

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

by www.10Kswimmer.com

When a new sport is observed for the first time by the general public or the media, the terminology and rules of the sport are either unknown or unfamiliar. This brief American English open water swimming dictionary includes the definitions, etymologies, synonyms and examples of numerous terms used in the sport of open water swimming.

Abandonment (noun): A swimmer may retire from a race due to injury, exhaustion or time limits. A race may be abandoned and restarted at a later time due to unsafe conditions on the course. *When the weather worsened and the waves reached over 10 feet, the referee called for abandonment of the race.*

Acclimate (verb): to become accustomed to warmer or colder water temperatures and conditions before an open water race or solo swim. *The swimmer began to swim in colder water in order to prepare for the English Channel.* [Origin: 1785–95; < F acclimater].

Acclimatization (noun): the process of adapting to warmer or colder water temperatures and conditions prior to an open water race or solo swim. *Acclimatization is an important part of preparing for the warm water conditions expected at the Olympics 10K Marathon Swim.*

Beach finish (noun): a finish that is on land, requiring the swimmers to exit from the water and run up a sandy beach to a finish line. *The rough water swim has a picturesque beach finish on the sands of Waikiki.* *Synonym: run-out finish.* *Antonyms: in-the-water finish and FINA finish.*

Beaufort Wind Force Scale (noun): an empirical measure for describing wind velocity based mainly on observed sea conditions. *The referee made reference to the Beaufort Scale when he made the public announcement about the abandonment of the world championship race.* *Synonym: Beaufort Scale.*

Beaufort No. -- Sea Conditions (wave height in meters)

0 - Flat (0 meters).

1 - Ripples without crests (0.1 meters).

2 - Small wavelets. Light breeze. Crests not breaking (0.2 meters).

3 - Large wavelets. Crests begin to break. Scattered whitecaps (0.6 meters).

4 - Small waves. Moderate breeze (1 meter).

5 - Moderate longer waves. Some foam and spray (2 meters).

6 - Large waves with foam crests and some spray. Strong breeze (3 meters).

7 - Sea heaps up and foam begins to streak. Moderate gale (4 meters).

8 - Moderately high waves with breaking crests (5.5 meters).

9 - High waves (6-7 m) with dense foam. Strong gale (7 meters).

10 - Very high waves. Visibility is reduced. Sea surface is white (9 meters).

11 - Exceptionally high waves. Violent storm (11.5 meters).

12 - Huge waves. Air filled with foam and spray. Hurricane (14+ meters).

Beeline (noun): the most direct and straightest route to a specific point during a race, albeit not necessarily always the fastest route due to currents or waves. *The coach directed her swimmer to take a beeline to the next turn buoy.* [Origin: 1820–30, Americanism; BEE + LINE]. *Synonyms:*

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straight course, direct line, shortest route, straight line and Rhumb Line.

Boxed-in (adjective): to get caught in between swimmers so as to not be able to swim in the direction or at the desired pace. *The swimmer was boxed in between three other swimmers after coming out of the turn.* Synonym: sandwiched and squeezed.

Breakaway (verb): to speed up or increase the pace in order to create separation from the rest of the field. *The swimmer made a breakaway on the last loop.* Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a move and breakaway.

Breakers (noun): waves that crests and break along the shore or shallow shoal that may not be visible. *At the start of the race, the swimmers had to fight through the breakers before they hit the first buoy.*

Call room (noun): a designated indoor or outdoor area or room where the swimmers gather before the race, often to listen to pre-race instructions from race officials or to store their personal gear before the race. *The swimmers were called to the Call Room 30 minutes before the start of the world championships.* Synonym: Ready room.

Celsius (noun): Also, **Centigrade**, a temperature scale in which 0° represents the ice point and 100° the steam point, often abbreviated to C when written. *FINA does not allow competitions when the water temperatures drops below 15°C.* [After Anders Celsius]

Chafing (noun): to irritate or cause irritation due to repeated rubbing of skin against swim suits or other items, including other body parts, due to the swimming stroke, waves, especially around swim suit straps, armpits, shoulders, upper thighs, neck and chin. *The swimmer always used Vaseline to prevent chafing under his arms.* [Origin: 1275–1325; ME chaufen to heat, rub, chafe < MF chaufer < VL *calfāre, var. of L cal(e)facere, equiv. to cale- (s. of calēre to be hot) + facere to make]. Synonyms: rubbing, irritation, friction and rubbing.

