



**BIRMINGHAM SWIM LEAGUE
Parent Handbook**

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WELCOME TO BIRMINGHAM SWIM LEAGUE

Let us take this opportunity to welcome you to Birmingham Swim League (BSL). We are glad that you have decided to become a member of our organization. Our club is a year-round age group, senior and masters competitive swimming team offering instruction, training and competition to young people and adults of all ages and abilities. The team is privately owned, financed and supported by its membership, under the direction of its Board of Directors and staff.

In recent years, BSL has established itself as the top team in Alabama as well as one of the fastest improving teams in the entire United States. The team competes in local, regional and national competitions sanctioned by United States Swimming, Inc., (USA Swimming) the governing body for swimming in this country and Southeastern Swimming, the Local Swimming Committee (LSC) which acts as regional governing body.

This handbook will help familiarize you with all facets of BSL and competitive swimming in general. As you look through the following pages you will be introduced to our history, philosophy, team policies, and basic information concerning your day-to-day participation in the BSL program. It is our hope that this handbook will help you better understand and enjoy the inner workings of BSL and the world of swimming.

THE BSL VISION

BSL provides each swimmer the opportunity to swim to the highest level in a team environment, which promotes personal growth and character development. BSL works to promote a long-term love of the sport of swimming.

THE BSL TRADITION

BSL was founded in 1965 by Jack Barncastle and other summer league coaches to keep swimmers active throughout the year. In 1977 BSL incorporated as a non-profit corporation. BSL has undergone many changes since those formative years. A full time program director/head coach and two other full time coaches now administer BSL. In addition, BSL has several part-time coaches, an office manager, a Board of Directors and one of the best parent volunteer groups in USA Swimming. All are devoted to providing the highest quality program of instruction and training.

We are very proud of the accomplishments of our swimmers. Since 1965 BSL swimmers have represented our team, the state of Alabama and our country very well. BSL swimmers have medaled at the Olympic Games, the District I Championships and everywhere in between. BSL has been the top program in Alabama for a number of years and is always near the top of the Southeastern Local Swimming Committee Championships. BSL won the 96 and 98 Southeastern short course championships.

The BSL tradition of excellence serves as a foundation upon which to build even greater success in the future. We look forward to seeing our swimmers continue to be the best team in Alabama and furthering their achievements on the regional and national levels.

TEAM PHILOSOPHY

The BSL program is characterized philosophically by the principles of self-image psychology. We are concerned with guiding and directing individuals toward maximum development of their talents and abilities. Similarly, the BSL coaching staff endeavors to teach, train and motivate young people to achieve their potential in swimming in the belief that this experience will prove valuable to them as they grow and develop.

The BSL program strives to instill in young swimmers an understanding and appreciation for such concepts as high self-esteem, personal accountability, constructive self-motivation, goal setting and goal achievement, and teamwork as these ideas relate to their success in training, competition and in life. It is our belief that the process of achieving is as significant as the achievement itself.

At each level of the BSL program, swimmers are instructed to strive for excellence. Excellence in this sense represents the achievement of that level at which a swimmer knows he/she has done the utmost to become the best he/she is capable of becoming. This philosophy is consistent throughout our program.

TEAM STRUCTURE

In keeping with the philosophy of providing a quality competitive swimming program for young people of all ages, abilities, and levels of interest, BSL offers five levels of instruction and training for team members:

GREEN - this is our introductory level. Swimmers are instructed in the four competitive strokes, turns and starts. Technique is the primary concern at this level. Swimmers are taught the importance of drills and technique, working together, concentration and pace clock skills. It is suggested that those in Green attended practice two to three times per week so that younger children are able to experience other activities. These swimmers are encouraged to attend in-town and some out of town meets.

BRONZE - swimmers in this group continue with primarily a stroke-oriented program. Pre-practice stretching is introduced with proper technique the main concern. Swimmers continue to concentrate on drills and learn the reasons for doing each of them. Swimmers are introduced to intervals, basic aerobic training, basic dry land exercises and more complex pace clock skills. Swimmers in this group are encouraged to participate in other activities. They are encouraged to attend in-town and appropriate out-of-town meets.

