



**CVAC
SWIM PARENTS
HANDBOOK**

INTRODUCTION The purpose of this handbook is to be able to provide the parents and our new team members a guideline to our sport and team policies. All families involved should read this handbook.

WHY SWIM? The United States Swimming (USS) age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health, by teaching healthy fitness habits.

TEAM PHILOSOPHY Catawba Valley Aquatic Club is dedicated to upholding its motto of "Sharing the Dreams of Children". Our mission is to help young athletes to achieve excellence in swimming and life. Not every youngster can be first, but all of them may succeed by performing their best

The booster club is responsible for providing the support for the swim program through fund raising and volunteers manpower.

TEAM LEVELS The Catawba Valley Aquatic Club has set levels for its swimmers. This allows each swimmer to progress at his/her own rate. Every level will progressively increase the degree of commitment as well as difficulty. The emphasis in the early years will be on stroke development and build a love for the sport. As they become age-group swimmers, they will be introduced to a more demanding, physical and psychological challenge.

Each group is designed to meet the swimmers ability, commitment level, and goals. It is very important to remember that every child is different, and he/she will progress at his/her own rate.

The following criterion DOES NOT DICTATE when a swimmer moves from one group to another. They are only guidelines. COACHES have the final decisions of when a swimmer is ready to move.

Seniors The Senior team consists of swimmers who have made a serious commitment to swimming. Swimmers in this group have decided to make swimming their primary sport. The group's main focus is on biomechanics of the stroke to make it as efficient as possible. The further development of the swimmers aerobic and anaerobic background will be a main focus as we attempt to improve on the athlete's fitness level.

Pre-Senior The Pre-senior team consists of swimmers that exhibit a high level of swimming and workout ability. These swimmers are expected to be mature, dedicated, responsible, and dependable.

Age Group The Age Group is geared towards swimmers who wish to improve on their strokes and fitness level. The group goal is to continue to improve on stroke technique, racing and training theories, as well as improve and further development of his/her fitness level.

Rays This is the second level of group competitive training and swimming. Children will increase their endurance and knowledge of the strokes, starts and turns.

Mighty Mites The Mighty Mites is the first level of group competitive training and swimming. Children will be taught the four competitive strokes, starts, and turns. Group goal is to encourage as many young swimmers to enjoy the sport in a fun and friendly environment.

PRACTICE TIMES (DURING SCHOOL YEAR)

Seniors	M-F 5:00-7:00 PM DL: M, T, Th 7:00 PM SAT 7:30-9:30 AM
Pre-Seniors	M, T, Th, F 7:00-8:30 PM DL: M, T, Th 6:30 PM SAT 7:30-9:30 AM
Age Group	T, Th, F 7:00-8:30 PM SAT 9:30-11:00 AM
Rays	M, W, F 7:00-8:30 PM SAT 10:30-12:00 PM
Mighty Mites	M, W, F 7:00-8:00 PM* SAT 11:00-12:00 PM*

***Subject to change**

**PARENTS
RESPONSIBILITIES**

In order to have a successful program, there must be a strong support from the parents. Parents you must make every effort to have your swimmer at practice consistently and on time.

As a parent it is important that you show support, love and recognition to your child. This in turn will give him/her confidence to perform well in competition.

Swimmers will often go through times in which they do not improve. This is one of the greatest challenges of our sport. This may occur when a swimmer is in the process of changing his/her technique, an increase in workload, or a change in the body. It is important that the parent continues to be supportive and encouraging, while the swimmer goes through these times.

On the pool deck, the coach is the coach! All coaches have the swimmers best interest at heart. It is important that parents allow coaches to do their job without any interference. The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmers performance. It is the parent's job to support the coach by adding love and encouragement to your swimmer.

The only area your swimmer is allowed to be in at LR College is the pool and locker rooms. The racquetball courts are off limits. We are responsible for keeping the pool area and locker rooms clean at all times.