Chop (noun): wave action at the surface of the water caused by wind. Small, frequent waves that are irritating to open water swimmers because they impede forward movement and can reduce visibility from the surface of the water. *The chop was the reason why he went a bit off-course.* Synonyms: surface chop, small waves, whitecaps and whitewater.

Core body temperature (noun): the operating temperature of a swimmer, specifically in the deep structures of the body such as the liver, in comparison to the temperature of peripheral tissues. This optimum temperature is 36.8°C (98.2°F) through it varies regularly as controlled by one's circadian rhythms. Temperature examination in the rectum is the traditional standard measurement used to estimate core temperature. *The swimmer finished the race, but her core body temperature had dropped significantly and she was experiencing hypothermia.* Synonyms: core temperature and normal human body temperature.

Corrected course (noun): the most direct course to the next turn buoy accounting for drift due to actual or anticipated currents, wind and wave action. *The lead pack set off on a corrected course*

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to the next turn buoy.

Course (noun): a direction or route taken by a swimmer. The path over which a race is run. The location in which a race is conducted. The swimmers were almost halfway around the race course. *The swimmers studied the race course from the escort boat during the pre-race meeting.* [Origin: 1250–1300; ME co(u)rs (n.) < AF co(u)rs(e), OF cours < L cursus a running, course, equiv. to cur(rere) to run + -sus, var. of -tus suffix of v. action]. Synonyms: race course, circuit and direction.

Current (noun): a portion of a large body of water moving in a certain direction. A steady forward movement of water; the flow of a body of water, regardless of cause. The horizontal movement of water in a channel or bay. *The currents were flowing against the swimmers.* [Origin: 1250–1300; < L current- (s. of curréns) running (prp. of currere)]. Synonyms: tide, eddies, rip tides and undertow.

Cut buoy (noun): In the case of a swimmer who did not properly round a required turn buoy, a violation of the rule that requires the swimmer to return and correctly round the turn mark. *The referee disqualified the swimmer for the cut buoy.*

Dock (noun): a fixed pier or floating platform where open water swimmers can either start or finish races or that serve as feeding stations or locations where supporters can cheer. *The lead swimmer came into the dock to receive a feeding from his coach.* [Origin: 1505–15; < MD doc(ke)]. Synonyms: berth, landing, pier, jetty, marina, slip and wharf.

Draft (verb): to swim close behind another swimmer (or swimmers) in order to take advantage of their slipstream, especially in a race. *The cagey veteran was drafting behind the young swimmer throughout the race.* [Middle English draught, act of drawing or pulling, from Old English.]. Synonyms: hang on, follow, drag and free ride.

Ear plugs (noun): a device inserted in the ear canal to protect from the intrusion of water or foreign bodies. Often made of wax or silicon and can help decrease the middle and inner ear exposure to cold and thus lessen the uncomfortable feeling, including vertigo, that may come with exposure to cold water conditions. *The swimmer always uses silicon ear plugs when he does cold water training in the Pacific Ocean.*

Eyes and ears (noun): offering of navigational advice to swimmers in the water when they cannot see the course or their competition. *The coach on the escort boat served as the eyes and ears of the swimmer when the swells got too large.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME eie, ie, OE ége, var. of éage; c. G Auge; akin to L oculus, Gk ps, Skt akṣi] + [Origin: bef. 900; ME ere, OE éare; c. ON eyra, G Ohr, Goth auso, L auris, Lith ausis, Gk oûs]

Escort (noun): a person or group of persons in a boat, kayak, Jet-Ski or on a paddleboard or surfboard accompanying or leading a swimmer for protection and/or guidance in the open bodies of water. *The escort was leading the swimmers out towards the last turn buoy.* [Origin: 1570–80; < F < It scorta, deriv. of scorgere to conduct < VL *excorrigere] Synonyms: paddler, kayaker, lead boat and escort boat.

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Escort (verb): to guide, protect or lead a swimmer in a boat, kayak, Jet-Ski or on a paddleboard while in the open water. *The coach will escort the swimmer on a kayak during the race.*
Synonyms: paddle and kayak (for).

Escort boat (noun): a boat or similar watercraft that accompanies or leads a swimmer for protection and/or guidance in the open bodies of water. *The escort boat led the swimmers throughout the 25-kilometer race.* [Origin: 1570–80; < F < It scorta, deriv. of scorgere to conduct < VL *excorriger]. Synonym: lead boat.

