



WSC Information Pack: Entering Meets

- Information on forthcoming meets is available from various sources:
 - ✓ Your Swim Coach
 - ✓ The Windsor Swimming Club website under “Calendar”
 - ✓ The Notice Board
 - ✓ The Open Meet Secretaries
- With levels of experience and ages differing within each squad, not everyone in a squad will necessarily be suited to the same meets. Coaches will advise on which meets are suitable for you and the events they would like you to enter. Check the web page and notice board regularly for information. Ask your coach whether the meet is suitable for you. One of the parents will have offered to take on the role of Open Meet Secretary. *The Open Meet Secretary does not decide which squads or swimmers are offered which meets/events and any queries in these areas must be addressed to the coaching team. Some events (e.g. Thames Valley, National Swimming League) involve being chosen for the team, most other meets simply depend on whether you have the necessary qualification times.*
- Swimmers who have not yet reached their ninth birthday are only (under ASA rules) able to participate in Internal events. See the notes on Novice Gala’s at the end of this booklet.
- Fill in the entry form (hard copy or off the web site) and give it/send it to the Open Meet Secretary together with the appropriate entry fee -all cheques must be **made out Windsor Swimming Club, not the host club** - before the specified club closing date, i.e. not the host club’s own date as that is the deadline for all forms to reach them.
- You will need to state on the form your age, gender and your best time for each event you are entering. The Open Meet Secretary has to vouch for times being valid and, for some meets (such as Districts) you have to specify exactly where you achieved that particular time.
- **Please take great care to supply all the information that the form requests, and do so legibly.** Mistakes can result in the host club refusing your entry.
- **ASA numbers:** To enter licensed meets you must have an ASA Registration Number. If you are unsure please contact the ASA Registration Secretary, who will advise you. Alternatively, visit the ASA web page, under Rankings you will find information on Home Country swimmers, type in your surname and your registration information will come up. If you are not listed you can add Application Pending on your entry form and Cindy Bingham will process your paperwork asap.
- **Short-course or long-course?** The great majority of meets are in short-course (25-metre) pools and entry forms require times swum in such pools. Some meets are held in long-course pools (ie those swum in 50m pools) and may require long-course times. These are slightly slower than their short-course equivalents, because there are more turns in a short-course race and the turn is the fastest part of the race. You can find the official ASA conversion pages on the Windsor SC web page or you can also find an unofficial converter at <http://www.pullbuoy.co.uk>
- Open meets will be entered on the Windsor SC calendar on the web page. A link to a cover letter from the Open Meet Secretary (giving closing date information) and the Meet information pack (containing entry forms, qualifying times etc) will be listed. Details will be posted on the Windsor SC Notice Board at Windsor Leisure Centre. A limited number of copies will be available poolside or from your coach.
- Your entry form, with cheque payable to Windsor SC, must be submitted to the Open Meet Secretary by the designated closing date (not the host club closing date). It is vital you meet this closing date as all the information from every Windsor entry has to be collated, entered into a specific system and submitted with one cheque covering all the club’s entries by the host closing date.
- Many meets are now **FIRST COME FIRST SERVED** - so we cannot risk waiting for late entries since we will miss out on swims.
- If the Meet runs with entry cards these will be given to you as soon as we receive them. This will usually be about a fortnight before the meet, but some clubs cut it fine and only issue them the week before. If it is a cardless meet the host club will put details of the accepted swims on their web page. We will also endeavour to put the information on the Notice Board as early as we can.

