



Swim England's Open Meet levels

Swim England's Open Meet levels are a system that categorises swimming competitions based on their difficulty level and the qualifications required for swimmers to participate. These levels range from 1 to 4, with Level 1 being the highest and Level 4 being the lowest.

Level 1 Meets:

Level 1 meets are long course events (50m) and cover National, Regional, and County Championships. The purpose of these meets is to enable athletes to achieve qualifying times for entry into National, Regional, and County Championships. A minimum qualifying time is required, and the submitted entry time can be verified in Rankings: <https://www.swimmingresults.org>. These times must be from Level 1 or 2 for National events and Level 1, 2, or 3 for Regional and County Championships.

Level 2 Meets:

Level 2 Meets are short course events (25m) covering National, Regional, and County Championships. Like Level 1 Meets, their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve qualifying times for entry into these championships. These competitions have qualifying times and are generally County Championships and other Open Meets.

Level 3 Meets:

Level 3 Meets can be both long and short-course events. Their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve times for entry into Regional and County Championships and other Meets at Level 1 or Level 2. These competitions generally use qualifying times and upper limit times (not faster than) to ensure that the meet stays as a development meet for up-and-coming and younger swimmers. Some Level 3 meets also accept unlicensed times for entry, which could be a time by a coach at training.

Level 4 Meets:

Level 4 Meets are entry-level events in pools 25m or 50m. They are for inexperienced athletes and swimmers seeking to compete outside their club environment. Borough Championships are an example of Level 4 Meets. These meets may have qualifying times in the same way as Level 3 meets, but they have more freedom in using electronic timing and qualified officials.

It's important to note that **Open Meets** are where the swimmer decides what events to enter, and they will only accept entries until their closing date. If oversubscribed, they will reject some swimmers from the programme. It is usually the slowest





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swimmers for an event (within each age group) that are scratched, so it is worth carefully selecting events for entry.

Open Meets and **Galas** are two different swimming events with unique characteristics and purposes.

Open Meets are individual competitions where the swimmer decides what events to enter. A swimming club usually hosts these meets and is open to all swimmers who meet any stated eligibility criteria. The aim of these meets is for swimmers to compete for medals and to register times for uploading to the official ASA Ranking database. Swimmers can then use these times to qualify for invited events such as County, Regional, and National swimming championships. Open Meets can be long (50m pool) or short (25m pool) events. They often have early starts and can mean long days for the participants.

On the other hand, **Galas** are team events where swimmers are selected to represent their club. The Head Coach and Team Manager decide who is swimming in which events – this may be an individual event or a relay. There is no charge for swimming, but spectators are charged admission. These usually take place on Saturday Afternoon/Evenings. Swimmers are asked to stay at a Gala until the end to cheer on their teammates – this is a significant part of being selected for the Team. Points are awarded for places in each race, and the overall total at the end of the gala determines the winning team/club.

The main difference between Open Meets and Galas is that in Open Meets, swimmers compete as individuals and choose their events, while in Galas, swimmers are selected to represent their club and the events they participate in are decided by the coach. Both types of events play a crucial role in the development of swimmers, offering different experiences and opportunities for growth.

The duration of an Open Meet in swimming can vary depending on the number of events, the number of participants, and the efficiency of the meet's organisation. A typical Open Meet lasts 2.5 to 4 hours per session.

Open Meets usually take place over weekends, often starting on Friday evening. Saturday and Sunday competitions start in the morning and typically run into the afternoon. Swimmers are limited to how many events they can compete in each day – typically three or four per day (excluding relays), to help control the length of the meet.





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Sometimes, meets are scheduled for a single evening (usually Friday). All age groups swim in the same session in these meets, and the meet typically lasts about 2.5 to 3 hours.

It's important to note that the duration of a meet can also be affected by factors such as equipment repairs, breaks for swimmers to prepare for long events, and the general flow of the meet. Therefore, while these are typical durations, the actual length of a specific Open Meet may vary.

Meet Program and Schedule

The meet program, a heat sheet, lists the swimmers competing in each event, including the heat and lane assignments. The hosting club typically sets the meet schedule and includes a list of the events. Typically, the events by distance:

- 50m fly, back, breast, free
- 100m, free, back, breast, free, IM
- 200m, free, back, breast, free, IM
- 400m, free, IM
- 800 and 1500m, free, and often by age, gender, and relay type.

Coach's Decision

Coaches play a significant role in determining which events their swimmers will participate in. They consider many factors, including the swimmer's abilities, previous performances, and potential for improvement. For instance, if a swimmer has not competed in a particular event for a while, coaches may choose that event to help the swimmer become well-rounded and improve in all strokes. Coaches also consider the swimmer's workload and the event schedule when making decisions.

Swimmer's Choice

In an Open Meet, swimmers can decide which events to enter. They can choose based on their strengths, interest in a particular stroke or distance, or desire to improve in a specific area. However, there is usually a limit to the number of events each swimmer can register for.

In conclusion, determining events in an Open Meet is a collaborative process involving the meet organisers, the coaches, and the swimmers. Each party plays a crucial role in ensuring that the chosen events suit the swimmer's abilities and goals and align with the overall meet schedule and program.