Fahrenheit (noun): a temperature scale that registers the freezing point of water as 32° and the boiling point as 212° at one atmosphere of pressure, often abbreviated to F when written. *The water temperature was a very comfortable 72°F.* [After Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit]

Feeding (noun): the process of eating or drinking or being given nourishment during a race. *The swimmers stopped momentarily for a feeding.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME feding, OE fēding].
Synonyms: drink, gel pack and some food.

Feeding pole (noun): see **Feeding stick**.

Feeding pontoon (noun): a boat or other temporary or fixed floating structure used by coaches to provide fuel (i.e., food) or hydration (i.e., drink) to swimmers in a race. *The coaches were standing on the pontoon waiting for the swimmers to come in for a feeding.* [Origin: 1585–95; < F ponton < L pontōn- (s. of pontō) flat-bottomed boat, punt]. Synonyms: feeding platform, pier and feeding station.

Feeding station (noun): a boat or other temporary or fixed floating structure, such as a dock or pier, used by coaches to provide fuel (i.e., food) or hydration (i.e., drink) to swimmers in a race. *The coaches were standing on the feeding station waiting for the swimmers to come in.*
Synonyms: feeding pontoon and feeding platform.

Feeding stick (noun): a long slender mechanical implement with a cup or bottle holder at the end in which to hand fuel (e.g., gel packs, food, chocolate) or hydration (e.g., water, Gatorade, tea) to a swimmer during a race. *The coach stood at the feeding pontoon with her feeding stick in order to hand the water bottle to her swimmer.* [Origin: bef. 1000; ME stikke, OE sticca; akin to OHG stehho, ON stik stick]. Synonyms: pole and rod.

FINA (acronym for Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur) (noun): the international governing body of swimming, water polo, diving, synchronized swimming and open water swimming, recognized by the International Olympic Committee for administering international aquatic competitions. It was founded in 1908 and is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. *FINA administers two different global open water swimming circuits in addition to the biennial World Swimming Championships held every odd year.*

FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup (noun): a year-round global series of professional marathon swims organized by FINA, 10 kilometers in distance, held in countries

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such as Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Portugal, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, China and Mexico. Many of the races are in loop courses that allow for spectators to see the athletes battling with each other throughout the race. *The top pro swimmers travel the world to participate in the FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup.*

FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix (noun): a year-round global series of professional marathon swims organized by FINA, ranging from 15 to 88 kilometers in length, held in countries such as Argentina, Italy, Serbia, Macedonia, Canada and Mexico. *One of the toughest endurance circuits in the world has to be the FINA Open Water Grand Prix.*

FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee (noun): a FINA committee (acronym: TOWSC) that sets and implements the rules and policies of open water swimming and organizes the FINA 10K Marathon Swimming World Cup and the FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix; have supported the International Olympic Committee to add marathon swimming to the Olympic schedule. Members include Valerijus Belovas of Lithuania, Flavio Bornio of Switzerland, Alan Clarkson of Great Britain, Jorge Delgado of Ecuador, Dr. Mohie Wahid Farid of Egypt, Paulo Frischknecht of Portugal, Tomas Haces German of Cuba, Dennis Miller of Fiji and Vladimir Srb of the Czech Republic. The Chairman is Sid Cassidy of the USA, Vice Chairman is Ronnie Wong Man Chui of Hong Kong and the Honorable Secretary is Shelley Taylor-Smith of Australia. The FINA Bureau Liaison is Nory Kruchten of Luxembourg. The Coaches' Commission Liaison is Osvaldo Arsenio of Argentina and the Athletes' Commission Liaison is Daniel Kowalski of Australia. *The FINA TOWSC set the rules of the competition at the Olympics.*

Finish shoot (noun): a series of lane lines, buoys or other such markings that indicate the finish area and help direct the swimmers to the final finish line or touch pads. *The lead group of swimmers all entered the finish shoot together, each sprinting to the touch pads.*

Fluid (noun): liquid nourishment that provides hydration during an open water race. Popular examples are Gatorade and water. *The coach prepared the swimmer's fluid at the feeding station.* [Origin: 1300–50; ME fuel(le), feuel < OF feuaile < VL focălia, neut. pl. of focălis of the hearth, fuel]. Synonyms: drinks, hydration and liquid.

Four-wide (noun): 4 swimmers swimming side-by-side during a race. *There is a four-wide sprinting around the buoy towards the finish.* [Origin: modern-day NASCAR term].

Fuel (noun): solid food or nourishment that provides energy source during an open water race. Examples are bananas and chocolate and gel packs like CarbBoom, Clif Shot, GU and PowerGel. *The coach put a bit of fuel in his water bottle at the feeding station.* [Origin: 1300–50; ME fuel(le), feuel < OF feuaile < VL *focălia, neut. pl. of *focălis of the hearth, fuel.]. Synonyms: food and solids.