SILVER - this group is the first of the progressive training groups. Competitive training is introduced. Pace clock skills are highly emphasized, dry land training becomes more progressive; interval work accounts for 50% of the practice time and training skills are taught. Careful attention is given to stroke technique. Swimmers attend in-town and appropriate out-of-town meets.

GOLD - this group is designed for committed and motivated young athletes. Attendance is highly encouraged. Training and instruction are at advanced levels so that swimmers may reach their highest potential. This group prepares the swimmer for senior swimming. Aerobic training is emphasized, while stroke instruction continues. Swimmers are taught to be aware of every aspect of swimming. They attend appropriate meets for their competitive level.

SENIOR I - A program for high school age swimmers who wish to progress to a senior level of swimming. The focus of this group is to improve stroke skills, conditioning and endurance. Swimmers in this group compete at the local and regional level.

SENIOR II – Swimmers in this group have the ability to train consistently in a highly intense training environment. The objective of this group is to reach the National and International level of swimming.

OTHER SWIMMING PROGRAMS - Birmingham Swim League offers two other services to the community besides our swim team. BSL offers a “learn-to-swim” program called SwimAmerica and an adult fitness program called BSL Masters.

GROUP PROGRESSION

Swimmers progress from group to group based on many criteria that include, but are not limited to, swim skills, swim times, maturity, age, commitment, and size and organization of existing groups. It is at the coaches’ discretion as to when a swimmer is ready and the timing is right to advance to the next level of the team.

SWIM MEET INFORMATION

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

BSL engages in a multi-level competition program within USA Swimming. Like our training program, USA Swimming attempts to provide a challenging yet success-oriented environment for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline BSL’s philosophy:

1. We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals or trophies is not our main goal. Even if a swimmer finishes first, but has swum poorly in comparison with his/her past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our main concern.
2. Good sportsmanship is of equal importance to improved performance. Respect for officials, team spirit, congratulations to opponents, encouragement to teammates, determined effort and mature attitudes are examples of behavior that are praised by the BSL coaching staff.
3. A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach’s job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer’s performance. It is the parent’s responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer’s confidence along the way.
4. Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet set challenging goals for meets and to direct their practice effort towards achieving these goals.
5. Swimmers are prepared for and are encouraged to compete in all events that are offered to them. This promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his/her potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. It is up to the swimmer’s coach as to what events he/she will swim.

CLASSIFICATION AND TYPES OF MEETS

1. AGE GROUP MEETS

There are four age groups in USA Swimming. They are 10 and under (sometimes 9-10), 11-12, 13-14, and Senior. The senior age group includes swimmers of any age who have achieved the qualifying time for the event. Age as of the first day of the meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet. Swimmers may only swim in the age group that they are a member, except in the case of the senior age group. In other words, a 10 year old girl cannot "swim-up" on the 11-12 girls relay.

Within each age group, USA Swimming has established a classification based on time standards. These standards are "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", and "AAAA". These standards are set for every event in each age group. In order to swim in a particular classification a swimmer must have met the time standard in each event. This permits fair yet challenging competition on all levels.

BSL has also set time standards for every event in each age group. These are known as the BSL Stepping Stone Times. They are based on the Southeastern Championship qualifying times, and are used as a motivational and recognition program.

BSL HOSTED MEETS

Each year we host a number of meets at Wald Park. We also host a couple in Tuscaloosa at the University of Alabama. These meets are open to all team members and range from one day to three days long.

OPEN MEETS

Southeastern Swimming encourages clubs to host "OPEN" meets. These meets have no qualifying times and are open to all team members. These meets may restrict the events that are available to swimmers who have not achieved a particular time standard. Open meets are usually two or three day meets and are generally out-of-town meets.

TIME STANDARD MEETS

These meets are open to swimmers who have achieved a set time standards. Depending on the meet, swimmers may only need 3 times to participate, or may need to meet the time standard in each event. Time standard meets are usually two or three days long and are generally out of town meets.

2. DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIPS

Once per year, in February, Southeastern Swimming conducts a championship meet for all 8 and unders and 9 and over swimmers who have not yet qualified for the Southeastern Championships. This meet is two days long. This is the meet we emphasize at the end of the season for our non-SE qualified swimmers. This meet is usually held out of town and is sometimes hosted by BSL.

