (Lane 6).
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 800 metres or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.
Late Entries	Meet entries from a club or individual that are received by the meet host after the entry deadline. These entries are usually not accepted and are returned to sender.
Leg	The part of a relay event swam by a single team member. A single stroke in the IM.
Length	The extent of the competitive course from end to end. See lap.
Long Course	A 50 meter pool.
Lycra	A stretch material used to make competitive swim suits and swim hats.
Malfunction	A mechanical or electronic failure - not a human failure by the swimmer.
Mark	The command to take your starting position.
Marshall	The adult(s) (official) who control the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet.
Medals	Awards given to the swimmers at meets. They vary in size and design and method of presentation.
Meet	A series of events held in one program.
Meet Director	The official in charge of the administration of the meet. The person directing the "dry side" of the meet.
Meters	The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the metric system. Long course meters is 50 meters, short course meters is 25 meters.
Nationals	British Swimming National Championship meet conducted in March/April and August.
Newsletter	A written communication published by a club or association.
NGB	National Governing Body
Novice	A beginner or someone who does not have experience.
NT	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.
Nutrition	The sum of the processes by which a swimmer takes in and utilises food substances.
Nylon	A material used to make swim suits.
Officials	The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition.
Olympic Trials	British Swimming sanctioned long course swim meet held the year of the Olympic Games to decide what swimmers will represent GB on our Olympic Team. Qualification times are faster than Senior Nationals.
Omega	A brand of automatic timing system.
OT	Official Time. The swimmers event time recorded to one hundredth of a second (.01).

Open Competition	Competition which any qualified club, organisation, or individual may enter.
Pace Clock	The electronic clocks or large clocks with highly visible numbers and second hands, positioned at the ends or sides of a swimming pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm ups or swim practice.
Paddle	Coloured plastic devices worn on the swimmers hands during swim practice.
Plaque	A type of award (wall plaque) given to swimmers at a meet.
Pool	The facility in which swimming competition is conducted.
Practice	The scheduled workouts a swimmers attends with their swim team/club.
Pull Buoy	A flotation device used for pulling by swimmers in practice.
Qualifying Times	Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer.
Race	Any single swimming competition. (I.e.) preliminary, final, timed final.
Ready Room	A room pool side for the swimmers to relax before they compete in finals.
Recall Rope	A rope across the width of the racing pool for the purpose of stopping swimmers who were not aware of a false start. The rope is about 15m from the starting end on meter pools.
Referee	The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions.
Registered Relays	Enrolled and paid as a member of ASA. A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200m and 400m distances. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 200m, 400m, and 800m distances.
Rest Area	A designated area (such as a gymnasium) that is set aside for swimmers to rest during a meet.
Ribbons	Awards in a variety of sizes, styles, and colours, given at swim meets.
Safety	The responsible and careful actions of those participating in a swim meet.
Schedule	The ASA's or Chesterfields list of meets with dates, meet host, meet location, type of meet, and contacts address and phone.
Scratch	To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.
Seed	Assign the swimmers heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.

Session	Portion of meet distinctly separated from other portions by locale, time, type of competition, or age group.
Shave	The process of removing all arm, leg, and exposed torso hair, to decrease the "drag" or resistance of the body moving through the water. Used only by seniors at very important (Championship) meets.
Short Course	A 25 meter pool.
Simultaneously	A term used in the rules of butterfly and breaststroke, meaning at the same time.
Split	A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, that is timed. (i.e.) A swimmers first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances.
Stations	Separate portions of a dry land or weight circuit.
Start	The beginning of a race. The dive used to begin a race.
Starter	The official in charge of signalling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.
Still Water	Water that has no current caused by a filter system or no waves caused by swimmers.
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.
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.
Suit	The racing uniform worn by the swimmer, in the water, during competition. The four most popular styles/types of suits worn are: Nylon, Lycra, Paper and Fastskin.
Swim-A-Thon	The "Fund Raiser" for local clubs to use to make money.
Swim-off	In a Prelims/Finals type competition, a race after the scheduled event to break a tie. The only circumstance that warrants a swim-off is to determine which swimmer makes finals or an alternate, otherwise ties stand.
Taper	The resting phase of a senior swimmer at the end of the season before the championship meet.
Team	ASA Registered club that has the right to compete for points.
Team Records	The statistics a team keeps, listing the fastest swimmer in the clubs history for each age group/each event.
Time Keeper	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	An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.
Touch Out	To reach the touchpad and finish first in a close race.
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.
Trophy	Type of award given to teams and swimmers at meets.
Uniform	The various parts of clothing a swimmer wears at a meet. May include: Parka, Warm up jacket, Team duffel bag, sweat pants, suits, hat, goggles, T-shirt, etc.
Unofficial Time	The time displayed on a read out board or read over the intercom by the announcer immediately after the race. After the time has been checked, it will become the official time.
Vitamins	The building blocks of the body. Vitamins do not supply energy, but are necessary for proper health.
Warm-down	The recovery swimming a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.
Warm-up	The practice and "loosing" up session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.
Watch	The hand held device used by timers and coaches for timing a swimmers races and taking splits.
Weights	The various barbells / benches / machines used by swimmers during their dry land program.
Whistle	The sound a starter/referee makes to signal for quiet before they give the command to start the race.
Work Out	The practice sessions a swimmer attends.
Yardage	The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.