Gel pack (noun): Small, easy-to-use, individual squeeze packages that contain simple and complex carbohydrates, antioxidants and amino acids in order to provide an energy boost during a race. Single-serving pouches are sold in a variety of sizes, shapes and flavors, and can be easily digested while swimming. *The swimmer stuck two gel packs in her swim suit before the start of*

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the race. Synonyms: sports gel and pouch.

GPS (noun): acronym for **Global Positioning System**; a global system of U.S. navigational satellites developed to provide precise positional and velocity data and global time synchronization for air, sea, and land travel. *The race director calculated the location of the turn buoys on the course by using GPS.*

Gulp and Go (noun): the third rule of feeding when an open water swimmer quickly consumes fuel (e.g., gel pack) or hydration (e.g., water) received from his/her coach on the feeding pontoon, then immediately begin to swim again after the momentary feeding stop. *The swimmer came in and did a great 'Gulp and Go' despite being crowded at the feeding station.*

Hydration (noun): water, Gatorade, flat Coca-Cola or Mountain Dew, fortified water drinks, tea and other liquids to restore or maintain fluid balance during an open water race. *The importance of hydration to prevent dehydration during the race cannot be overemphasized.* [Origin: 1795–1805; HYDR + -ATE]. Synonyms: liquid and drinks. Note: some nutritionists argue that caffeine does not hydrate because it is also a diuretic.

Hyperthermia (noun): an abnormally high body temperature, usually resulting from warm water, warm temperatures, bright skies and/or humidity, during open water races, especially common during intense competitions or complicated due to dehydration. Several degrees of severity exist, starting with Heat Edema with the swelling of hands and feet. Heat Stroke is a medical emergency with potential for profound confusion, loss of coordination, hallucinations and coma, typically with a core body temperature of greater than 104°F. Between these two extremes there are intermediate degrees of severity, including (in order) Heat Syncope, Heat Cramps and Heat Exhaustion. *The doctors were ready to deal with cases of hyperthermia due to the hot water conditions under sunny skies.*

Hypothermia (noun): an abnormally low body temperature, often caused by prolonged exposure to cold water during open water races, especially when combined with chilly winds, pronounced fatigue for swimmers with a low body fat percentage. Hypothermia is medically defined when the core body temperature drops below 35°C (95°F). Mild hypothermia may be identified by increased shivering or vasoconstriction. Severe hypothermia includes altered cognition, unusual behavior, weakness, apathy, reduced cardiac output, and even coma. *The swimmer was pulled from the water when it become obvious that she was suffering from hypothermia.* [Origin: 1885–90; HYPO- + THERM- + -IA where hypo- + Greek thermē, heat; see gwher- in Indo-European roots + -ia].

Impede (verb): to obstruct, interfere or retard in movement or progress by means of cutting off, swimming into, blocking or pulling on legs, ankles, arms or shoulders of other swimmers during a race. *The swimmer was impeded by his competitor when he was cut off towards the end of the race.* [Origin: 1595–1605; < L impedire to entangle, lit., to snare the feet]. Synonyms: slow, stop, block, pull and interfere.

Intermediate buoy (noun): Buoys placed between required turn buoys or markers that may be passed on either side without penalty. *The swimmer went to the left side of the intermediate*

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buoys because he thought this would give him an advantage.

International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame (noun): an affiliate organization to the International Swimming Hall of Fame, established in 1961 to recognize the marathon swimmers throughout the world and governed by an international selection committee of marathon swimming experts. It recognizes not only the world's most successful swimmers in competitive races, but also individuals for their solo swim exploits around the world. *Due to her exploits as a professional marathon swimmer and her unprecedented solo swims, she was inducted in the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame.*

In-water start (noun): a start that begins in the water and does not require swimmers to dive in from a starting pontoon or run in the water from a beach, pier or shoreline to start. *The bay swim used an in-water start where the swimmers lined up behind the rope.* Synonym: in-the-water start. Antonyms: beach start, dive start and run-in start.

In-water finish (noun): a finish that is in the water and do not require the swimmers to exit from the body of water where the race is held. *The bay swim used a rope across two buoys as the in-water finish.* Synonym: in-the-water finish. Antonyms: beach finish and run-out finish.