The Ten Commandments For Parents of Athletic Children

- I. Make sure your child knows that - win or lose, scared or heroic - you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
- II. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/her competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level.
- III. Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.
- IV. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
- V. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, and sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you - win or lose - he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
- VI. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.
- VII. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.
- VIII. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy; attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
- IX. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
- X. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort.

COMMUNICATION

Swimmer's box -Most team information will be placed in each swimmer's box. Each swimmer will have a box with their name on it. The box is located at the far end of the upper deck. You will find newsletters, announcements, awards, etc. It is the swimmers responsibility to check their box daily.

Newsletter - The team publishes a newsletter every month. The newsletter usually contains general information; results of the last swim meet, announcements, and up coming events.

Fundraising Commitment

Each family is expected to raise \$300 annually to assist with pool rent, equipment and awards. There are a couple of ways this amount can be raised: Heat Sheet Ad Sales, Coupon Book sales and the Swim-a-thon. This will be discussed in detail at the booster club meetings.

COMPETITIVE STROKES

The four competitive strokes are (1) freestyle, (2) backstroke, (3) breaststroke, and (4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swum by one swimmer called the individual medley. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (medley relay).

SWIM SEASONS

Swimming is divided into two seasons: Short Course and Long Course

Short course: This season runs from September until the end of March. All meets are held at 25 yd pools.

Long Course: The Long Course season usually begins in April and runs to the beginning of August. All long course meets are held at 50-meter pools.

LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by United State Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, and Senior. The Senior classification includes any age-registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmers age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmers age for the entire meet.

Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as "C" swimmers. As they improve, they advance from "C", to "BB", "B", "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". United States Swimming publishes the times required for each ability level each year. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

Some swim meets set certain qualification standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification.

TYPES OR LEVELS OF SWIM MEETS

1. Dual meet occasionally, we will compete with one other team in a dual meet. These meets help promote team unity, but usually limit the number of events a swimmer may enter.
2. Qualification Meets-These meets have some type of qualification time standard(s) that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet. Our local swimming body is North Carolina Swimming.
3. Junior Olympic Championships-At the end of each short course (winter) and long course (summer) season, a Championship meet is sanctioned by North Carolina Swimming, the governing body of swimming for our region. North Carolina Swimming sets the qualifying time standards for these championship meets. Generally, the standards fall between the national "A" and "AA" time standards.
4. Zone Championships - After the Junior Olympic Championships are held in the summer, a swimmer may qualify to participate in the South Eastern Zone Championships. This is an all-star meet where swimmers compete as a member of the North Carolina Swimming Zone team, which competes against other states from the southeast.
6. Speedo/USS Junior National Championships-One of the highest levels of achievement for swimmers to strive for is the participation in the Junior National Championships. United States Swimming sponsors an eastern United States Junior National meet; a central United States Junior National and a western United States Junior National meet each season. CVAC swimmers meeting qualifying time standards for this meet travel to different locations throughout the eastern half of the United States to compete against the best 19-Under swimmers in the nation.
7. Phillips 66/USS National Championships (Senior Nationals)- Other than the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, each of which is held every four years, the highest level of competition for our senior swimmers is the USS National Championships. Swimmers can qualify for national teams that represent the U.S. in international competition by their performances at Senior Nationals.

CVAC HOME MEET REQUIREMENTS

CVAC hosts two swim meets each year in November and February. The meet is typically one day. Due to the size of the meet it takes participation from each family to run the meet. Listed below are descriptions of positions needed to run the meet.

WORK SESSION POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Meet Director: The official in charge of the administration of the meet. This is the person directing the "dry side" of the meet.

Announcer: This person is responsible for announcing when swimmers should report for events.

Awards: This position requires several people. This group (usually 2-3 people) is responsible for taking the computer-generated labels for predetermined places for each event and place them on awards. The awards are then placed into a container for each participating team. ***Recommend new members pair up with an experienced member.***

Clerk of Course: 2/3 people will check in the swimmers and give them their card for each race. This is a check in area for all swimmers prior to swimming his/her event. Swimmers will be handed a card that has which heat and lane he/she will be swimming in for that event. The 8&Unders are also led down to the pool by 1 or 2 adults lined up by their respective heat and lanes.

