



## **LONG COURSE SEASON: A GUIDE FOR SURGE FAMILIES**

As we transition into the Long Course season, you may see swimmers and coaches writing “LCM” on various meet announcements, heat sheets, and social media. This stands for Long Course Meters which refers to swimming in a 50-meter pool, the same course used at the Olympic Games. While most of the year in the United States is spent racing in 25-yard pools (Short Course Yards - SCY), the summer season shifts toward this Olympic-style format.

### **What Makes Long Course Different?**

The biggest difference is simple: fewer walls. In a 50-meter pool, swimmers turn half as often, meaning they spend more time swimming and less time pushing off the wall. Because of this:

- Races feel longer and more physically demanding
- Technique and pacing become more important
- Underwaters and walls play a smaller role than in short course swimming

It is completely normal for swimmers, especially those new to LCM, to feel like races are harder at first.

### **Why Are Times So Different?**

One of the most important things for families to understand is that Long Course times are not directly comparable to Short Course times.

Short course swimming includes frequent push-offs and underwater momentum that help swimmers maintain speed. In long course, swimmers must sustain their speed for much longer distances without those advantages. As a result, times often appear slower, especially early in the season.

Conversion tools do exist, but they are only estimates and are not something we rely on, as long course racing differs in many important ways. In many respects, LCM feels like a different version of the sport.

If your swimmer has never raced a Long Course meet, they will be entered with an NT (No Time) since SCY performances do not directly transfer to LCM results.



## **What About Our Local Meets?**

While we are in the Long Course season, all meets held at Das Rec will continue to be competed in Short Course Yards (SCY) due to facility limitations. This allows swimmers to continue racing in a familiar format while preparing for long course competition.

Our Bud Dallman Memorial Meet will be the first Long Course Meter (LCM) meet for many swimmers and is highly recommended. This meet provides an excellent introduction to the 50-meter pool in a supportive environment and is a great opportunity to gain valuable long course racing experience.

## **Why Do We Swim Long Course?**

Long Course season plays an important role in long-term development. It helps swimmers:

- Build strength and endurance naturally
- Improve stroke efficiency
- Develop pacing and race awareness
- Gain confidence racing in a new environment

Many swimmers return to the next Short Course season stronger and faster because of the skills developed during the summer.