

# **St. Johns Sea Lions Swimmer / Family Handbook**

**Last Updated: July 2025**



## **Introduction**

The purpose of this handbook is to inform swimmers and their families of the mission, vision, policies, and procedures that govern the St. Johns Sea Lions (SJSL) Swim Club. Policies contained in the handbook affect all swimmers. Swimmers and their families are encouraged to review the handbook annually to become familiar with the facts and rules of the club.

## **Mission Statement**

***We exist to foster maximum growth of our members as a team and as individuals using the vehicle of competitive swimming.***

## **Our Philosophy**

The SJSL Swim Club provides an enjoyable competitive swimming experience for a broad range of participants of varying ages and skill levels. We want our swimmers to understand the fundamentals of competitive swimming, including proper stroke techniques, turns, and starts. We want our swimmers to develop into individuals who exhibit personal self-discipline, sportsmanship, a high level of personal responsibility, and a sense of positive self-esteem.

A necessary condition for the achievement of club goals is proper discipline for the whole team, both during practices and at meets. An important part of personal development is a proper sense of how one conducts oneself when one is part of a team. Each swimmer is accountable for their behavior and their impact on the ability of other members to achieve their goals to effectively function as a team. Sea Lions swimmers will receive proper conditioning to meet the swimming challenges they will face. The conditioning program will consider the age and personality of the individual to best meet the swimmer's needs. A club goal is for swimmers to develop an understanding of proper conditioning that will serve to promote lifelong health and fitness.

To foster a positive and supportive swim community, we encourage family participation to the extent possible. Family participation will improve the experience of swimmers and will create a positive environment that is enjoyable for all. In addition, family participation will significantly facilitate the operation of the Sea Lions by sharing in the tasks and duties required to operate a successful swim club. SJSL is a volunteer run club and, as such, relies on family engagement to sustain the club for future generations of swimmers in our community.

Along with numerous personal benefits, above all, we want swimmers' membership with SJSL to be FUN. Without that, none of the other philosophical goals are achievable.

## **Competition**

The SJSL staff and Board of Directors do not view the first place swimmer as the only winner. Rather, we encourage all swimmers to exhibit successful traits such as good sportsmanship and a positive attitude. Every swimmer, no matter where he/she places, can emulate winning characteristics:

- Concentration
- Listening Skills
- Working Toward Goals
- Strong Work Ethic
- Support of Teammates

A sport is not an end in itself, but a vehicle used to teach life skills and how to reach one's potential. We use sport as organized play to demonstrate and measure one's abilities. Seen in that light, winning without learning is not our desired outcome. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most. The real measure is who learned the most from the competitive experience. A swimmer quickly forgets the medals, records, and material benefits. He/She will, however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and enhanced self-image. These are the characteristics that make the swimmer a successful person with a better chance of reaching his/her peak potential, and of positively impacting the world.

### **Coaches**

All SJSL coaches are paid employees, earning an hourly rate that is approved by the Board of Directors. The *head coach* and *assistant head coach* each receive one free swimmer registration per session.

All coaches, aside from the head coach, are hired at the discretion of the head coach.

The coach's job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The SJSL coaching staff provides a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving for improvement. Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition. The coaching staff is responsible for the development of the practice structure.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
2. Sole responsibility of stroke instruction and training regimen rests with the coaching staff. Each group's practice is based on sound scientific principles and is geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. Before and after each race, the coaches will offer guidance and constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance.
4. The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the SJSL program through their work with swimmers and feedback to families and the SJSL Board of Directors.

### **Team Structure**

An eligible SJSL member must be at least five years old by the first practice of the

session, interested in competitive swimming, meet the requirements established by the team coach and the Board of Directors, and pay all dues and fees as established by the Board. Before joining our program, a child must be comfortable in the water, have adequate maturity to receive instruction, and be able to swim at least one length of the pool freestyle and one length of the pool backstroke. He/she must also have the desire to be in the program.

The SJSL uses a progressive program designed to develop the child physically, mentally, and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined, long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer's physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge must be introduced to the training program.

In addition to emphasizing long-term results, it is important that we establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels, and goals, not necessarily age or where their friends are placed. At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. Each child will progress at their own rate as determined by varying individual ability. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on swimmers' physical, mental, and emotional levels of development.