Set-up/Clean-up Crew: Several people are needed for this job. This group is responsible for making sure chairs are put out and the sound system is in place. The trash is taken out at the end of the meet to the dumpster. At the end of the day the gym needs to be swept. Usually, all team members/parents present for this last session will pitch-in to get this job done. ***This is an easy job and goes quickly if everyone helps.***

Computer Room: This person is responsible for recording and scoring the meet. This person enters the deck entries, creates timer sheets, creates heat sheets for officials and coaches, validates times, prints and post results from each event, makes adjustments to swimmer lane positions as required, and works with the Meet Referee/Meet Director regarding any issues that may come up during the meet.

Heat Sheet/T-shirt Sales: At least two people are needed for this job and will be needed at the pool at least fifteen minutes before warm-ups. This person will sell heat sheets and sell T-shirts if provided.

Officiating: Officiating brings you as close to the swimming action without actually being in the pool. Usually most or some of your officiating sessions will count towards your volunteer requirements. Additionally, you can use your expenses from away meets that you officiate as a tax write-off. The team is always looking for individuals to become officials. If you are interested, please talk to the Head Coach. There is usually a spring and fall training session held locally. **This position requires training and certification.**

Runners: This position requires a person to take the heat result printout from the timing judge and any disqualifying (DQ) slips to the computer room. This position mainly stays out on deck so it allows a great view of the meet. Wearing good walking shoes is recommended.

Timers: This position manually times the swimmers and requires operating a stop watch, pressing a timing button, and recording times on a sheet of paper. Each lane requires two/three timers (so the above listed tasks are divided). This position also requires verifying the swimmers name against the heat sheet prior to each race. This position provides a great view of the swim meet. Comfortable light clothing is recommended.

Head Timer: This position coordinates the positioning and coverage of timers for each session during the meet, conducts a timers meeting, and hands out the timer sheets during the timers

meeting. This position also is responsible for running two back-up stopwatches during the session.

Concession Workers/Head: Workers are needed to sell food and beverages to all participants and visitors. CVAC also asks families to provide food; beverages and other items for the CVAC hosted meets. This is a great source of revenue for the team. There is a schedule put up for families to sign up to work shifts and donate items.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...BUT, WERE AFRAID TO ASK (Or didn't know what to ask):

HOW DO I FIND OUT ABOUT SWIM MEETS?

Check the newsletter and your child's box for upcoming swim meets. There is usually one meet scheduled each month. About two weeks before a meet your child will bring home an information sheet telling you everything you need to know about the meet.

HOW IS MY CHILD ENTERED IN MEETS?

When the sheet is brought home, the swimmer and the parent have time to decide if they will participate. Keep an eye on your meet schedule and look for these sheets to come home. Sometimes the sheets get buried in the swimmer's bag or get left in the locker room or car pool. Ask the coach if you think you missed getting your sheet. There is a deadline for the sheets to be turned in so this needs to be returned as quickly as possible. If you have any questions about what your child should swim ask one of the coaches.

**There are relays at the swim meets. The coaches enter the children in the relays so you need to check with the coaches to see if your child is also in a relay.

WHAT DO I DO AT A MEET?

Swim Meets are a great family experience. They are a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some very in depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming but you will catch on fast. Don't hesitate to ask a veteran parent for help.

1. Arrive at the pool about 15 minutes before the stated time for warm ups. This will allow you time to stake out your territory and spread out.

