

PAR FOR THE COURSE

By Carole L. Cooney

In the 1920s this expression, which came from golf, was broadened to include other activities. In golf, “par” is the number of golf strokes it usually takes for a golf expert to play a course. That’s how “par for the course” came to mean a typical or expected result. Related expressions are “up to par” meaning satisfactory and “below par” meaning unsatisfactory.

Setting: The Amigos Swimming Pool

Characters:

Narrator

Joan

Shelly

Christy

Narrator: At the nearby public swimming pool, Joan and her friends were swimming. Shelly was having trouble with different strokes so Christy was giving her some help. Joan was practicing freestyle for an upcoming competition.

Shelly: Hey, Christy, can’t I just dog-paddle around awhile. I’m tired from trying to do the Crawl.

Christy: Shelly, you’ll never learn if you give up. Come on, let’s practice the kick.

Narrator: The two girls swim to the edge of the pool.

Christy: Now hang onto the side and flutter your legs. Okay. That was good but a bit “below par.” Come on, move those legs faster.

Shelly: I’m trying...*I’m trying!*

Joan: Whew! What a workout. I think I’m close to “par for the course.” Would one of you watch me and see that I don’t stay under the water beyond the 15-meter mark.

Shelly: I’ll do it!

Christy: No you won’t. You’ve got to keep practicing the flutter kick.

Shelly: Do I *have* to?

Christy: Do you want to learn how to swim or not?

Shelly: Oh, Okay.

Narrator: Christy lifts herself out of the pool and walks to the 15-meter mark.

Christy: Okay. Joan. I’m watching you. Ready, set, go.

Narrator: Joan dives into the water and glides beyond the 15-meter mark. She stops and turns to Christy.

Joan: How did I do?

Christy: Well, it was sort of “below par” because you went beyond the 15-meter mark. Do you want to try again?

Narrator: Joan climbs out of the pool and gets ready to make another dive.

Christy: How are you doing, Shelly? Do you want to count down for Joan?

Shelly: Sure! Anything to stop fluttering. Okay. Joan? One, Two, Three!

Narrator: Joan dives cleanly into the water and glides to the 15-meter mark. She stops.

Shelly: Yeah! Way to go! You did it! That was “par for the course!”

Joan: Now the trick is to do that every time. Are you ready to call it a day? I’m beat.

Shelly: Will you watch me do the Crawl? I’m not sure I’m getting it right.

Christy/Joan: Sure.

Narrator: Christy and Joan watch Shelly attempt to do the Crawl.

Joan: Make sure your face is in the water and turn it from side to side. That’s it, Shelly. Why don’t you join her, Christy?

Narrator: Joan watches with a big smile on her face. Her friends are mastering the Crawl and she’s proud of them.

Joan: Great going, Christy and Shelly. I’d say *we all* did “par for the course” in swimming today.