## **SJSL Levels of Swim**

### ***Sea Pups (not offered every session / year)***

A program for swimmers 5-8 years old who have a strong interest in joining the Sea Lions program. It is a step up from swim lessons. The purpose is to prepare the swimmer to join the SJSL team. A child joining Sea Pups must:

1. Be able to keep afloat for a few minutes
2. Be able to understand and follow instructions
3. Be able to stay in the water for 30 minutes
4. Be able to be away from his/her parents for the duration of practice

Upon completion, the swimmer should be able to swim the length of the pool. It is our goal for the swimmer to move to our Developing group after only one session of Sea Pups, but it may be necessary for the child to be in Sea Pups for more than one session.

### ***SJSL Developing Group***

This program is designed to help swimmers learn the fundamental skills needed to be successful in competitive swimming. They will learn each of the four strokes (butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle) along with proper starts and finishes. The child must:

1. Be able to swim the length of the pool in freestyle and backstroke
2. Attend practice two to three times per week
3. Be approved by the coach or by request of the Sea Pups coach

### ***SJSL Intermediate***

This group is for swimmers who are ready for competitive swimming; focusing on stroke techniques and improving speed. The child must:

1. Be able to start from the blocks
2. Perform all four strokes legally
3. Attend at least three practices each week
4. Be asked by the coaching staff to attend this group

### ***SJSL Advanced***

This group is for swimmers ready to strengthen their bodies and their swimming skills. The swimmer must:

1. Be able to swim 50 yards of each stroke legally
2. Be able to complete 90-minute workouts
3. Attend three to four practices each week
4. Be asked by the coaching staff to attend this group

### ***SJSL Elite***

This group is for the seriously dedicated swimmer only. The swimmer must:

1. Be asked by the coaching staff to join this group
2. Be able to complete two-hour workouts
3. Attend four to five practices each week

## **Swimmer's Responsibilities**

### ***Discipline Policy***

In the event of swimmer behavior infractions such as acting in an unsafe manner or not following coach instructions, swimmers will first be issued a warning. If additional infractions occur, the coaches and the Board of Directors reserve the right to then take appropriate disciplinary actions up to and including parent meeting, suspension from practice, suspension from a meet, or removal from the team.

Swimmers are expected to follow rules of etiquette and safety both in the pool area and in the locker rooms. Use of cameras of any kind is strictly prohibited in the locker room, this includes having a phone out for any reason.

### ***Practices and Attendance***

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the policies regarding practice.

**\*\*\*If St. Johns schools are closed due to inclement weather, families will be notified VIA EMAIL if practice is cancelled (unless the school district determines otherwise).\*\*\***

1. Attendance is not required, but attending practice on a regular basis will help the swimmer reach his/her potential. The least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest success.
2. All swimmers must have proper and functioning equipment for each practice. Coaches cannot spend time away from the group to find a lost cap or fix goggles.
3. Swimmers with hair longer than a crew cut or pixie cut are encouraged to wear a swim cap when in the pool.
4. Swimmers must show proper respect for coaches, teammates, and pool equipment by listening to instruction, arriving to practice on time and staying until workouts are complete unless discussed with coaches in advance.
5. **Swimmers must arrive at the pool no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their practice time. Swimmers must be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice time.** The coaches and the Board of Directors are not responsible for supervising swimmers outside of their designated practice time. **Leaving a child under 13 years old unattended is not allowed.** Coaches and the Board of Directors reserve the right to contact the proper authorities if a child under 13 years old is not picked up by a parent/guardian/trusted adult. A pattern of late pick up may result in dismissal from the swim club.
6. All club members (including swimmers, siblings, parents, and guests) have an obligation to act as guests while in the high school. This is not our pool. We rent it from the high school. If we don't treat the pool and the building properly, we may not be able to continue using it.
7. Swimmers are not allowed to roam the halls. If a swimmer is waiting for a sibling's practice, he/she should wait quietly in the bleachers so as not to disrupt the current practice group or other activities at the high school.
8. Lockers are available for swimmers' use. Swimmers must provide their own padlocks and are encouraged to lock up their valuables or leave valuables at home. Locks may not be left on the lockers overnight. SJSJL and the high school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen property.
9. The Lost-and-Found basket is inside the pool office on the floor.

