

Swimming Terminology

Galas can be rather confusing for both swimmers and parents until they have got used to the technical terminology which is used. Below are a range of terms with short explanations.

Open Meet	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 for swimming too fast at a Graded Meet.
Heat Announced Winners	This means that there are no finals and the age group winners are announced according to the fastest time after all heats have been completed.
Disqualification	The most common reasons why a swimmer is disqualified are 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.
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 the race is about to begin. The referee will then give one long blow which tells the swimmers to mount the starting block or, in the case of backstroke, to enter the water. The referee will then hand over to the starter who will say 'take your marks'. Once all swimmers are ready, the starter will either fire a starter gun or press the electronic starter 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 for a particular stroke and length. Apart from elite level, PBs can be recorded at internal club competitions or club time trials.
Long Course/Short Course	A long course is a 50 metre pool and short course a 25 metre pool. To convert times from a short Course time to a Long Course time a conversion table has to be used.
Dual Meet	A competition between two clubs.
Marshalling Area	The area where the swimmers meet 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 or IM	A race comprising all four strokes in the following series - butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and front crawl.
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"