3. SOUTHEASTERN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Twice a year, Southeastern Swimming conducts championship meets. These are held in February, and July. Swimmers must have an SES Qualifying time in each event they enter. The spring and summer Southeastern Championships are focus meets for the season. All Swimmers who have achieved their time standard are encouraged to go. These meets are three and a half days long.

4. EASTERN SECTIONAL SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Eastern Sectional is a focus meet for our older swimmers who have met qualifying times that have been set by the sectional. This meet is a stepping-stone to Junior Nationals and Senior Nationals. Qualifying times are similar to the 15-16 "AAA" times. There are no age groups at this meet, only a men's and women's division.

5. JUNIOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

At the end of the short course and the long course seasons this meet is held around the country. The best young swimmers around the country compete. USA Swimming establishes qualifying times. Swimmers may compete at this meet until they reach 19 years of age, or obtain Senior National qualifying times.

6. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

With the exception of the Olympic Trials and the World Championship Trials, which are each held once every four years, the highest level our swimmers compete is the USA National Championships. As with Junior Nationals, swimmers travel around the country to compete against the best swimmers in the United States. These meets offer the opportunity to qualify for U.S. National teams. Swimmers making these teams travel the world representing our country.

**** Each meet listed as a championship meet is a team focus meet. All swimmers who qualify are highly encouraged to participate and to contribute to the TOTAL TEAM EFFORT.

MEET SCHEDULE

Each season's meet schedule will be posted on the team website (www.bsllswim.org). Updates will be printed in each issue of the monthly newsletter, "Chlorine Chronicle".

The meet schedule has been established with the expectation that a swimmer will attend every meet for which they are eligible. In the beginning of the season parent meetings, meets are highlighted on our meet schedule that best suit that squad. All swimmers in the BSL program should plan on attending a championship meet; either Districts, Southeasterns, Senior Sectionals, Junior Nationals, or Senior Nationals. We do not schedule meets unless we feel they are important to participate for the development of the athlete. However, we do not require that swimmers attend meets. Swimmers can also be entered in part of a meet (one day). Simply specify which day(s) on the sign up sheet by the name.

On an average we try to schedule competitions for our swimmers once per month. In some instances, meets are scheduled as close as two weeks apart or as far as five weeks apart. This scheduling occurs when the meets available to us offer no alternative.

The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning which meets BSL swimmers will attend. Swimmers may not represent BSL at meets that are not on our schedule without first consulting the coaching staff.

TRAVEL MEETS

While we host a number of meets each season, most of our open competitions are held out-of-town. Each season we will list, on your meet schedule, a hotel that the team has contracted rooms with and the number to call. Hotel arrangements should be made as soon as possible. Parents are responsible for transporting their children or finding a responsible adult to do so. In some cases, we will offer a Team Travel Meet. Swimmers will travel by bus or vans and will be chaperoned by parents selected by the coaching staff. (See TEAM TRAVEL.)

TEAM TRAVEL

It is important for swimmers to participate in meets both with and without parents in attendance. This adds to the growth experience a child may gain from competitive swimming. Through these experiences a child may learn responsibility, individual initiative, accountability and teamwork. Below are the policies of BSL concerning team travel meets.

1. The Code of Conduct must be followed by all swimmers. Each swimmer may be required to sign a Code of Conduct before going on a team travel trip. All directives from the coaches and chaperones must be followed at all times.
2. Swimmers are expected to be on time for all meetings, meals and meet functions.
3. Please turn in all deposits, monies, and forms on time.
4. Any deviation from the meet itinerary by swimmers or parents must be approved by the coaching staff in advance.
5. Any matters requiring disciplinary action will be handled according to the policies listed in the Code of Conduct.

MEET ENTRY

For each meet BSL posts a meet sign-up sheet on the bulletin board at each pool. The swimmer should indicate beside their name whether or not they are attending the meet for the entire weekend, or simply a single day. If you have questions, please contact your child's coach.

**** BSL encourages eligible swimmers to participate in all BSL home meets.

MEET PROCEDURES

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes prior to warm-up. This is generally the time listed on the web site about each meet.
2. Obtain a heat sheet and make sure that the entries listed are identical to the one listed at the pool. Check your entries on the BSL website prior to the meet. If there is a problem, notify your swimmer's coach immediately so that corrective action can be taken.
3. Warm-ups will always be conducted by a member of our staff.