### **Swimmer's Code of Conduct**

- Any swimmer who is known to use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco products including e-cigarettes/vapes and any product containing THC is subject to removal or from the team.
- Never interfere with the progress of another swimmer during practice or meets.
- Treat teammates with kindness. Any attempt to interfere with another swimmer's progress through physical, emotional, or relational bullying is prohibited.

- SJSL expects each swimmer's actions reflect positively on the team at all club functions which includes practice, meets, and social functions.

### Parent Responsibilities

Understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers, coaches, and the Board is key to a successful program. Adherence to the following is critical in fostering positive relationships:

- **The coach is the coach.** Self advocacy is vital to build a swimmer's confidence. Please encourage your swimmer to speak to the coach regarding any concerns they may have regarding the swim program. A trusting relationship between coach and swimmer produces best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim, it causes considerable confusion as to whom the child should listen.
- Parents are not allowed on the pool deck during practice unless it is an emergency. Parents are encouraged to observe from the balcony. Supervise your non-swimming children at all times. The coaches and Board are not responsible for a swimmers outside of designated practice times.
- Please e-mail the Board Director, or whomever is responsible for team e-mails, if your child will not be at a meet into which s/he has already been entered as this can cause line-up changes.
- SJSL hosts several meets. These meets are an important source of revenue for the club. **Every family is expected to help at a meet at least once in the season (i.e. timing, marshalling, concessions).**
- Transportation to and from meets is the responsibility of the swimmer. Any arrangements made to coordinate transportation with other swimmers are a private agreement among those involved.

### Communication

Most written communication such as newsletters, calendars, schedules, and qualifying times, will be on the team website: [www.sjsealions.com](http://www.sjsealions.com) or visit us on our Facebook page: ST JOHNS SEA LIONS SWIM CLUB.

Information will also be emailed to families from [stjohnssealions@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnssealions@gmail.com). Families are welcome to email that address with questions, comments or concerns.

We encourage parents to share questions/concerns directly with the coaches or a member of the Board. Please be considerate when contacting coaches. Coaches are often available before (6:00 p.m.) or after practice (8:00 p.m.) to meet with parents. **Please do not try to engage a coach in a discussion during practice time as it poses a safety risk to our swimmers.** A phone call or an email is the best way to set up a meeting in person.

### Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is comprised of nine parents of SJSL swimmers. They hire and work with the coaching staff, organize club functions, collect fees, distribute information, run meets, and handle the overall business of the SJSL. The Board of Directors has

four officers (president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary) and five representative members.

Board of Directors members are elected by the parents present at the Awards Banquet in March for a one-year term on a rotating basis. The Board of Directors elects the officers for a one-year term. The Board of Directors usually meets once a month. The dates vary depending on the availability of the members and the urgency of the agenda. All parents are welcome to join Board of Directors' meetings to give suggestions or make comments. Board meetings will be posted on the SJSL website.

Each board member receives one free swimmer registration per session for their service to the board.

Each board member will have a specific SJSL responsibility – as assigned each July. Responsibilities may include: gear/swag coordinator, meet organizer, scholarship coordinator, weight room coordinator, document/SOP coordinator, Sea Pups coordinator – or may align with the applicable officer role a board member is elected to.

### **Team Information**

Each session's check-in takes place at the high school pool, usually on the first and second day of each session's scheduled practice. Registration forms will be posted on the team website approximately one month before the session begins. All forms must be completed and paid for online. No late entries after the first week of practice will be allowed to join the team. The only exception to this rule is for high school swim team members, who may be allowed to join the team in their off-season. All fees must be paid before the child is permitted to swim. If your child decides not to swim within the first week, you will receive a refund.

### **Seasons vs Sessions**

For MTSL, the swim season is from September to March. SJSL swims year-round, so we break our year into three swim sessions to coincide with the USA and MTSL seasons. The sessions are as follows:

- **Fall:** September - mid December (generally week before school Christmas break)
- **Winter:** early January to mid March
- **Summer:** early June to early August

SJSL doesn't typically host a Spring session (May to early June). These are general guidelines and are subject to change.

### **Team Suit**

Each year SJSL has a team suit for sale. Purchase is encouraged but not required. The more swimmers that purchase the team suit, the more SJSL looks like a united team at swim meets. We do not make a profit on the sale of suits, caps, or goggles.

### **Awards Banquet**

Our annual banquet to celebrate our swimmers is held at the end of March. All



swimmers and their families are encouraged to attend. Special awards include The Andrew H. Nelson Award and The Fred Meyer Award.

