

## **A GUIDE FOR NEW PARENTS**

### ***Swim Seasons and Time Standards***

#### **Swimming Seasons**

1. The short course season (meets swum in 25-yard pools) typically runs from September through April. The season wraps up with the Speedo Championship Series Wisconsin Sectionals.
2. The long course season (meets swum in 50-meter pools) typically runs from May through July, with Western Zones and Sectionals in late July or early August.
3. Except for the few swimmers who qualify for zone, sectionals, or national competitions, most teams and swimmers take a break for August.
4. The Sopris Barracudas swimming season is composed of three trimesters: Fall (September through December), Spring (January through mid-May), and Summer (mid-May through early August). The fall and spring trimesters focus on short course training and meets, and the summer trimester focuses on long course training (for those who choose to compete) and conditioning (for those who swim with summer leagues and want to maintain their fitness level for the fall season).

#### **Basic Time Standards**

1. The time standards that we use are available on the USA Swimming website. Click Times/Time Standards on the main menu; then Time Standards. Then go to "A/B (the one you need) Motivational Times".
2. Your child must swim an event without getting disqualified to get a time. Then take that time and look at the time standards table.
3. First you must make sure that you use the correct table. Times are reported in SCY (Short Course Yards, events swum in a 25-yard pool), SCM (Short Course Meters, 25-meter pool), and LCM (Long Course Meters, 50-meter pool.). Most of the meets we have in the fall will be SCY.
4. Find your child's age and sex and then look for their event. Now find their time. If their time is slower than the first time listed, they have a "C" time. The other times are B, BB, A, AA, AAA, and AAAA, with AAAA times being the fastest time listed.
5. If you have an 8 and younger swimmer, use the 10 and under time standards.
6. If your child's time is listed as NT in a meet sign-up or heat sheet, it means they have "no time" established in that event.
7. When your child "ages up" (i.e., has a birthday and graduates to the next age group), the times they swam when younger are still valid although the classification might change. For example, a child who has a BB time as a 10-year-old might drop to a B time when he/she turns eleven.

8. Unlike most summer leagues, there is no "age cut off date" in USA swimming. You are as old as you are on the day of the meet. You do not, however, age up during a meet. Usually the cut off is the child's age on the first day of the meet; this is stated in the meet announcement.

## **Other Time Standards and Age-Group Information**

- 1 You may hear parents and coaches talking about other time standards such as All-Stars cuts, zone cuts, sectional cuts, etc. This section will give you a little background.
- 2 The vast majority of swimmers under the age of eighteen swim in the "age group" category. In this category, qualifying times for meets are based on the age of your child. All of the above information on time standards is based on age groups.
- 3 Most swim meets have the following age groups: 10 & under, 11-12, 13-14, and either 15-18 or OPEN. If the age group is 15-18, then only swimmers of that age may swim. If the age group is OPEN, then any registered swimmer who meets the entrance criteria may swim. You may see older swimmers (college kids, adults) in this age group or you may see young swimmers who cannot swim this event in their own age group. For example, a meet may not offer a 200 butterfly to 11-12 swimmers. A twelve-year-old could elect to swim this event in the OPEN age group.
- 4 There are also meets on the schedule referred to as "mini" meets. "Mini" refers to the size of the competitors, not the length of the meet! These meets are usually restricted to the youngest swimmers. Often these meets offer events appropriate for young, beginning swimmers (e.g., 25 yard free, back, breast, and fly) and additional age groups (e.g., 6 & under, 7-8) that allow the youngsters to place and earn ribbons without competing against 10-year-olds.
- 5 The Western Zone Long Course (around August) Age Group Championships are prestigious events usually held in the northwest U.S. Swimmers qualify during the long course season by beating the published time standards for each event. These times are typically published on the CSI web site at the beginning of the long course season.
- 6 You may also see time standards labeled T16. This stands for Top 16 reportable time. USA Swimming publishes yearly the top sixteen swimmers nationwide in each event in each age group. If your swimmer achieves a T16 time, it means that their time will be reported to USA swimming for possible inclusion on this list (depending on how many other kids across the nation swam faster).
- 7 Then there is another category of meets for which age is irrelevant. There is a qualifying time for each event, regardless of age. (There are different times for males and females, however). One of these meets is Sectionals. Officially, the name of this meet is now Speedo Championship Series Wisconsin Sectinals, but you still hear people talk about Sectionals. There

are also meets above that level at both the national (e.g., U.S. Open, Olympic Trials) and international (e.g., FINA World Championships, Olympics) levels. Obviously, the qualifying times get tougher and tougher as the swimmer progresses. This information doesn't apply to the vast majority of us parents, but it's nice to know what somebody else is talking about!