Knot (noun): a unit of speed equal to one nautical mile or about 1.15 statute miles per hour. *The race was conducted under wavy conditions and 10-knot winds.*

Landmark (noun): large, visible or stationary objects that are easy to see with a quick sighting from the perspective of the swimmer in an open water race; includes buildings, light poles on piers or anchored boats visible from the distance. *The swimmer looked for various landmarks as she was swimming into to shore at the end of the race.* [Origin: bef. 1000; ME; OE landmearc]. Synonyms: guide, point and mark.

Lanolin (noun): a greasy, fatty substance, insoluble in water, that is extracted from wool-bearing animals used to coat the skin of swimmers, especially to friction points (e.g., underarms, inside thighs, chin and neck) in order to prevent chafing or help reduce the impact of cold water. *The coach spread a thin layer of lanolin under the swimmer's shoulders.* [Origin: 1880–85; < L lān(a) WOOL + -OL + -IN]. Synonyms: grease, Vaseline, white stuff, Adeps Lanae, wool wax, wool fat, anhydrous wool fat and wool grease.

Lap (noun): one complete round, length or circuit around a race course. *The swimmers have two more laps around the course.* [Middle English lappen, from lappe, lap, lappet]. Synonym: loop, round and circuit.

Lead boat (noun): a boat or similar watercraft that leads a swimmer or the lead pack of swimmers on a race course. *The lead boat led the swimmers throughout the 25-kilometer race.* Synonym: escort boat.

Lead pack (noun): the fastest or first group of swimmers in a race, all closely swimming together. *The lead pack sprinted towards the finish ahead of the other competitors.* [Origin: 1175–1225; (n.) ME pak, packe < MD pac or perh. MLG pak; (v.) ME pakken < MD or MLG]

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Synonyms: group and bunch.

Leading the pack (verb): to swim ahead of a group of swimmers in an open water race. *The favorite was leading the pack during the first half of the race.*

Left (or right) shoulder turn (noun): term used by race officials to describe the required turn direction when passing a turn buoy. A left shoulder turn means that the turn buoys must be kept on the left-side of the swimmer. *All orange buoys must be passed using a right shoulder turn.*

Line of sight (noun): an unobstructed path from the swimmer's eye to a distant point such as the turn buoys or finish line. *The swimmer had a great line of sight from the turn buoy to the finish area.*

Long-distance swimming (noun): swimming in natural or man-made bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins and rivers; generally understood to be at least 3 kilometers in distance. *The masters swimmers decided to try long-distance swimming when they visited Hawaii.* Synonyms: open water swimming, rough water swimming and marathon swimming.

Loop (noun): one complete round, length or circuit around a race course, especially one that is circular in shape. *The swimmers have to swim four loops around the Olympic 10K course in the rowing basin.* [Alteration (influenced by Italian lega) of Middle English liege, from Old French ligue, from Medieval Latin liga and from Old Italian lega, liga (from legare, to bind), both from Latin ligāre, to bind; see leig- in Indo-European roots]. Synonyms: lap, round and circuit.

Make a break (verb): to speed up or increase the pace in order to create separation from the competition. *The swimmer plans to make a break just after the last turn.* Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a move and breakaway.

Make a move (verb): to catch up to or swim into position ahead of one's competitors. *The swimmer will make his move in the second half of the race.* Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a break and breakaway.

Marathon swimming (noun): swimming a minimum of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) in the large outdoor bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins and rivers, as defined by FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur). Alternatively, swimming a minimum of 25 kilometers (15.5 miles), as defined by the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. *The athletes were preparing for a 25-kilometer pro marathon swimming race.* [Origin: 1895–1900; allusion to Pheidippides' 26-mi. (42-km) run from MARATHON to Athens to carry news of the Greek victory over the Persians in 490 b.c.] + [Origin: bef. 1000; ME; OE swimmende (adj.)] Synonyms: open water swimming, rough water swimming and long distance swimming.

Marking (noun): numbers that are written in black in on the shoulders, shoulder blades and

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wrists of the swimmers for identification purposes. These numbers are used to monitor the swimmer's progress, announce the swimmer's position to the crowd and media, and to inform swimmers who commit rule infractions during the race. *The race officials write markings on the swimmer's shoulders 30 minutes before the start of the race.* Synonyms: race numbers and competitor's numbers.