The Andrew H. Nelson Award is given in honor of PFC Nelson, a former swimmer, who was killed in action in Iraq in 2006. The award is based on a good attitude, effort, and sportsmanship. The Fred Meyer Award is given each year to one swimmer. This award is based on attendance, attitude, effort, sportsmanship, and excellence.

### **Swim Leagues**

The Sea Lions has been affiliated with three different leagues through the club's history. They are:

- ***MTSL (Michigan Team Swim League)***

This is our current league. MTSL season is from September – March. All meets are held in a 25-yard pool. We attend several invitationals in this league and have dual meets with some of the teams.

- ***CASL (Capital Area Swim League)***

This league includes several teams from the Lansing area. The winter season is from September – March. During this time, we swim dual meets with several of the teams. We also attend some of their invitationals. Their summer season is from April – August.

- ***USA Swimming***

SJSL is no longer affiliated with USA Swimming.

### **Swim Meets**

SJSL hosts and attends several swim meets throughout each season. Each meet features four competitive strokes:

- Freestyle
- Backstroke
- Breaststroke
- Butterfly

Events are held in all the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes called the Individual Medley (IM). Participating swimmers complete each of the four strokes in order of fly, back, breast, free. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who all swim freestyle (free relay) or each swimmer swims one of the competitive strokes in the order of back, breast, fly, free (medley relay).

### **Age Groups**

Age group classifications:

- 8 & Under
- 10 & Under
- 9-10
- 11-12
- 13-14
- 13 & Over

- 15-18
- 15 & Over
- Open (any age may swim in this event)

## **Types of Meets**

### ***Dual Meets***

Occasionally, SJSL will compete with one or two other teams in a dual or tri-meet. These meets help promote team unity, but usually limit the number of events a swimmer may enter.

### ***Invitational***

SJSL competes in invitationals, which are comprised of several teams competing against one another. In these meets, the teams may enter as many swimmers in an event as they like, but each swimmer is limited to a maximum number of events that he may swim for the day.

### ***State Championships***

At the end of the winter season, SJSL attends two state championship meets. MTSL State Championships take place the end of February/early March. In order to swim at the Championship Meet, the swimmer must meet a specific “cut time” in one or more of the offered events.

## **Swim Meet Procedure**

### ***Meet Schedule***

Each season’s meet schedule will be posted on the team website and shared through other communication channels, including email.

### ***To Sign Up for a Meet***

A sign-up function will be emailed to SJSL families as the information is made available. Please be aware of the deadline date for submission as the meet coordinator also has a deadline. Many meets will not allow late entries. If there is space available, some meets will allow deck entries, but there is a higher charge.

### ***What to Take to the Meet***

Parents, remember—it is usually very warm at a swim meet. Dress accordingly. Swimmers should bring:

- Swim suit, cap, and two pairs of goggles
- Towels—you may want two
- A robe or warm up clothes to wear over swim suit between events
- A water bottle and snack (or money for concession stand)
- Items to shower after the swim meet, if desired

### ***At the Meet***

Regarding parents at swim meets, parents are not allowed on deck unless they are serving in an official capacity (such as timing). It is important for every swimmer to know

what event numbers s/he is swimming. Most swimmers write the numbers on the backs of their hands with a permanent marker, or receive help from a coach in doing so. The event numbers are posted at the meet or the coach will have a list. Some meets are marshaled. This means someone will line the swimmers up as their events draw closer. Some meets are self-marshaled. This means it is the swimmer's responsibility to make it to the starting blocks on time. If a swimmer misses their event, they are also scratched from the next event; always be aware of what event is currently taking place.

### **Awards**

Some meets distribute the awards during the meet. As soon as the results are posted, the awards are available for the swimmer/parent to pick up. Some smaller meets give the awards to the coach or meet coordinator after the entire meet is over. In this case, your awards will be distributed at the next practice.

### **Glossary**

Aggregate Time: Time achieved by four swimmers in individual events that are added together to arrive at a probable relay time.

Age Group: Division of swimmers according to age. Most common age groups are: 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15 & Over.

Alternate: After the finalists are decided in a prelim/finals meet, the next two fastest swimmers are designated as alternates. The faster of the two is the first alternate, and the next is the second alternate. If a finalist cannot participate in the finals, the alternates are called to take his/her place, often at a moment's notice. If your child is an alternate, s/he should be standing next to the blocks with cap and goggles on ready to swim when the event starts.

