

Explaining the Diving Numbers

If you have ever watched a diving event on TV you probably remember hearing the announcer call out a number prior a dive. For example, in the Beijing Olympics you may have heard the announcer say, "Laura Wilkinson performing a 107B forward-three-and-one-half somersaults pike, 3.0." All those numbers may seem arbitrary or even confusing, but in diving each number is a specific dive and each dive has a specific degree of difficulty attached to it. Far from arbitrary, each number in a dive description indicates everything about that specific dive.



Diving Group Numbers

All dives are categorized into five main groups: Forward, backward, reverse, inward, and twisting. There is also a sixth group in platform diving: The armstand group. Every group of dives is assigned a number.

- 1 = Forward
- 2 = Backward
- 3 = Reverse
- 4 = Inward
- 5 = Twister
- 6 = Armstand

Dive numbers are either three or four digits long. Each number in the dive represents a particular aspect of the dive; the direction it will go and how many somersaults and twists it will have.

The Number of Somersaults

The numbers start with the 100s. Any dive or somersault that leaves the board or platform in the forward position is classified as forward and given the group number one. The diving number for the forward group is three digits long. The first number indicates the group, the second number is usually a zero (except when a dive is a "flying" dive, and then the middle number is one), and the third number is the number of

half-somersaults in the dive. Thus a 101 is a forward dive; a 102 is a forward somersault and a 113 is a flying one-and-one-half somersault.

- 1 = ½ somersault (dive)
- 2 = 1 somersault
- 3 = 1 ½ somersaults
- 4 = 2 somersaults

Position of the Dive

Each dive is then given a letter that corresponds to it. The letter indicates the position of the dive.

- A = Straight or Layout (no bend or curve to the body)
- B = Pike (legs straight and body bent at the waist)
- C = Tuck (legs bent into the body)

- D = Free (combination of the three positions used in twisting dives)
The numbers for backward, reverse and inward are essentially the exact same as forward except they start with the number two, three and four, respectively. A 201 is a back dive and a 205 is a back two-and-one-half somersaults. Similarly, a 303C is a reverse one-and-one-half somersaults tuck and a 405B is an inward two-and-one-half somersault pike.

Twisting Dives

Twisting dives are slightly different. Twisters have four digits associated with them.

Twisting dives start with the number five indicating the twisting group. The second number says the direction the dive will go; either forward (1), backward (2), reverse (3) or inward (4). The third number indicates how many half-somersaults are in the dive and the fourth number tells how many half-twists are in the dive. For example:

- A 5132D is a forward one-and-one-half somersault with one twist in the free position.
- A 5233D is a back one-and-one half somersault one-and-one-half twist in the free position.

Armstand Dives

Armstand dives either have three or four digits depending on if they have any twists involved. The armstand group starts with the number six. For non-twisting armstands, three digits are used. The first digit is a 6 indicating an armstand, the second number indicates the direction; either forward (1), backward (2), Reverse (3) or Inward (4). The third number indicates the number of half-somersaults. For example:

- 612B = Armstand forward somersault in the pike position
- 622B = Armstand back-one somersault in the pike position

For twisting armstands, the number still starts with 6, but will have four digits. Just as above, the second number indicates the direction, the third number is how many half-somersaults are in the dive and the fourth number is how many half-twists there will be. So a 6243D is an armstand back double somersault with one-and-one-half twists in the free position.

Degree of Difficulty & Scoring

To further complicate the number game, each dive is given a specific degree of difficulty (DD).

Olympic Gold.

For example, a 101A (forward dive straight) has a degree of difficulty of 1.4, but a 101C (forward dive tuck) has a DD of 1.2. At all competitions, a DD chart is given to the diver when he/she is filling out a diving list. The DD is important because it is the number by which the score is multiplied. A higher DD will usually mean a higher score, but not necessarily.

If a diver is performing a 105B on 3-meter with a DD of 2.4 and does the dive for fives, and another diver performs a 105C on 3-meter with a DD of 2.2 and does the dive for eights, the diver with the lower DD will score more points than the one with the higher DD. Experienced divers know that DD is great, but if the performance is not there, it is best to stick to a dive that can be executed well rather than try a dive that has a higher DD, but is tough to pull off consistently.

Understanding the Diving Numbers

The diving numbers may seem confusing at first, but in time it becomes easier to understand. Just remember that every dive is assigned a number describing every element of the move, and each dive is given a specific DD. If you can keep those two things in mind, understanding the diving numbers becomes a lot easier.

Hot Tip: Numbers Count

Pay close attention to the dive that is written on the dive sheet, especially twister dives. If a diver accidentally writes a 5122 D (forward one somersault with one twist) and actually intended on performing a 5132 D (forward one-and-one-half somersault with one twist); the diver will need to execute the dive written on the dive sheet, or it will be a failed dive.