Miss a feeding (verb): to drop a cup or bottle with hydration due to jostling in a crowd around the feeding station or to not get close enough to the feeding station to receive fuel (e.g. gel pack) or hydration (e.g., Gatorade). *The swimmer missed a feeding for the second time at the feeding station.*

Mixed zone (noun): an area near the finish line where media representatives, photographers and team officials can interview and photograph swimmers after the race. *The swimmer smiled widely and waved to her coach from the Mixed Zone where she was being interviewed by the press.*

Navigation (noun): the art or science of plotting, ascertaining or directing the course of a swimmer in an open water race. *The coaches and swimmers discussed the navigation options for the swim around the island.* [Origin: 1520–30; < L *nāvigātiōn-* (s. of *nāvigātiō*) a voyage]. Synonym: direction and plotting

Navigational IQ (noun): the innate ability for a swimmer to swim the straightest and fastest path in an open water race course. *She has the highest navigational IQ among all the competitors.* [Origin: 1520–30; < L *nāvigātiōn-* (s. of *nāvigātiō*) a voyage. See NAVIGATE, -ION] + intelligence quotient]. Synonym: ability to swim straight.

Off course (adjective): not swimming in the right (or fastest or straightest) direction in an open water race. *The swimmers started to veer off course to the left.* [Origin: orig. stressed var. of OF] + [Origin: 1250–1300; ME *co(u)rs* (n.) < AF *co(u)rs(e)*, OF *cours* < L *cursus* a running, course, equiv. to *cur(rere)* to run + *-sus*]. Synonyms: crooked and veering (to the right/left).

On course (adjective): swimming in the right (or fastest or straightest) direction in an open water race. *The swimmers were right on course throughout the race.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME *on*, *an*, OE: *on*, *in*, *to*; c. D *aan*, G *an*, ON *ā*, Goth *ana*; akin to Gk *aná* up] + [Origin: 1250–1300; ME *co(u)rs* (n.) < AF *co(u)rs(e)*, OF *cours* < L *cursus* a running, course, equiv. to *cur(rere)* to run + *-sus*]. Synonym: right on.

Open water swimming (noun): swimming in natural or man-made bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins and rivers; generally understood to be longer than 1 kilometer in distance. *The triathletes practice open water swimming in the lake every Saturday.* Synonyms: marathon swimming, rough water swimming and long distance swimming.

Pack (noun): a group of swimmers swimming together in a race or during training. *The swimmers were in a large pack during the start of the race.* [Origin: 1175–1225; (n.) ME *pak*, *packe* < MD *pac* or *perh.* MLG *pak*; (v.) ME *pakken* < MD or MLG]. Synonyms: pod, swarm, crowd, horde, mob, throng and shoal.

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Positioning (noun): a place or location, often strategic and intentional, but occasionally unintentional or accidental, where a swimmer finds him/herself during an open water race. *The coach stressed to the swimmer the need to hold her positioning around the turn buoys on the last loop.* [Middle English posicioun, from Old French posicion, from Latin positiō, positiōn-, from positus, past participle of pōnere, to place; see apo- in Indo-European roots]. Synonyms: place and location.

Rabbit (noun): a swimmer whose goal is chiefly to set a fast pace, either to set a record or to exhaust a specific competitor so that a teammate can win. *The teammate served as a rabbit by going out fast on the first two loops.* [Origin: 1375–1425; late ME rabet(te) young rabbit, bunny, prob. < ONF; cf. Walloon robett, dial. D robbe]. Synonym: pacesetter.

Race numbers (noun): numbers that are prominently written in semi-permanent black ink or with temporary tattoos on the upper arms, shoulder blades and wrists of the swimmer for identification purposes. These numbers are used to monitor the swimmer's progress, announce the swimmer's position to the crowd and media and inform swimmers who are committing rule infractions during the race. *The race officials write the race numbers on the swimmer's shoulders 30 minutes before the start of the race.* Synonyms: markings and competitor numbers.

Reach and Roll (noun): the second rule of feeding when the swimmer extends his/her hand to grab fuel (e.g., gel pack) or hydration (e.g., water) from his/her coach on the feeding pontoon, then turns over on his/her back to consumer the fuel or hydration. *The swimmer was ready to reach and roll once he grabbed the water bottle from his coach.*

Ready room (noun): a designated indoor or outdoor area or room where the swimmers gather before the race, often to listen to pre-race instructions from race officials or to store their personal gear before the race. *The swimmers were called to the Ready Room 30 minutes before the start of the world championships.* Synonym: Call room

Red card (noun): a red-colored penalty card that indicates the immediate disqualification of a swimmer due to unsportsmanlike conduct or a serious infraction of the rules during an open water race. *The head referee gave a red card to the swimmer who pulled back his competitor around the turn buoy.* Synonyms: disqualification.