Anchor: The final swimmer in a relay.

Backstroke: One of the four competitive racing strokes. Backstroke is the first stroke in the Medley Relay and the 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 four competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M.

Bulkhead: A moveable wall that divides the pool into different courses (lengths).

Butterfly (Fly): One of the four competitive racing strokes. Butterfly is the third stroke in the Medley Relay and the first stroke in the I.M.

Button: The manual timing system stopping device that records a back-up time in case the touchpad malfunctions. The button is at the end of a wire plugged into a deck terminal box. There is usually one button per lane. It is the timer's responsibility to push the button as the swimmer finishes the race.

Championship Finals: The top 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the number of lanes in the pool) in a Prelims/Finals meet who, after the Prelims, qualify to return to the Finals.

Championship Meet: The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are necessary to enter the meet.

Check-in: The procedure required before a swimmer swims at a meet. Failure to check in will result in the swimmer not being able to participate in the meet.

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.

Consolation Finals: After the fastest 6 or 8 swimmers (depending on the number of lanes in the pool) are chosen in a prelims/finals meet, the next 6 or 8 fastest swimmers are chosen to compete in the heat prior to the Championship Finals.

Course: Designated distance (length of pool) for swimming competition. Long Course = 50 meters. Short course = 25 yards or meters.

Deadline: The date by which entries must be received in order 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. Most meets discourage parents on deck (unless they are working the meet).

Deck Entries: Accepting entries into swimming events on the day of a meet. There is usually a higher charge per event than if the swimmer registered in advance. Deck entries are only accepted if there is space available in the meet.

Distance: How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards, 50 yds, 100 yds, 200 yds, 500 yds/400 meters, 1000 yds, and 1650 yds. Distances for long course are: 50 meters, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, and 1500m.

Disqualified (DQ): A swimmer's performance is not counted because of a rules infraction. An official raising one arm with open hand above his/her head signals a disqualification.

Dive: Entering the water head first.

Dual Meet: Type of meet where two teams/clubs compete against each other.

Drill: An exercise involving a portion or part of a stroke used during practice to improve technique.

Dropped Time: When a swimmer improves their time from a previous performance.

Dryland: The exercises and various strength programs swimmers do out of the water.

Entry: An Individual, Relay team, or Club's event list into a swim competition.

Entry Fees: The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies from meet to meet.

Entry Limit: Each meet will have a limit of total swimmers it can accept, or a time limit it cannot exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Eligible to Compete: The status of a member swimmer that means s/he is registered and has met all the requirements.

Event: A race or stroke over a given distance. An event equals one preliminary with its final or one timed final.

False Start: A swimmer leaves the starting block before the beep or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team. The official may disallow a 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 1/2 way on yard pools and about 50 feet from the starting end on meter pools.

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 until all swimmers have competed.

Fees: Money paid by swimmers for services—practice, registration, USA membership, etc.

FINA: The international rules-making organization for the sport of swimming.

(Federation International de Natiation Amateur)

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 swimmer's feet. Used in swim practice, not in competition.

Flags: Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool five yards (or meters) from the wall.

Freestyle (Free): One of the four competitive racing strokes. Freestyle is the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and the fourth stroke in the I.M.

Gallery: The viewing area for spectators during the swimming competition.

Gun Lap: The part of a freestyle distance race (400 meters or longer) when the swimmer has two lengths plus five yards to go. The starter/official will fire a gun or ring a bell over the lane of the lead swimmer when that swimmer reaches the backstroke flags.

Heats: A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. Results are compiled after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Sheet: The printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet. The heat sheet will show in which event, heat, and lane a swimmer will be participating. Heat sheets are not always accurate, as a swimmer may have achieved a better time since entries were submitted, or a swimmer may have scratched from or been added to the meet or event.

Heat Winner: The swimmer that wins a single heat of an event.

Horn: A sounding device used in place of a gun or "beep."

I.M. (Individual Medley): A swimming event that uses all four of the competitive strokes. The order of the strokes must be: butterfly (fly), backstroke (back), breaststroke (breast), and freestyle (free).

Invitational (Invite): A type of meet that requires a club to receive an invitation to attend the meet.

Jump: An illegal start done by the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> member of a relay team. The swimmer on the block breaks contact with the block before the swimmer in the water touches the wall.

