



Swimming can be rather confusing for both swimmers and parents, especially at galas, until they have got used to the technical terminology. Here are some pointers to get you started!

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| Open Meet (OM) | At an Open Meet swimmers are required to meet qualification times in order to compete |
| Graded Meet | At a Graded Meet a time cap is applied and only those swimmers below the cap are allowed to compete |
| Speeding Ticket | This is what a swimmer receives if they swim faster than the cut off time for an event. A swimmer who gets a speeding ticket will not be eligible to win a medal |
| Heat Announced Winners (Heat Declared Winners - HDW) | This means that there are no finals and the age group winners are announced according to the fastest time after all the heats have been completed |
| Disqualification (DQ) | The most common reason why a swimmer is disqualified is that a swimmer has not touched the wall properly when turning or has not used the proper stroke technique |
| Over the Top Starts | This means that swimmers stay in the water until the next heat has started (Butterfly, Breaststroke, Freestyle) |
| Side by Side Starts | This means that the swimmers stay in the water until the next heat has started (Backstroke) |
| One Start Rule | This means that a swimmer is automatically disqualified for provoking a false start |
| Starts and False Starts | At the start of a race the referee will blow three times to notify the competitors that race is about to begin. The referee will then give one long blow which tells the swimmers to mount the starting blocks or enter the water (Backstroke) The referee will then hand over to the starter who will say "take your marks" Once all the swimmers are ready, the starter will either press the electronic starter |

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| | button. in the event of a false start, the starter will press the starter button again and/or the false start rope will be dropped into the water |
| Personal Best (PB) | This is the fastest time that a swimmer has recorded in their lifetime for a particular stroke and length. Apart from elite level, PBs can be recorded at internal club competitions or club time trials |
| Seasonal Best (SB) | This is the fastest time that a swimmer has recorded for a particular stroke and length, in that current season (Sept-Aug) When a swimmer achieves a PB then they also achieve an SB. When a swimmer achieves an SB, they may not achieve a PB |
| Long Course/Short Course | A long course pool is 50m in length. A short course pool is 25m in length. |
| Dual Meet | A competition between two clubs |
| Marshalling Area | The area where swimmers are to report to ahead of their race |
| Kickboard | A flat rectangular piece of foam used in kick sets |
| Pullbuoy | A piece of foam that goes between your legs and helps you float whilst doing pull sets |
| Paddles | Flat pieces of plastic worn on the hands, usually during pull sets |
| Individual Medley (IM) | A race comprising all four strokes in the following series - Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle |
| Touchpad | A board at the end of the pool that acts as a stopwatch. When the swimmer finishes and hits the touchpad, it records the time |
| Heats | The division of an event in which there are too many swimmers to compete at one time |
| Coach | "The king of the pool and the one that is always right" |