- Most meets no longer issue entry cards, , but for those that do you get one card for each swim, usually pink for girls and blue for boys, and you should check that the details are as on the form you submitted.
- Meets without cards will either require you to sign in (register) for every event on the day of the meet (usually before the end of each warm up session) OR will operate a withdrawal system ie you have to withdraw from races otherwise they will assume you are swimming all the events you have entered. If you do not withdraw, races will be run with empty lanes which makes it difficult for your fellow swimmers to race the best they can.
- Until the day of the meet look after your cards carefully - on the day of the meet, post them in the cards box before the deadline, which will usually be around the time at which the warm-up starts. Cards are usually posted on a session-by-session basis, or day-by-day for more extended meets.
- We hope that you will win lots of medals and if you do, we have a protocol that we insist that you abide by when you are presented with them. Please wear your club tracksuit or shirt on the podium. Not only does it show pride in Windsor Swimming Club, but is, in some cases, a Child Protection requirement.
- **British Age Group Categories or BAGCATS for short** is the system of allocating points for swims in younger age groups - for girls up to and including age 13 and boys up to 14. Essentially, any time in any event in any age group attracts a certain number of points and prizes are awarded at County level and above on this basis as well as for individual events. You do, however, need a computer programme to work it out. The mechanics needn't concern us here, but are fully explained at www.britishswimming.org One or two club meets also offer BAGCATS competitions.
- There are different levels of Meets and here is an attempt to break it down:
 - ✓ Internal: wholly within the club (time trials, novice galas, club championships)
 - ✓ Open / Graded / Licenced Meets: hosted by the club with other clubs invited to attend;
 - ✓ County championships (Berks and South Bucks ASA);
 - ✓ District championships, for us ASA South East Region
 - ✓ National championships at open, youth and age-group levels;
 - ✓ League Galas: the autumn National Swimming League for all age groups and the spring Thames Valley Junior League for 12s and under and Junior Arena League. Refer to the National Swimming league web page. Swimmers will be selected for the team and told which event(s) they will swim. If you are selected for a team event, Congratulations; it is a great achievement to represent Windsor SC.
 - ✓ **Club championships:** We expect that all swimmers in the Competitive Groups will enter the annual Club Championships, which are usually held starting in July, and going through to September/October. (Sprints in July) - Check web page calendar for details. Times acquired at club champs can be used to enter County Championships. Please see a separate Information Pack for more details on Club Championships
 - ✓ **Other club events:** The Windsor SC Licensed Meet is normally held in January. A Level 3 meet has also just been added to our meet calendar in May. Check our calendar for forthcoming events.
- The principles apply equally to meets hosted by other clubs. Unless you are joining as an experienced swimmer, you will almost certainly start out with **graded meets**, also known as B-grades. A few offer a simultaneous C-grade category. Meets are "graded" (Level 1/2/3 or A/B/C) to provide differing levels of competition/entry requirements.
- Entries for graded meets will only be accepted from swimmers whose best time is SLOWER THAN a specified time for each swim. So if you pick up a form and the entry time looks daunting, don't worry - it just means you won't get in if you are already FASTER THAN the time.
- It is always possible, but unlikely, that a particular swim will attract more entries than the organizers can accommodate, in which case the slowest entrants or those entered with no time may be unlucky. If you do have a time, or the possibility of a time trial (speak to your coach) please ensure you use it on the entry form. **Don't be nervous if it's your first B-grade and you get allocated a swim but don't yet have an entry time - plenty of others will be in the same position and you'll swim in the same heats as them. And who knows, you might well be faster than some who already have times and just not yet have had the chance to prove it. Go for it!**
- Entrants are quite rightly on their honour not to fake times on entry forms and apart from damaging the club's reputation, it won't do you any good - on the day "speeding tickets" rather than medals are awarded for beating the entry time. In some meets this is a straightforward calculation, others allow a slight margin. (Of course, you may enter in good faith and be in such great form you still get a ticket, and there's no shame in that!)
- **Open Meets** are available for all standards of swimmer, from novice to senior international. Each meet has a licensing level according to the purpose of the competition and they all have qualifying or consideration times.

- ✓ **Level 1:** is the highest level of meets and aimed at National qualifiers, or swimmers close to National qualification who are looking to achieve National qualifying times. Level 1 meets only have lower qualification times ie swimmers must be faster than the entry times shown. A Level One meet is not allowed to use the “first come first served” method of selecting swimmers therefore giving the very fastest swimmers the chance to compete. Level One meets are now also held only in 50m pools
- ✓ **Level 2:** is aimed at District qualifiers and swimmers who are looking to achieve Regional or National qualifying times. Level 2 and 3 meets also have lower qualification times, swimmers must be faster than the lower limit but slower than the upper limit. Level 2 meets can only be run in 25m Pools
- ✓ **Level 3:** is aimed at swimmers looking to achieve County qualification and is for all swimmers below Regional level. The meet will have a lower and an upper qualification time and your times must be faster than the lower times and slower than the upper time.

