

UNDERSTANDING THE SWIMMING WORLD: A GUIDE TO COMPETITIVE SWIMMING



Swimming Age Groups:

8 and Under: Swimmers 8 years of age and younger

10 and Under: 9 years and 10 years of age

12 and Under: 11 years and 12 years of age

14 and Under: 13 years and 14 years of age

Open: 15 years through summer after graduation

Diving Age Groups:

Junior: Divers 12 years of age and younger

Senior: 13 years and older

Age Cut-Off: Age of participants will be determined as of 12:01 a.m., on June 15th each year

Swim Strokes and Their Common Names:

Freestyle (free) = front crawl swum on stomach with arms making a windmill motion

Backstroke (back) = the front crawl stroke swum on the back, cannot turn over on to stomach

Butterfly* (fly) = both arm and leg movements occur at the same time, swum on stomach

Breaststroke* (breast) = "frog stroke" where arms and legs move like a frog on top of the water

^ Require 2-hand touches at finish, no freestyle kicking or scissor kicking allowed

Lap – point from one side of the pool to another (25 yards or 25 meters)

25 = 1 length of the pool (yards or meters)

50 = 2 lengths of the pool (yards or meters)

100 = 4 lengths of the pool (yards or meters)

Relay: 4 person event where each swimmer swims one leg of the race

Medley Relay: 4 swimmers compete with the 1st swimming backstroke, 2nd swimming breaststroke, 3rd swimming butterfly and 4th swimming freestyle

Free Relay: Each of the 4 swimmers swims freestyle

Event – part of the competition meet specified by age, gender and stroke. Each age group swims the four strokes as well as one relay at one meet. 8 and Under swimmers compete in the free relay. All other swimmers compete in the medley relay.

Heat – portion of the event

Official Heat – first heat of an event where points are used towards final score

Exhibition Heat – any additional heat completed after the official heat

False Start – leaving the blocks before the heat is started by an official (2 false starts results in disqualification)

Disqualification (DQ) – time and place of finish does not count due to incorrect swimming technique

Warm-up – opportunity for swimmers to get their muscles loose and ready

Cool Down/Warm-down – slow swimming needed to recover from race or practice

Time Conversion – The swimming pools throughout the league are different lengths with some being 25 yards and some 25 meters:

Fanny Chapman.....yards; Souderton..... yards; Nor-Gwyn..... meters; Pennridge..... yards;

Hatfield..... meters; Harleysville..... meters; Towamencin..... yards; Lansdale..... meters

- To change a yard time to a meters time: Multiply 1.11 x the yard time

- To change a meter time to a yards time: Multiply .901 x the meter time

How a Meet is Scored: There is a total of 466 points to be won in a swim meet. They are broken down as follows:

Diving (36 points - 9 points for total each Jr. Girls, Jr. Boys, Sr. Girls, Sr. Boys):

- 5 points for 1st, 3 points for 2nd, 1 point for 3rd

Swimming

- Relays (40 points): Winning relay gets 7 points. No other points are awarded
- Individual Races (360 points): 5 points for 1st, 3 points for 2nd, 1 point for 3rd
 - o A team cannot sweep an event as long as there is a swimmer from the opposite team competing. In such case, the fourth place swimmer from the opposing team earns 1 point leaving the first and second place finishers earning 5 and 3 points respectively.

Championship Meet Qualifying Times: The championship meets are divided into three categories according to ability (A, B and C). Qualifying times can be found in the Dolphin handbook, website or on the Bux-Mont swim league website (www.northpennswimming.com/BuxMont). Viewing a swimmer's time at the end of the season will determine which championships they will attend. It is possible to attend all three championships but a maximum of four events total may be swum.

Volunteering Parent Jobs:

Timer (3 per lane split with the opposing team): Start the stop watch when the flash goes off and stop when the swimmer touches the wall. Timers are responsible for timing every heat in every event.

Head Timer: Time the race and record all timers' times on appropriate 3x5 cards. Circle the median time and hand to the Runner.

Back-Up Timer: Time each race and fill in if one timer misses the take off of the race.

Ready Bench: Organize the swimmers in lane order according to their heat. Make sure they have their 3x5 card handy and send them (or walk them) to their appropriate lane. Have two to three heats lined up to ensure a smooth moving swim meet.

Runner: Person who collects the 3x5 cards from each lane and takes to the scorer's table.

Announcer: Announces the races, swimmers and events over the PA system

Scoring Table: While working with the opposing team, scorers record the results from every race and keep track of the total team score.

Finish Judge: Standing at the end of the pool, judges determine the order in which the swimmers finished the race.

Stroke and Turn Judge: Judges determine whether the swimmer was swimming technically correctly (legal) throughout the race.

What to Bring to a Meet:

- Team suit, Swim cap, 2 pair of goggles (in case one pair breaks), 2-3 towels, Warm clothing including sweatshirts and sweatpants
- Healthy snacks (pretzels, vegetables, crackers, peanut butter and jelly) and water or Gatorade
- Enthusiasm, sportsmanship, spirit (coaches judge swimmers on dress according to announced theme) and excitement!

Helpful Websites and Articles:

- Souderton Dolphin Website (up-to-date information on season): <http://tcteams.com/dolphins/index.php>
- "Swim City" (swimming explanations, techniques and ways to improve):
<http://www.swim-city.com/library.php3?cat=technique>
- "Total Immersion Swimming" (articles on improving technique): <http://www.totalimmersion.net/index.html>
- "Breaststroke Breakthrough" by Terry Laughlin <http://www.breaststroke.info/grotebreast.htm>