

Glossary of Swimming Terms

Arena League	The national swimming league competition for clubs across England. For more information: http://www.nationalarenaswimmingleague.org/
ASA	Amateur Swimming Association, the governing body of British swimming. For more information: https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/
ASA number	A unique reference number that you will be provided with when joining a swimming club and asked to provide when entering galas.
Accredited Meet	A competition where there is a full complement of officials and all the rules of swimming will be applied.
Catch up	A swimming drill for freestyle. To perform the drill swimmers will swim freestyle normally with one exception: they need to wait for one arm stroke to be completely finished before starting their next stroke. That is where the name of the drill comes from, as one arm is always trying to catch up to the other. Once a swimmer's hand enters the water in front of them, they can take the next stroke.
Club gala	A gala which usually only involves swimmers from WWHSC.
Considered Time	A time set by the meet organiser that may be considered for entry into the event.
Converted Time	A calculated time used to compensate for a change in pool length. A 25m pool time can be converted to an equivalent time for a 50m pool and vice versa. For more information: http://www.pullbuoy.co.uk/times
Counties	The annual county swimming championship involving clubs from Oxfordshire and North Buckinghamshire. One of the highlights of the Club's swimming year! More information: http://www.onbcountiesasa.co.uk/index.html
Development Meet	A meet aimed at younger swimmers many swimming their first competitive galas.
DQ or disqualification	This happens to all swimmers at some point! This means that the swimmer has committed an inappropriate or 'illegal' activity and that the swimmer's time does not count and cannot be used in the future.
Drill	An exercise which is designed to address a weakness in a particular stroke.
Dual Meet	A competition between two clubs.
Eligible to compete	The status of a member swimmer that means they are registered with the ASA and have met all the entry requirements.
EMT	Early Morning Training
Entry fees	The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the type of meet.
Entry limit	Normally meets have a maximum number of swimmers they can accept for each race.
Event	A race.
False start	When a swimmer leaves the starting block or moves on the block before the starter has started the race. The swimmer will be disqualified for making a false start.
FINA	Fédération Internationale de Natation or the International Swimming Federation which produces the unified rules for swimming.
FINA rules	The rules governing all swimming activities including starts, the different strokes and finishes. A copy of the rules can be downloaded from: http://www.fina.org/sites/default/files/2017_2021_swimming_16032018.pdf
Finger drag drill	A freestyle drill. The drill involves swimming freestyle as usual and then after you pull under the water and begin to bring your arm back up, drag your fingers over along the top of the water as you return your hand to the start of the stroke position. Be sure to keep your elbows

	more parallel to the water. This drill helps bring awareness to your arm position during recovery.
Fins	Footwear worn by swimmers in training, sometimes called flippers. Using fins improves a swimmer's body position and their technique. When a swimmer uses fins, they can move faster through the water and their body will sit higher in the water.
Fly	Short for butterfly stroke.
Free	Short for freestyle or front crawl.
Gala	A swimming competition.
Graded meet	Swimmers must be able to swim faster than a specified time for the event and be slower than the cut of time for it. If a swimmer does swim faster than the cut off time they will be awarded a 'speeding ticket' and will not qualify for a trophy.
Heat Declared Winner	Means there will be no final and the winner of the event is determined by times swam once all the heats are completed. Sometimes abbreviated to HDW.
Heats and Finals	Occur when there are too many swimmers for them all to compete in one race, the event will be split into heats with the fastest swimmers overall going forward to the final.
Individual Medley	A race comprising all four strokes in the following order butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and front crawl. Usually abbreviated to IM.
Individual best time	The same as a PB. A swimmer's individual best time can be found on the ASA website: https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/
Kick sets	Lengths swum in the pool using legs only.
Kickboard	Rectangular piece of foam used in kick sets.
LTAD	Long-term athlete development.
Long Course	Any competition held in a 50M pool. Sometimes abbreviated to LC.
Meet Pack	The package of information, usually a PDF or Word file, which is produced by a swimming club detailing all the information relating to a swimming gala (meet).
National qualifying times	Accepted from meets licensed at Level 1 and 2 and swum in a 50m pool.
Officials	These are the people in white you see poolside at galas. They are all qualified and registered officials who are there to make sure that swimmers abide by the official rules. Open meets are dependent on having a certain number of officials to meet their license so if you want to support your swimmer this is a great way to get involved.
One Start Rule	Rule applied at almost all competitions and it means that a swimmer is automatically disqualified if they fall or dive into the water before the starting signal.
Open Meet	<p>At an Open Meet swimmers are required to meet qualification times in order to compete. There are four levels of open meets and they are licensed according to the purpose of their competition.</p> <p>Level 1: is aimed at National qualifiers, or swimmers close to National qualification, looking for opportunities to achieve National qualifying times. These meets will have qualifying times for entry, which will be just below the national times.</p> <p>Level 2: is aimed at Regional qualifiers and will have qualifying times and upper limit times. Access to the ASA ranking information could be used to enable meet organisers to verify that entry times submitted by swimmers fall within the stated range.</p> <p>Level 3: is for Club swimmers who are looking for County qualifying times and again would have qualifying and upper limit times set at an appropriate level. These meets would provide a programme throughout the year to support the requirements of swimmers below Regional level.</p> <p>Level 4: it is intended that the system of licensing may ultimately develop to include a fourth level for club swimmers and those beginning competition through initiatives such as Active</p>