- National qualifying times are accepted from meets licensed at level 1 & 2.
- District qualifying times are accepted from meets licensed at level 1, 2 & 3.
- **Licensed meets:** This term has now replaced "designated meets". These are the only meets via which you can qualify for national competitions, and for ASA South East Districts.
- As national times are so prized competition just to get into licensed meets is often fierce, and for those swum long-course (i.e. in 50 metre pools) it has become even more so, for reasons explained below. Some meets offer the full range of events swum at national level, but others where the hosts' pool time is restricted may not include events above 400m. Competition to get into long-course 200 and 400 IMs and the rare 800 and 1500 freestyle is particularly tough. Some licensed meets may in turn accept only entry times which have been swum at other licensed meets. This is because these are all checkable via the ASA database at www.britishswimming.org which lists all swims at such meets.
- Meets will be swum either in single-year age groups or with double years. Being in the younger year of a two-year band makes it harder to get in, but don't worry - the boot will be on the other foot next year!
- The longer you have been swimming, the more of a feel you will get for the likelihood of being accepted for a particular swim. As mentioned above, if an entry is rejected a refund is usually made, but unrealistic entries create unnecessary work both at our end and the host club's.
- Needless to say, it is particularly important to use genuine times when entering licensed meets as an entry on a false time may deny someone else trying to enter on their genuine time a rightful place in the race.
- **Time trials:** Even if you have been turned down for a swim, you may still be accepted for a time trial on the day, subject to paying the entry fee on the day (which is sometimes a little more than the original entry fee) Ask your coach's advice.
- **County championships:** These are swum over a series of Saturdays in the spring, and are also designated meets. You will need to have achieved a qualifying time for each event you wish to enter. Qualifying times are published well in advance and will be distributed with entry forms. There may also be "consideration times" for the youngest age groups, which may be accepted if an event and/or the whole program is under-subscribed.
- **ASA South East Districts:** The highest level of designated meet. Qualifying times are much more stringent than for Counties. You will need to specify where and when the time was achieved and the organizers may want to verify it.
- The District have three competitions per year, the Youth Championships for swimmers aged 15 to 19 & over (boys), 14 to 18 & over girls, BAGCAT Age Group Championships for swimmers aged 10 to 14 years (boys), 10 to 13 years (girls), the Open Championships for Senior (aged 17 years & over), and Junior (aged 16 years and under) swimmers. The Youth Championships are held at the beginning of May, the Age Groups, the middle of June and the Open Champs at the end of November.
- All the competitions are Long Course, which means they take place in a 50m pool. Swimmers have to gain qualifying times from designated meets in order to compete at these championships.
- Ages for the summer series are as of the last day of the championships. **Qualifying times need to be achieved at designated meets.** No qualifying times are set for the youngest age groups in 100-metre events - you can enter these only if you make the relevant 200-metre entry time. Although the meets are long-course, entries require short-course times.
- **Nationals & British Championships:** Required entry times for these competitions change from year to year. Full details on the ASA web page. www.britishswimming.org
- **National Championships:** These are the next step up from the Regional meets; again swimmers have to attain the qualifying standard in order to compete. As with the Region there are three levels of competition. The first is the National BAGCAT Championships, for swimmers aged 11 years to 14 years boys and 11 years to 13 years girls and is usually held late July early August. Then there's the National Youth Championships for boys aged 15/16 years and 17/18 years and girls aged 14/15 years and 16/17

years and these are usually held early to mid August and directly follow the Age Group Competition. Selections for all the World Class Start and Potential Programmes come from these competitions. The last National event is the ASA Long Course Championships, which is open to any age group attaining the qualifying times, but is mainly a senior event.

- All National events are held Long Course (50m pool) and the venue is normally in Sheffield.
- **The British Championships** are held each year. The first is the Long Course (50m pool), held in March/April and doubles as trials for Olympic, World, European Championships, Commonwealth Games, European Junior Championships and European Youth Olympics.

Administrators: Licensed Meets, etc: Open Meet Secretary

 Graded Meets: Graded Meet Secretary

Details of who is handling which meet is contained in the entry pack for each meet and for current names of the volunteers filling these administrative positions, please go to our website on www.windsor-sc.org.uk