Red-carded (verb): to be disqualified by a referee during an open water race. *The swimmer was red-carded by the referee after his unsportsmanlike conduct.* Synonym: disqualified.

Referee (noun): the designated individuals who judge open water races based on the established rules set by FINA or the race director. Referees can be located at the start, turns, finishes and/or on escort boats along the course. *The referee gave a yellow card to the swimmer after observing the second rule infraction.* [Origin: 1605–15; REFER + -EE]. Synonyms: judge and ref.

Rough water swimming or **roughwater swimming** (noun): swimming in outdoor bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins and rivers. *The athletes were for some rough water swimming at the beach.* Synonyms: open water swimming, marathon

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swimming and long distance swimming.

Sea life (noun): living organisms found in the ocean and other bodies of water that open water swimmers may encounter during training sessions or races. These include fish, jellyfish, sea nettles, sea lice, turtles, porpoise, dolphins, sea lions, sharks, coral, seaweed, kelp, sea snakes. *The beginner dreaded sea life during his first open water race in the Caribbean, but the experienced swimmers were looking forward to seeing all kinds of sea life.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME see, D zee, G See, ON sær sea, Goth saiws marsh] + [Origin: bef. 900; ME lif(e); OE lif; c. D lijf, G Leib body, ON lif life, body]. Synonym: sea creatures.

Seek and Spot (noun): the first rule of feeding when the swimmer heads toward the feeding pontoon and identifies his/her coach standing on the pontoon. *The swimmer wanted to seek and spot his coach on the feeding pontoon before he cut in to feed.*

Sighting (noun): the act of seeing in the open water races, generally towards landmarks, turn buoys, escort boats or the finish. Lifting the head to look ahead in order to decide the optimal direction to be swimming in an open water race; a view of the race course. *The swimmer took frequent sightings as she raised her head every 25 strokes.* [Middle English, from Old English siht, gesiht, something seen; see sek in Indo-European roots]. Synonyms: view and look.

Slip streaming or drafting vessels (verb): intentionally taking advantage of the wake of escort boats or officiating watercraft on the course; rules prohibit this action by swimmers. *The referee gave a yellow flag to the swimmer who was slip streaming behind the escort boat.*

Solo swim (noun): an individual swim that is not part of an official race. *More people have successfully climbed Mount Everest than have completed a solo swim of the English Channel.* [Origin: 1685-95; Ital. L sölus alone]. Synonym: single swim.

Split time (noun): a time for a set distance within a race. *His split time for the first loop was 29 minutes.* Synonyms: interim time and split.

Starting platform (noun): a dock, pier or other floating structure where the swimmers stand to start an open water race; each swimmer is given about 60 centimeters or space on the starting platform. *The 30 swimmers lined up on the starting platform to the roar of the crowd.* Synonym: starting pontoon.

Starting pontoon (noun): a dock or floating structure where the swimmers stand to start an open water race; each swimmer is given about 60 centimeters or space on the starting platform. *The starting pontoon was anchored to the ocean floor to create a stable start for the swimmers.* Synonym: starting platform.

Stick and stay (verb): to draft off of another swimmer for an extended period during a race. *The coach advised the swimmer to stick and stay with the race favorite for the first 5 kilometers.* Synonyms: draft, stay with him/her, drag and slipstream.

Strung out (verb): to become separated from one another during an open water race, especially

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in the later stages of the race after the swimmers have been swimming together in a pack. *After the midway point, the top swimmer increased her pace causing the lead pack to get strung out.*

Surface chop (noun): wave action at the surface of the water caused by wind. Small, frequent waves that are irritating to open water swimmers because they impede forward movement and can reduce visibility from the surface of the water. *The surface chop was the reason why he went a bit off-course.* Synonyms: chop and whitewater.

Swell (noun): a long wave or series of waves in the ocean that move continuously without breaking. *The swells caused the swimmers to rise and fall during the first half of the race.* [Middle English *swellen*, from Old English *swellan*]. Synonym: wave.

Tack 'n Turn (verb): a race tactic when a swimmer veers a competitor slightly off-course and then shifts direction quickly to gain a better position or angle to a turn buoy, feeding pontoon or finish. *The leader tacked and turned the second swimmer to his advantage.*

10K (noun): 6.2 miles or 10 kilometers, the standard distance of the Olympic marathon swim. *The swimmers will swim four loops in the rowing basin during the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim.*

Three-wide (noun): 3 swimmers swimming side-by-side during a race. *There was a three-wide coming around the last turn buoy.* [Origin: modern-day NASCAR term].