	Sports.
Open water meet	A swimming gala or event that takes place outdoors in a river or lake.
Oxfordshire and North Bucks ASA	Our county amateur swimming association. For more information: http://www.onbcountiesasa.co.uk/index.html
Paddles	Flat pieces of plastic worn on the hands, usually during pull sets.
PB	An abbreviation for 'personal best', which is the best time that a swimmer has achieved for an event. Swimmers should know their PB for each event and keep a PB chart of their times so that they can follow their improvements. See also under Individual Best Times.
Pullbuoy	A piece of foam that goes between your legs and helps the swimmer float whilst doing pull sets.
Pull sets	A set swum only using the arms.
Qualification time	Often the conditions of a meet will require you to have swum a minimum (and occasionally maximum) time at a licensed meet in order to qualify.
Ranking	These relate to the relative position a swimmer may hold at a variety of levels including within a club, a county, a region or nationally. These can be found on the ASA website for the last 12 month period at: https://www.swimmingresults.org/12months/
Regional qualifying times	Times required to qualify for the South East Regional Swimming Championship. These are only accepted from meets licensed at Level 1, 2 and 3.
Rep	Shorthand for repeat, so 5 reps of 50 backstroke would mean swimming backstroke for 50 metres five times.
Set	A group of related swims e.g. 4 x 100m freestyle with 10 seconds rest between each 100m. A training session is divided into a number sets including some or all of the following kick, pull, drill, swim etc.
Short Course	Any competition held in a 25m pool. Sometimes abbreviated to SC.
Sign in	Most meets will require you to arrive by a certain time to sign in for your events. If you miss this you won't be able to swim.
Six-three-six drill	A freestyle drill which helps to establish good alignment and a good catch position. By introducing three strokes every six kicks, the swimmer will find it more challenging to focus on achieving their optimal alignment and arm position. The rhythm is kick for six - stroke - stroke - stroke - breathe - kick for six. Some swimmers may find this breathing pattern challenging, in which case, add an extra breath during the strokes.
Skins	This is an event, usual the last event, in a gala when the fastest six or eight male or female swimmers (depending on the number of lanes available) have the opportunity to compete against each other in a 'swim off'. The skins competition is based on an individual medley, with all four strokes available to swim in each round. A random draw takes place before each round to decide the stroke to be swum. After each round the slowest swimmer is eliminated until only the winner remains.
Speeding Ticket	Awarded to a swimmer at a graded meet who swims faster than the cut off time for an event. A swimmer who gets a speeding ticket will not get a trophy but their time will still count.
Splits/Split time	The time taken to complete a portion of a swim, for example if a swimmer is swimming a 400 metre event then the times taken to swim the first, second, third and fourth 100 metre segments of the race. This would be the 100 splits or split times.
Swim age	Meets tend to be divided by groupings decided in reference to swim age. Rules of different meets will be different and could be : The age that they are on the day of a competition, or The age they will be at the end of the year i.e. 31st December 201X.
Swim down	An easy swim at the end of a session that is designed to relax the muscles, slow the heart rate and respiration and help to work off any toxins built up during the session.

Swim England	The national governing body of swimming in England.
Swim Mark	The formal accreditation and quality control system for swimming clubs in England. For more information: https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swimmark-accreditation-for-clubs/
Swim off	Occurs when two or more swimmers have achieved identical times in heats. These swimmers will compete against each other for a place in the final. These tend to be nerve-racking events!
Warm up	A swim at the start of a session which is designed to warm up the muscles, raise the pulse and prepare the body for training or competition.
Zip drill	A swimming drill for front crawl, sometimes called the 'rib tickle'. The thumb of the hand that is exiting the water is dragged along the side of the body from thigh to armpit; this helps a high elbow recovery which is a characteristic of good front crawl technique.