4. All BSL swimmers should wear the BSL team suit and cap (if worn) at all meets. Wearing BSL team apparel (shirts, sweats etc.) promotes team unity and pride and greatly aids spectator recognition.
5. Each swimmer is responsible for knowing which events he/she is entered and for being at the appropriate place when it is time to swim. It is helpful to write a younger swimmer's event number, heat and lane on their hands for quick reference.
6. Before and after each race the swimmer should report IMMEDIATELY to his/her coach. Coaches may be working with as many as 30 swimmers in a session and need to relay information to the swimmer about his/her race as soon as possible.
7. Between races swimmers are asked to rest and prepare themselves for their next race. Dress to keep warm. If swimmers are going to eat, it should be light nutritious snacks.
8. It is very important that swimmers check with their coach before leaving for the day to make sure they are on a relay (if they are being swum). This insures that all relays will be able to compete.
9. What to bring:
 - a. BSL team suit
 - b. BSL team cap
 - c. BSL team shirt
 - d. goggles
 - e. 2 or more towels
 - f. sleeping bag or blanket
 - g. games or books
 - h. water bottle
 - i. snacks or money for concessions
 - j. folding chairs

ENTRY FEES AND SURCHARGES

Each event and relay that a swimmer enters carries an entry fee. These fees range from \$4.00 to \$6.00 depending on the meet.

In addition to the entry fees noted above, each Local Swimming Committee (L.S.C.) which for us is Southeastern Swimming, charges a per swimmer surcharge for each meet, usually \$3. This money is used to operate the Local Swimming Club (L.S.C.), including sending swimmers to national and All-Star competitions.

Through experience, we have learned that the establishment of an escrow account for each swimmer simplifies paying entry fees, is more convenient for the parents and makes our team run more efficiently. It is required to keep a minimum of a \$100.00 balance in the escrow account at all times. More information about the escrow account is located in the financial obligations sheet in the registration package.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Listed below are the most common swim meet jobs. It takes approximately 45 parents PER SESSION to run a top-notch meet.

1. TIMERS - Operate stop watch and backup button.
2. RUNNERS - Take information from one place to another repeatedly.
3. SET-UP - Help set up tables, chairs, touch pads, wiring, etc. and clean deck area on Friday night before meets.
4. TAKE-DOWN - Put equipment away and clean up after a meet.
5. CONCESSION STAND - Sell food, drinks, heat sheets, etc.
6. CLERK OF COURSE - Help line up the swimmers for their heats.
7. OFFICIALS - The official's judge legal stroke technique and act as Starter and Referee. If you have been involved in swimming for a while we can help you become a certified official.
8. AWARDS - Attach labels to ribbons at the meet. Another job is to sort and place ribbons in BSL swimmers' boxes after the meet.
9. COLORADO SWIM 5 ELECTRONIC TIMER OPERATOR - If you can concentrate you can learn this job. It's technical, but not terribly difficult.
10. SCORING - All of our scoring is done electronically. There are several jobs involved. If you have any math or computer skills let us know!
11. COMPUTER ENTRY BEFORE THE MEET - Please let us know if you have worked with Meet Manager or would like to learn it.
12. ANNOUNCER - Calls swimmers to Clerk of Course, announces results, etc.
13. PLACE JUDGE - Two people work together to judge and record the order of finish for each heat.
14. HOSPITALITY - Coordinates tasty food for the coaches during the meet.

SWIMMER-PARENT-COACH RELATIONSHIP

To have a successful program, there must be complete understanding and cooperation among swimmers, parents and coaches. The progress a swimmer makes depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask all parents and swimmers to consider this section carefully as you join BSL.

COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

Coaches supervise the entire competitive swim program. The BSL coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself. Therefore, the coaching staff must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. Coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on age and ability 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 for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and geared to the goals of that group.

3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets BSL swimmers may attend. With regard to which events a swimmer will enter, coaches shall also make the final decision.