2. The swimmer should report to the coach as soon as they arrive. The coaches like to begin warm up on time.

*****THE IMPORTANCE OF WARM UP BEFORE EXERCISE*****

Many of our swimmers show up late for meet warm up either because they think it is not important or they believe they will be too tired to race. It is very important that each CVAC swimmer arrive to warm up on time! Warming up increases and improves use of oxygen in muscles and blood and thus improves muscle efficiency and increases speed of nerve impulses and blood flow to muscles, tendons, ligaments and other connective tissues. Warm up improves cardiovascular response to sudden strenuous exercise. The key to beneficial warm up is to gently and slowly increase body temperature by 1 or 2 degrees. This takes 20-30 minutes. This is one reason we like to start warm up on time. Latecomers do not get the full benefit.

Other than the physiological aspect, each swimmer is part of the CVAC Swim Team. We like to see everyone together as a team. The psychological impact on the swimmers is tremendous when they all warm up together. The swimmers will also be able to become more familiar with a strange pool, the feel of the walls, the spacing of the flags and other things that help them race better. People who miss warm up also often miss last minute instructions about clerk of course, relays and other important things.

3. While your swimmer is warming up buy a heat sheet. This will tell you when your child is swimming (what heat, lane, etc.). It lists all swimmers in each event in order of "seed time". When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a "no-time" or "NT". A "no-time" swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

Write the event numbers, heat and lane on the back of your child's hand with permanent marker. This will help her not to miss any events.

4. After warm ups your swimmer should listen to the PA system and watch the callboards for his/her event to be called. Each event is usually called three times. When the event is called the swimmer reports to the Clerk of Course or, at some meets, directly to the block. Pay attention and listen to the Clerk of Course workers; they will get you to the blocks. In a meet where the swimmer reports directly to the block it is imperative that the swimmer listen to the starter. He will announce when each heat is to step up to the blocks.

5. Immediately after the race the swimmer should ask the timer for his/her time and report directly to the coach. The coach will then help the swimmer evaluate the race and offer advice for the next race.

6. Before leaving the swimmer should check with the coach to make sure they are not needed for a relay. Be sure to clean up your area and check for all personal belongings.

WHAT OTHER SUGGESTIONS WILL HELP US PREPARE FOR THE MEET?

1. Clothing—The weather conditions at indoor swim meets may vary from very warm to very cool. It is suggested that you and your swimmer dress for maximum flexibility.

At indoor meets swimmers should have a T-shirt or 2, sweats, at least 2 towels, 2 caps, 2 pairs of goggles, and shoes or sandals. Take a blanket or sleeping bag to sit on in the rest area. Take playing cards, small games, walkmans etc. to help pass the time between events. Identify all your belongings. Everyone has the same stuff.

Outdoors let the weather and common sense guide you. It is wise to prepare for a shower. Bring your own folding chair.

Bring lots of sunscreen.

2. Food--Each swimmer should bring his/her own cooler of snacks. There is usually a concession stand but it is better to bring your own. Suggestions of items to bring: lots of drinks (water, Gatorade, fruit juice), granola bars, yogurt, cereal, pretzels, sandwiches, muffins, fruit, crackers etc.

3. Team uniform--The team uniform consists of the team cap, the team suit, and various T-shirts, and sweats, bags and other items.

4. Facility Do's and Don'ts where we swim:

- Lenoir Pool—Bring chairs and coolers/food is allowed. Limited concessions.
- Huntersville Pool—Bleachers are there, but there is also room for chairs. You can bring coolers and food. A concession stand is there also.
- Charlotte Downtown Pool—Bleachers are there, with limited room for chairs. You **cannot** bring coolers in, but there is a nice concession stand.

****Cap**—CVAC has a purple cap available for \$6.00. This helps the coaches identify the swimmers in the water during meets.

****Suit**--Team suits are ordered every September. A flyer will go out and you send back the order form with the money. All team items are sold on a pre-order basis. We do not carry stock.

****T-Shirts** will be available for order at the same time as the suits. We also plan to have available this year a new sweat suit. Flyers will go out for this also.

****Team bags and parkas** can also be ordered throughout the year.

What Happens If Your Child Has a Disappointing Swim

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, remain positive and encouraging. Point out the good in the race; let them know that you still love them.

