Jargon Buster

Short Course and Long Course

- Long course events are held in 50 metre pools. Short course events are held in pools shorter than 50 metres (usually 25 metres).
- Proficient swimmers tend to swim faster in shorter pools because of the increased number of turns, but the difference in times also varies with the stroke being swum.
- There are complex conversion tables to help convert between short course and long course times. This enables swimmers with short course times to enter for long course events.

Open Meet

- These galas are open to swimmers from all clubs. Usually there are entry times for these galas, which swimmers must have swum faster than in order to be eligible to enter.
- Some clubs hold galas where there are no entry times or galas which are aimed at younger or less experienced swimmers. However, if there are too many entries for an event some of the slower swimmers may be rejected.

Graded Meet

- In this type of gala, swimmers are only allowed to enter events if they are slower than the published entry times. These are good galas for new and inexperienced swimmers to start with.

BAGCat

- This stands for British Age Group Category.
- To encourage younger swimmers to take part in a wide range of events, swimming events have been split into different categories (eg sprint events, distance events, IM events etc).
- A swimmer's time for a particular event is converted into BAGCAT points using a complex method that takes account of their gender and age and the event. To calculate a swimmer's BAGCAT total score, you add up the best BAGCAT points score from each of the different categories. Some competitions have separate awards for the best BAGCAT score and for the best total BAGCAT score.
- A swimmer can also use their BAGCAT points scores to compare their performances in different events and see where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

HDW

- This stands for Heat Declared Winner.
- In some galas there are heats of each event, and the fastest swimmers qualify to compete in the final. In HDW galas, the swimmers' times in the heats are compared and the winner determined without a final being swum.