4. The decision concerning the make-up of relay teams is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff. Though many factors may be taken into consideration, relays are generally made up of the four fastest available swimmers. But sometimes it includes a swimmer who has been very impressive in practices, or someone who is on fire at this meet, or someone who hasn't swum the event in a meet in a while and so hasn't officially made a fast time but who has let the coaches know by practice performance and otherwise that he/she deserves to be in the relay. This is especially true in championship meets. Trust the coaches to act in what they consider the best interests of the team as a whole, and understand that this sometimes conflicts with what a parent may see as the best interests of their child at this moment.

5. At meets the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. (It is the parent's job to offer love, understanding and encouragement regardless of their swimmer's performance.)

The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the BSL program. It is the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in the future.

PARENT GUIDELINES

Parents play a critical role in rearing their children. Parents create the environment in which children grow. Your child is a product of your values, the structure provided, and the parental model. Human nature, however, is such that a person loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children. The following guidelines will help keep a child's development in the proper perspective.

1. Any questions concerning your child's training or team policies should be directed to the child's coach during office hours. Criticizing the coach in front of your swimmer undermines the coach's authority and breaks the swimmer-coach support necessary for maximum success.

2. Every individual learns at a different rate and responds differently to the various methods of presenting skills. The slower learner obviously takes more time to learn, and this requires more patience on the part of the parents and coaches who must both remember that the child's ultimate swimming potential may be as great or greater than that of the faster learner.

3. 10 and unders are the most inconsistent swimmers, and this may be frustrating for parent, coach and swimmer alike. We must be patient and permit these swimmers to learn to love the sport.

4. Parents must realize that slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal and perhaps more desirable than precocious or forced early development. It is important that everyone learn to compete and develop some competitive spirit. It is also important for children to learn to adapt to reasonable levels of emotional stress. The small disappointments they must learn to handle as children prepare them for the larger ones they are certain to encounter as adults.

5. No parent should behave in such a way as to bring discredit to the child, the team or competitive swimming. Any disagreement with a meet official should be brought to the attention of the coach and handled by the coach.

6. Parents should be sure that a child swims because this is what he/she wants to do. People tend to resist anything they “have to do”. Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.

7. Parents’ attitudes and models often dictate the attitudes of their children. A child might not be consciously aware of what is taking place while subconsciously absorbing powerful messages about their parents’ desires. For example, a parent should be enthusiastic about taking his/her child to practices, meets and fund-raising projects. These functions should not be considered a chore.

8. The etymology of the word “competition” goes back to two Latin words “com” and “petere”, which mean “together to strive”. Avoid “playing” your child against their nearest competitors, thereby, creating vendettas within the team and swimming community. Close competition provides two great services for the athlete: it brings out the best in them and shows where improvement is needed.

9. The communication between coach and swimmer is very important. A two-way relationship must exist daily at practice. It is imperative that the coach has full attention at these times. **IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE ASK PARENTS TO WATCH PRACTICE FROM THE BLEACHERS AND TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE COACHING IN ANY MANNER.**

10. It is the coach’s job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer’s performance. It is the parents’ job to supply love, recognition and encouragement necessary to help the young athletes feel good about themselves. It is best for parents to refrain from making any stroke corrections and to refrain from trying to coach their swimmer. When parents interfere with the coaching process it causes considerable, and often times, insurmountable confusion as to who the swimmer should listen to and respect. If you differ with something, please confer with your coach.

Remember, particularly in the case of younger swimmers, that the attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can “win” or succeed all the time-- there will always be some disappointments. Every swimmer can gain from his/her experience whether or not they ever win a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time.

THE SECRET IS NOT ONLY TO PRODUCE GREAT SWIMMERS, BUT ALSO TO PRODUCE GREAT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO SWIM.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASCA - The American Swimming Coaches Association is the professional organization for coaches in the United States. ASCA certifies coaches, offers education opportunities, assists coaches in a number of areas and is a strong political organization in USA Swimming. To be an ASCA member coaches must sign a code of ethics, continually work on their education and provide service to the swimming committee.

BSL - The official abbreviation for Birmingham Swim League. It will be listed in the heat sheets this way.

“CHLORINE CHRONICLE” - our newsletter. Published approximately once per month, it is packed with useful information, meet results, etc. Please read this publication each month from cover to cover!