If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer on to something good. "All right, you have had a bad race. How do you think you can do better next time?" Immediately start talking about the positive things.

Very Basic Swimming Rules

Starts

The swimmers are not allowed a false start. If they jump the start and the starter thinks they are trying to get an advantage (whether intentional or not-it does not matter), they will be taken out of the race. This is not like the Olympics where they are allowed two false starts.

Strokes

1. Freestyle: feet have to touch the wall

2. Backstroke: swimmers have to be on their back when they touch the wall. After he/she touches, he/she can then turn around, but he/she must push off on their back. At the finish a swimmer must finish on his/her back. A swimmer may not roll over and grab the wall until they have first touched it.

3. Breaststroke and Butterfly: Swimmers have to touch the wall with both hands at the same time. A swimmer may not freestyle kick off the wall in either breaststroke or butterfly. When swimming butterfly, both arms must move at the same time.

GLOSSARY

"A"	Time classification for a swimmer. National Age Group Time Standard "A".
"AA"	Time classification for a swimmer faster than an "A" time.
"AAA"	Time classification for a swimmer faster than a "AA" time.
"AAAA"	Time classification for a swimmer. Times faster than this are approaching National cuts or Top Times consideration.
A-Meet	Swim meet, which requires swimmers to have previously achieved an "A" time standard in the events they wish to enter.
A-B Meet	Swim meet that offers separate competition for both "A" swimmers and "B" swimmers, usually with medals for the "A" swimmers and ribbons for the "B" swimmers. Swimmers compete in separate brackets against other swimmers of their own ability. Usually only "A" swimmers can score individual event team points.
Age Group	Division of swimmers according to age. The National Age Group divisions are: 10-under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18. Some LSC's have divided the swimmers into more convenient divisions specific to their situations: (i.e.) 8-under, 13-Over, 15-Over, Junior, Senior.
Alternate	In a Prelims/Finals meet, after the finalist is decided, the next two fastest swimmers other than the finalist are designated as alternates. The faster of the 2 being first alternate and the next being second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate, the alternates are called to take their place, often on a moments notice.
Anchor	The final swimmer in a relay.
Approved Meet	Swim meets conducted by organizations (other than USS member clubs or LSC's) that have applied to USS or the local LSC for approval. If approval is granted, swimmers may use times achieved as USS qualifying times. A USS official must be present at all sessions of the meet. Approval does not mean Sanctioned.
"B"	Time classification for a swimmer. National Age Group Time Standard "B".
"BB"	Time classification for a swimmer. National Age Group Time Standard "BB".
B-Meet	Swim meet that requires swimmers to have previously achieved a "B" time standard in the events they wish to enter. Some meets have no bottom cut time allowing "C" swimmers also to compete.
B-C Meet	Swim meet that offers separate competition for both "B" swimmers and "C" swimmers, usually with ribbons for the "B" swimmers and smaller ribbons for the "C" swimmers. Swimmers compete in separate brackets against other swimmers of their own ability. Swimmers are not allowed to enter an event that they have an "A" time in.
Backstroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swum, as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M.
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.
Breaststroke	One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swum as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M.
Bulletin	One of the most important communication devices for a swim club. Bulletin boards are usually in the entrance Board 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 swum, as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M.
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 timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.
Cap	The latex or Lycra covering worn on the head of swimmers.
Cards	A card that a swimmer gives to the timer behind the lane. Cards usually list the swimmers name, USS number, seedtime, event number, event description, and the lane and heat number the swimmer will swim in. Backup times are written on these cards. Each event has a separate card.
Carbohydrates	The main source of food energy used by athletes. Refer to a Nutritional Manual for more information.
Championship Meet	The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter meet.
Championship 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.
Check-In	The procedure required before a swimmer swims an event in a seeded meet. Sometimes referred to as positive check in, the swimmer must mark their name on a list posted by the meet host.
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 3 heats.
Clerk of Course	A check-in/seating area for swimmers to sit and wait for their event. This allows those running the meet to ensure the swimmers are in the correct heat and lane.
Clinic	A scheduled meeting for the purpose of instruction. (I.e.) Officials' clinic, Coaches clinic.
Club	A registered swim team that is a dues paying member of USS and the local LSC.
Code	A set of rules that have been officially published.

