

# Entering Meets

## Open Meets

You notice on the e-news (or website) that something called an Open Meet is coming up and that entries need to be in by a specific date. The Fixture List/Gala Entry on the website contains Conditions for the meet: a programme of events, details of the promoter's conditions, qualifications times and finally an entry form and/or offers to officiate form, and this will details the cost of entry. It all looks very daunting, but actually it isn't.

### So, what is an Open Meet?

Unlike a club gala/league fixture, swimmers aren't selected as part of a club team, they qualify for the meet based on their PBs. Although they are representing the club, they are, to a large part, swimming for them self and a time in each event. Also, unlike club galas, swimmers from any club can enter providing they meet the entry criteria so the competition is both wide and varied. Typically the coaches select which particular Open Meets the club will attend and support and give guidance on which swimmers should attend and which events should be entered.

Where the club supports an Open Meet there will usually be a Coach and/or a Team Manager present on poolside to look after the swimmers and ensure they are in the right place at the right time to swim in their events (known as whips or clerks of the course), so don't panic when you hear of swimmers being called to the whipping area.

OK, so the coaches select specific Open Meets for the club to attend, how do you work out if your little swimmer should attend and if so which events they should enter?

In part, some of these decisions are made for you as every Open Meet is licensed with the ASA and part of that licensing process determines what level the event is aimed at. It also determines the number and level of qualification for the officials and potentially whether such things as electronic timing are in place.

There are four levels of Open Meet licensing, with each level being defined by certain criteria and the top being Level 1.

\*LEVEL 1 50m (Long Course) pool only. No upper limit times but minimum standard qualification times apply. Suitable for obtaining National or Regional QTs

\*LEVEL 2 25m (Short Course) pool only. May have upper limit times (although not faster than National Qualifying Times – see below) and minimum standard qualification times are required. Suitable for obtaining National or Regional qualifying times

\*LEVEL 3 Should have upper limit but may also have lower limit qualification times to reflect the standard at which the meet is aimed. Suitable for obtaining QTs for Regional Champs, county champs and Level 1 or 2 meets

\*LEVEL 4 Club championships only

National and Regional events are almost always Long Course events. Level 1 and 2 events are likely to have quite challenging lower limit QTs, i.e. your swimmer must have achieved a faster time in that particular event to enable them to enter. Also, some events will stipulate that the time must have been obtained since a particular date and potentially at a certain level of licensed meet. For example, you cannot achieve a National QT at a Level 3 or 4 meet, Regional QTs cannot be obtained at a Level 3 or 4 meet. Level 3 meets might have upper limit times (or may, for example, stipulate no swimmers with a National QT in any event can enter) to restrict the standard of swimmer entry. If your swimmer has a time faster than the upper limit time then they won't be eligible to enter that event. A Level 3 event may allow times achieved to be at the discretion and validation of the club, i.e. they don't have to have been previously obtained at a licensed meet.

Just to add a further variable, the Open Meet will generally take the age of the swimmer to be as at the last day of the meet itself although may sometimes be 31<sup>st</sup> December. Specific events at the meet will be run for specific age groupings and gender and each event will have times specific to that age/gender. Some meets will use single banded ages (e.g. 10 years old) others may have double banded ages (e.g. 9-10 years old or 10 and under – the latter may be shown as U11). Some specific races may not be open to certain ages, for example the youngest swimmers are often not eligible to compete in 100m events (this is because the 100m is considered a sprint and swimmers of this age do not have the physiological development to compete effectively over this distance).

So, because you've looked at the Fixture List on the website and have kept an eye out for Open Meet details on the e-news or more likely because your swimmer returned from their last training session asking if you have entered them for a particular meet you know your first potential Open Meet is coming up.

Assuming the date in the diary is free then the next thing is to find the QT criteria for the events suitable for the age/gender of your swimmer. Armed with the PBs you have diligently been recording and updating you are basically looking to see whether their time is faster than the lower limit qualification (or consideration time) and slower than any upper limit times that might be in place. You might find your swimmer is either too fast or too slow for every event they could potentially swim and hence your work for this Open Meet is done and you get a weekend off!

However, let's assume that you find that your swimmer is eligible for almost every event they could possibly swim. What you do is complete an MSC entry form, fill in the time and write out your cheque (or pay by BACS) for the best part of £50+ and hand it in. NO! You should stop and think a little. You should consider three other things:

Firstly the programme of events for the Open Meet and secondly how many swims in total and per session you are going to enter your swimmer for. The meet itself will be split into a number of sessions with each session comprising specific events. There's no standard magic formula here, e.g. 50m Free isn't always in the same session as 200m Breaststroke, so you need to study the programme of events carefully. Basically, you need to ask yourself some questions; if you enter your swimmer for every potential swim in every session; do you both really want to be at the pool from 7am to 7pm and/or the whole weekend? Are there some sessions/events which for whatever reason they aren't ready for or don't need to swim? Is there a combination of events which might compromise their performance in a single session for a specific event? Is swimming four separate events in a single session really a good idea and is your swimmer up to it in terms of fitness and stamina? **If you are in any doubt or need advice you should discuss it with your swimmers coach before submitting the entry.**

Then the third thing to consider is the distinction between Long Course and Short Course events. Long course means the event is swum in a 50m pool; short course is a 25m pool. There are conversion factors which allow you to convert a time achieved in a Long Course event to an equivalent Short Course time, an online convertor can be found on our website or on the ASA site or Sportsys website. Please do not use Pullbuoy as the calculation doesn't match the ASA/Sportsys one. Interestingly Long Course times are slower than Short Course times because the swimmers do not gain as much benefit from the turns off the wall. Obviously there are only a few venues offering 50m facilities.