CLERK OF COURSE - at certain meets, the area where swimmers are organized before each event. We use a Clerk of Course at all meets that we host.

DQ - Disqualification. If listed on the results sheet for an event, it denotes a swimmer was disqualified for a rule infraction. If your child was disqualified in an event and is not aware of the reason; ask your child's coach. Do not approach meet officials about disqualifications.

DECK SEEDING - Usually at most meets, the longer events will be deck seeded. Swimmers will be given lane assignments just prior to swimming. A check-in will be held early in the meet to determine who is present, so that full heats will be swum. Coaches will check in swimmers or let them know to check in themselves.

FALSE START - When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the starting signal is given. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team.

FINALS - the session of a meet where qualifying rounds were previously held to determine the finalists (usually 6 to 20 in number depending on pool size and whether or not consolation finals are being held). The finalists compete to determine the winner.

HEAT SHEET - a listing of all swimmers in a meet by event, heat and lane assignments. These will be available at meets for a cost of \$3.00 - \$10.00.

L.S.C. - Local Swimming Committee. Within USA Swimming there are 52 L.S.C.'s. Our L.S.C. is called Southeastern Swimming and is comprised of the states of Alabama, Tennessee and the panhandle of Florida.

LONG COURSE - a type of competitive pool, which measures 50 meters in length. This is the standard course for International, Senior National and Olympic competition.

PRELIMS - in certain meets, especially championship meets, the qualifying rounds used to determine the finalists. These meets are usually set up to swim Prelims in the morning and Finals in the evening.

REFEREE - the USA Swimming official who has authority over all other officials at a swim meet. He/She makes all final decisions and sees to the efficient running of the meet.

SEED TIMES - the time a swimmer uses to enter competitions. This time (generally the swimmer's best time) is used to determine a swimmer's heat and lane, when compared to other entrants.

SENIOR MEET - all USA Swimming registered swimmers who meet the qualifying times are eligible to compete. No age groups are used. The only classification is men or women.

SHORT COURSE - a type of competitive pool measuring 25 yards in length.

SPLIT - a per lap time that coaches use to determine pace for each swim. Splits are a great teaching tool.

STARTER - The USA Swimming official at a meet responsible for starting each heat and calling the next heat to the block.

STROKE JUDGE - a USA Swimming certified official who determines the legality of a swimmer's strokes and makes disqualifications, if necessary.

TIME STANDARDS - certain qualifying times are established each year for both short course and long course and are used to classify swimmers for particular competitions.

TOUCH PAD - the part of the electronic timing system that rests against the wall at the finishing end of each lane. Swimmer's times are electronically recorded when the pad is touched.

UNATTACHED - the status a swimmer receives when he/she changes from one USA Swimming club to another. A swimmer must be "unattached" for 120 days from their last competition for one club until they can compete for their new club. During this time they may swim for a club in individual events, but may not score or swim on relays.

USA Swimming - The governing body for swimming in the United States. They are headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado at the Olympic Training Center.

USA Swimming # - The unique registration number of each athlete member in USA Swimming. This unique number has 14 places. The formula for deriving your USA Swimming # is:

The first 6 places are the swimmer's birthday. The next 3 places are the first 3 letters of the swimmer's first name as it appears on birth certificate. The 10th place is the swimmer's middle initial. The last four places are the first 4 letters of the swimmer's last name. If a swimmer does not have 3 letters in their first name, a middle initial, or 4 letters in their last name, then an asterisk is used in those places. An example would be Swimmer B. Fast born on January 18, 1990. Their new number would be 011890SWIBFAST. A swimmer with the name of Jane (No middle initial) Doe born on February 14, 1989 would have the number 021489JAN*DOE*.

ZONES - The country is divided into 4 zones - Southern - Eastern - Central - Western. At the end of the long course season, in August, an All-Star competition is held between L.S.C. teams within each zone. The Southeastern Zone Team is picked at the Southeastern Long Course Championships and competes at the Southern Zone Championships the following week. Seven swimmers, male and female, are chosen from the following age groups, 11-12, 13-14 and 15-18. Once a swimmer has qualified for Senior Nationals he/she is no longer eligible to compete in a Zone meet. The selection process and the number of athletes in each age group can vary from year to year.