Code of Ethics	A Code of Conduct that both swimmers and coaches are required to sign at certain USS/LSC sponsored events. The Code is not strict and involves common sense and proper behavior.
Colorado	A brand of automatic timing system.
Consolation Finals	After the fastest 6 or 8 swimmers, the next 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the # of pool lanes) in a Prelims/Finals meet whom, after the Prelims swim, 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. (I.e.) Long Course = 50 meters / Short Course = 25 yards or 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 "authorized" USS member may be on the deck during a swim competition.
Deck Seeding	Swimmers report to a clerk of course and receive their lane and heat assignments for the events.
Distance	How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), 1650 yards (66 lengths). Distances for long course are: 50 meters (1 length), 100 meters (2 lengths), 200 meters (4 lengths), 400 meters (8 lengths), 800 meters (16 lengths), 1500 meters (30 lengths).
Disqualified	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.
Dive	Entering the water headfirst. Diving is not allowed during warm-ups except at the designated time, in specific lanes that are monitored by the swimmers coach.
Diving Well	A separate pool or a pool set off to the side of the competition pool. This pool has deeper water and diving boards/platforms. During a meet, this area may be designated as a warm-down pool with proper supervision.
Dual Meet	Type of meet where two (2) teams/clubs compete against each other.
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 Fees	The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the LSC and type of meet.

Entry Limit	Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they cannot 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 time.
Eligible to compete	The status of a member swimmer that means they are registered and have met all the requirements.
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.
Fastest to Slowest	A seeding method used on the longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events will alternate one girls heat and one boys heat until all swimmers have competed.
Fees	Money paid by swimmers for services. (I.e.) Practice fees, registration fee, USS membership fee, etc.
FINA	The international, rules making organization, for the sport of swimming.
Finals	The final race of each event.
Final Results	The printed copy of the results of each race of a swim meet.
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 15 feet from the wall.
Format	The order of events and type of swim meet being conducted.
Fund Raiser	A money making endeavor 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.
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 used by the starter to start the races.

Gun Lap	The part of a freestyle distance race (400 meters or longer) when the swimmer has 2 lengths plus 5 yards to go. The starter fires a gun shot over the lane of the lead swimmer when swimmer is at the backstroke flags.
Handbook	A reference manual published by teams/clubs and LSC's or other swimming organizations.
Heats	A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by the swimmer's 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 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.
High Point	An award given to the swimmer scoring the most points in a given age group at a swim meet. All meets do not offer high point awards; check the pre meet information.
HOD	House of Delegates. The ruling body of an LSC composed of the designated representative of each club plus the board of directors (BOD) of the LSC. One vote per club and board member.
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, and Freestyle. Equal distances must be swam of each stroke.
Insurance	USS offers "accident insurance coverage" which is automatic when swimmer, coach, official, pays their USS membership fee. Many restrictions apply, so check with your club for detailed information.
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.
J.O.'s	Junior Olympics. An age group championship meet conducted by the LSC.
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.
Juniors	A USS National Championship meet for swimmers 18 years old or less. Qualification times are necessary. National Meets are conducted both short course (in April) and long course (in August).

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. A lightweight object used with great accuracy by coaches.
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 500 yards 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.
LSC	Local Swim Committee. The local level administrative division of the corporation (USS) with supervisory responsibilities within certain geographic boundaries designated by the Corporation.
Lycra	A stretch material used to make competitive swimsuits 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.
Mile	The slang referring to the 1500-meter or the 1650-yard freestyle, both of which are slightly short of a mile.