Lane: The specific area in which a swimmer is assigned to swim.

Lane Lines: Continuous floating markers attached to a cable stretched from the starting end to the turning end of the pool for the purpose of separating each lane and quieting the waves caused by racing swimmers.

Lap: One length of the course. (sometimes may mean down and back as in the Lap-a-thon.)

Lap-a-thon: An annual fund-raiser. Each swimmer solicits donations and/or pledges for the amount of laps completed. Down and back counts as one lap.

Lap Counter (Cards): Large numbered cards used during freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end, therefore, the number on the cards are only odd numbers. A bright orange card designates the final lap.

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.

LCM: Long-Course Meter

Leg: The part of a relay event done by a single team member or a single stroke in the I.M.

Length: The extent of the competitive course from end to end. (25 yards, 25 meters, 50 meters)

Long Course: 50-meter pool

Mark: The command to take your starting position.

Marshall: The adult who controls the crowd and swimmer flow at a swim meet.

Meet: A series of events held in one program.

Meters: The measurement of the length of a swimming pool that was built per specs using the metric system. Long course is 50 meters; short course is 25 meters.

Mile: Slang referring to the 1500-meter or the 1650-yard freestyle, both of which are slightly short of a mile.

NT (No Time): The abbreviation used on a heat sheet to designate that the swimmer has not previously participated in the event.

Officials: The certified person/persons who operate the many facets of a swim competition. They are usually wearing white shirts.

Open: An event that has no age limit.

Pace Clock: The large digital clock positioned at the shallow end of the pool so the swimmers can read their times during warm-ups and practices.

Paddle: Colored plastic devices worn on the swimmer's hands during practice.

Prelims: The first session of a Prelims/Finals meet in which the qualification heats are conducted. Short for "Preliminary."

Prelims/Finals: Type of meet with two sessions. The preliminary heats are usually held in the morning session or the first day. The fastest 6 or 8 (depending on the number of lanes in the pool) swimmers advance to the Championship Heat in the Finals. The next fastest 6 or 8 swimmers advance to the Consolation Heat in the Finals. A swimmer who has qualified in the Consolation Finals may not place in the Championship Finals even if his Finals time would place him there. The converse also applies.

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.

Relays: A swimming events in which four swimmers participate as a relay team. Each swimmer swims an equal distance in the race. The two types of relays are: Medley Relay (one swimmer does backstroke, one does breaststroke, one does butterfly, and one does freestyle) and Free Relay (each swimmer does freestyle).

Sanction: A permit issued by a Local Swim Committee or USA Swimming group member to conduct an event or meet.

SCM: Short-Course Meter

Scratch: To withdraw from an event or meet after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have a scratch deadline and specific scratch rules; and, if not followed, the swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

SCY: Short-Course yards

Seed: To 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.

Split: A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance that is timed. (i.e. A swimmer's time for the first 50 yards is taken as the swimmer swims the 100-yd race.)

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. The device used to begin each event.

State Qualifier: A swimmer who has made the necessary cut-off times to enter the State

meet.

Stand Up: The command given by the Starter or Official to release the swimmers from their starting position.

Step Down: The command given by the Starter or Official to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is an indication that everything is not right for the race to begin.

Stroke: There are four competitive strokes: Butterfly, Breaststroke, Backstroke, and Freestyle.

Submitted Time: Time used to enter swimmers in meets. The swimmer must have achieved these times at previous meets.

Taper: The resting phase of training at the end of the season before the championship meet.

Timed Finals: Final scoring is done after each swimmer has swum the event. No preliminaries are conducted.

Time Standard: A time that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.

Timer: The volunteers standing behind the starting blocks who are responsible for getting watch times on each event.

Time Trial: An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.

Touch Pad: The removable plate that hangs in the water and is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the pad (forcefully) in order for the time to register.

Unofficial Time: The time displayed on the scoreboard after a swimmer finishes his race. After the time has been checked, it will become the official time.

Warm-Up: The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or event.

Whistle: The sound a starter/official makes to signal for quiet before s/he gives the command to start the event.

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.

Zones: The country is divided into four major zones: Eastern, Southern, Central, and Western. At the end of the long-course season (August), the Zone Administration sponsors a championship age-group meet. Michigan (MTSL) is divided into two zones: North and South. The dividing line is roughly even with Gaylord.