The complication comes once your swimmer has short course times **AND** long course times!! You need to thoroughly check the conditions to ascertain what is acceptable e.g. short course only or converted times accepted... It is your responsibility to provide the time in the format that the conditions ask for. For instance, if it is a short course meet and the conditions state short course times or converted long course times will be accepted, it is your job to do the conversion and state the fastest time on the entry form. The same applies for a long course meet but reversed...

**DO NOT** place long *and* short times on your entry form (or a combination of both), they must be one or the other dependant on what is stated in the conditions! The SportSystem Equivalent Performance tool is available on our website (other converters such as Pullbuoy should not be used).

Once you have been through this process you need to ensure you **FULLY** complete the MSC entry form for the events your swimmer is entering and return this with your cheque. Correctly completed entry forms must be submitted with a cheque payable to MSC (or the BACS payment has **already** been paid) for the entry fee and **do not forget to include £1 admin fee per meet** (not per event!). Don't forget to put your swimmers ASA number on the form! If they are incomplete and returned to you, you will risk missing the closing date!

If you have any queries on the correct completion of your swimmers entry form, you must speak to the squad coach *before* the closing date. Any form not completed correctly when received by the volunteer processing the club entry will be rejected and passed back via the coach, you may not receive this back until days later by which point your swimmer will have missed out on being entered...

So, that's it, you put the date in the diary noting all the swims you've entered and await the big day! Well not quite, there's one last hurdle. All submitted eligible entries for Open Meets aren't necessarily accepted, some are based on fastest first, some first come first served, some only publish consideration times and will set the qualification time based on the number of entries they receive; all of these conditions should be made clear in the Promoters conditions for the meet.

The point for you is that whilst your entry is all in order you will only be able to swim at the event if the entry for that particular event is accepted. You will get details of which events your swimmer has been rejected for if the meet is oversubscribed. Having got this it is a good to check the accepted entries (often on the host club website) against the sessions and programme of events as you might find it changes your plans for the day, e.g. one swim in the first session of the day and then 4 in the last session might make logistics tricky. There are no refunds for accepted entries, so if you drop out of miss a swim your entry fee for that event is forfeited. If your swimmer is rejected for an event by the organisers then a refund will be available, but not until it is received into MSC's bank account.

To enable swimmers to get times (PB's) you can enter your swimmer to a Level 3 meet without them. Just place a tick in the time box and then talk to the squad coach! Do not submit the form until this is done! If your swimmer does not meet the lower QT's, then again, you must talk to the squad coach! This only applies to Level 3 meets: to enter Level 2 or above, you must have met the qualifying time criteria!

**So please remember a few things:**

It is your responsibility to ensure the entry form is prepped for ease of processing; any problems and the entry *will be* rejected by the volunteer.

**Ask questions of the squad coach prior to the closing date**

Clarify times/issues with the squad coach prior to the closing date

Don't forget the closing date is the **LAST** day not **THE** day to submit entries

If you miss the deadline, please do not ask for leniency as a refusal often offends...

Hope that helps clarify things.

Examples of completed forms:

Event Number	Event	Entry Time SC	Entry Time LC
4	100M BACKSTROKE	1:23.6*	1:24.53
6	100M FREESTYLE	1:18.6*	1:16.74
11	200M BREASTSTROKE	3:34.1*	3:36.54
15	200M FREESTYLE	2:43.33	—
21	50M BREASTSTROKE	45.5*	46.20
26	100M BREASTSTROKE	1:41.5*	1:42.75
30	50M BUTTERFLY	38.7*	39.16

£5.00 Per event PLUS £1 admin fee Total Fee = £36.00

The LC column shows a LC time but it has then been converted to a SC time and inserted in the SC column (along with an asterisk and explanation just to be on the safe side) The 200 Free time is a SC time only



Event Number	Event	Entry Time SC	Entry Time LC
5	50M Breaststroke	53.10	*
7	200M Backstroke	3:40.21	*
10	100M Breaststroke	1:52.60	*
14	50M Butterfly	50.14	*
16	50M Backstroke	47.30	*
27	50M Freestyle	37.60	*
31	100M I.M	1:41.05	*

£2 Per event PLUS £1 admin fee Total Fee = £36.00

A simple asterisk (and times ending in 0) confirm these are LC conversions to SC times



Event Number	Event	Entry Time SC	Entry Time LC
5	50 Breast		39.45
8	50 back	39.15	
10	100IM	1:17.30	
14	200 Free	3:01.34	2:58.76
18	400IM	5:47.32	
24	200Fly		4:31.50
£.....5.50..... Per event PLUS £1 admin fee		Total Fee =	34.00

Is this a LC or SC meet? One or other of the columns times needs converting