Nationals	USS senior or junior level meets conducted in March/April and August. See Senior or Junior Nationals.
Natatorium	A building constructed for the purpose of housing a swimming pool and related equipment.
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
Newsletter	A written communication published by a club or association.
NGB	National Governing Body
NT	No Time. The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not swam that event before.
Nylon	A material used to make swim suits.
Officials	The certified, adult volunteers, who operate the many facets of a swim competition.
OT	Official Time. The swimmers event time recorded to one hundredth of a second (.01).
Open Competition	Competition which any qualified club, organization, or individual may enter.
Pace Clock	The 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	Colored 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.
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.
Practice	The scheduled workouts a swimmer attends with their swim team/club.
Prelims	Session of a Prelims/Finals meet in which the qualification heats are conducted.
Prelims-Finals	Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session. The fastest 6 or 8 (Championship Heat) swimmers, and the next fastest 6 or 8 swimmers (Consolation Heat) return in the evening to compete in the Finals. A swimmer who has qualified in the Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if their finals time would place them so. The converse also applies.
Pre-seeded	A meet conducted without a clerk of course in which a swimmer knows what lane and heat they are in by looking at the Meet heat sheet, or posted meet program.
Proof of Time	An official meet result, OVC, or other accepted form. Swimmers/Coaches must supply proof of time with some meet entries, and other meets it is not required unless a swimmer misses a cut of time at the meet.
Psyche Sheet	Another name for a "Heat Sheet" or meet program.

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. See "A" "AA" (etc.) times.
Race	Any single swimming competition. (I.e.) preliminary, final, timed final.
Referee	The head official at a swim meet in charge of all of the "Wet Side" administration and decisions.
Registered	Enrolled and paid as a member of USS and the LSC.
Relays	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. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle.
Ribbons	Awards in a variety of sizes, styles, and colors, given at swim meets.
Sanction	A permit issued by an LSC to a USS group member to conduct an event or meet.
Sanction Fee	The amount paid by a USS group member to an LSC for issuing a sanction.
Schedule	USS or LSC 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.
Seeding	Deck Seeding - swimmers are called to report to the Clerk of the Course. After scratches are determined, the event is seeded. Pre Seeding - swimmers are arranged in heats according to submitted times, usually a day prior to the meet.
Senior Meet	A meet that is for senior level swimmers and is not divided into age groups. Qualification times are usually necessary and will vary depending on the level of the meet.
Senior	A USS National Championship meet for swimmers of any age as long as the qualification times are met.
Senior Nationals	Nationals are conducted long course in the spring.
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 yard or 25 meter pool.

Split	A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, that is timed. (I.e.) A swimmer's 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 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.
Stroke	There are 4 competitive strokes: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and 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.
Swim-A-Thon	The "Fund Raiser" copyrighted by USS swimming 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	USS 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.
Timed Finals	Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times.
Time Standard	A time set by a meet or LSC or USS (etc) that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.
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	An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.

Top 10	A list of times compiled by the LSC or USS or Swimming World that recognizes the top number of swimmers Top 16 in each age group (boys & girls) in each event and distance.
Touch Pad	The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touch pad to register an official time in a race.
Transfer	The act of leaving one club or LSC and going to another.
Travel Fund	A sum of money set-aside for a swimmer to use for travel expenses and entry fees to specified meets.
Unattached	An athlete member who competes, but does not represent a club or team. (abbr. UNA)
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.
USS	The governing body of swimming. United States Swimming.
USS Number	A 12 part number assigned to a swimmer after they have filled out the proper forms and paid their annual dues.
USOTC	United States Olympic Training Center located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.
Warm-up	The practice and loosening 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.
Yards	The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the American system. A short course yard pool is 25 yards (75 feet) in length.
Yardage	The distance a swimmer races or swims in practice. Total yardage can be calculated for each practice session.
Zones	The country is divided up into 4 major zones: Eastern - Southern - Central - Western. At the end of the long course season (in August) the Zone Administration sponsors a championship age group meet.