Throw a Curve (noun): a race tactic used when when a swimmer purposefully swims in a zig-zag or curved pattern in order to attempt to lose a swimmer who is drafting off of them. *The leader is throwing a curve to the rest of the pack.*

Tide (noun): the periodic rise and fall of the waters of the ocean and its inlets, produced by the attraction of the moon and sun, and occurring about every 12 hours. The inflow, outflow, or current of water at any given place resulting from the waves of tides. *The race director took the tides into account when he decided to start the race in the early morning.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME (n.); OE *tīd* time, hour; c. D *tijd*, G *Zeit*, ON *títh*; akin to TIME]. Synonyms: stream, flood tide and current.

Toss and Turn (noun): the fourth rule of feeding when the swimmer quickly discards the fuel (e.g., gel pack) or hydration (e.g., water cup or bottle) received from his/her coach and immediately turns over on his/her stomach to begin swimming after a momentary feeding stop. *The swimmer was ready to toss and turn after quickly gulping down the Gatorade.*

Touch pad (noun): finish plates placed vertically (i.e., perpendicular to the surface of the water) at the end of open water races that identify the race finish and can be electronically tied to the official timing system. *The two swimmers slapped the touch pad at nearly the exact same time.* Synonyms: Finish, finish pads and finish line.

Transponder (noun): light, waterproof timing devices with GPS capabilities that are worn on both wrists of swimmers at FINA-sanctioned races. *The swimmers were given transponders before the race by the officials.* Synonym: timing chips.

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Turn buoy (noun): a distinctively marked colored float in the water, anchored to mark the course for swimmers. *There are four turn buoys throughout the race course that the swimmers must go around to finish.* [Origin: 1425–75; late ME boye a float < MF *boie, boue(e) < Gmc].
Synonyms: guide, marker, beacon, signal and buoy.

Unsportsmanlike conduct (noun): inappropriate or unprofessional acts committed by swimmers during an open water race that can lead to a warning or disqualification by the referee or that are not in the spirit of the competition. These acts can include obstruction, interference or making intentional contact with another swimmer that can lead to a warning or disqualification by the lead referee, whether made by the swimmer or the swimmer's escort boat or crew. *The swimmer was disqualified for his unsportsmanlike conduct because he swam over the shoulders of his competitor at the finish.* Synonym: unsporting behavior.

Vaseline (noun): a well-known trademark used for a brand of petroleum jelly that is used to coat the skin of swimmers, especially to friction points (e.g., underarms, inside thighs, chin and neck) in order to prevent chafing: *The swimmer applied a thin coating of Vaseline around his neck.* [1872, trademark for an ointment made from petroleum and marketed by Chesebrough Manufacturing Co., coined from Ger. Wasser "water" + Gk. elaion "oil" + scientific-sounded ending -ine. Robert Chesebrough was of the opinion that petroleum was a product of the underground decomposition of water]. Synonyms: grease, Body Glide, bag balm, PAM, Channel grease and Cramer Skin Lube.

Veer off course (verb): to swim not on the optimal path along an open water race. *The swimmers were pushed by the strong currents and were gradually veering off course.*

Wake (noun): the track of waves left by an escort boat, JetSki or other watercraft moving through the water or across the path of swimmers in an open water race or solo swim. *The swimmers were bothered by the wake of the escort boat.* [Origin: 1540–50; < MLG, D wake, or ON vǫk hole in the ice].

Whiteboard (noun): a smooth, glossy sheet of white plastic that can be written on with a colored pen or erasable marker in the manner of a blackboard. The white plastic is used by coaches or referees to provide instructions to swimmers during an open water race. *The coach wrote "2K to go" on the whiteboard to show his swimmer.* Synonym: chalk board.

Whitecaps (noun): small ocean surface waves that break offshore due to the wind that are irritating to open water swimmers because they tend to impede forward progress and reduce visibility. *The winds picked up in the afternoon leading to an ocean full of whitecaps.* Synonyms: whitewater, surface chop, chop, small waves and turbulence.

Yellow card (noun): a yellow-colored penalty card that indicates an official warning to a swimmer due to unsportsmanlike conduct or an infraction of the rules during an open water race. *The head referee gave a yellow card to the swimmer who cut across the back of his competitor.* Synonym: warning.

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Yellow-carded (verb): to be warned by a referee during an open water race. *The swimmer was yellow-carded by the referee after his unsportsmanlike conduct.* Synonyms: warned and given a warning.