



## Brockworth Swimming Club - Guide to Competitions

As a parent or new member you may have a little or perhaps no experience of the different types of swimming competitions, which can seem quite daunting, so I hope the following provides a useful resource.

It aims to cover the types of Galas / Meets that the swimmers may be involved in, how to enter, what can be expected on the day and what parents/swimmers need to prepare for a successful competition swim.

As a competitive swim club, it is our aim to prepare all swimmers for Galas and as such, it is expected that all members will compete in Galas throughout their time with the club. If you are unsure if your swimmer is ready to compete, coaches are happy to meet and discuss with you, please contact the club direct. We understand that there are a range of commitments to swimmers competing, including financial, time and travel, so we aim to offer entry to a number of competitions throughout the year to be as inclusive as possible.

### Types of Competition

#### **Open Meets – Supported by the club**

Open meets are events which are open to all swimmers who meet the relevant age (over 9) and time qualifications for the event. Each swimmer will compete against swimmers from several different swim clubs. The primary objective is to achieve improved times for themselves with medals as a welcome bonus. Achieving a qualifying time through an ASA Open meet is the only way that a swimmer can qualify for the County or Regional championships.

The club attends various open meets throughout the year, at different levels, so that all our swimmers have a chance to compete at the right level for them. We would like to see swimmers from across the various squads take part in suitable open meets throughout the year. All times achieved are recorded on the Swim England rankings database ([www.swimmingresults.org](http://www.swimmingresults.org))

Times achieved at open meets provide the swimmer with a reference point to monitor progress and promote a sense of achievement, only offered through competing.

The club will send out an email when a supported open meet is coming up. There is usually an entry form attachment or a link for you to follow to download and print the relevant forms. Open Meets are held to give swimmers the chance to choose events they want to swim - so you can enter as many or as few as you like. The forms will usually ask for your swimmers 'Entry Time' so they can be entered with similar speed swimmers for a close race! Your swimmers recorded times for each race can be found online [www.swimmingresults.org](http://www.swimmingresults.org) and you can search for your swimmer using their name or ASA number. If your swimmer has no recorded time for that stroke, or has not raced before, please speak to the coaches about an appropriate entry time.



Entry forms should be read and completed carefully to avoid mistakes and missing closing dates. Please note that we set our own closing dates for supported meets, so that the Competition Secretary has enough time to process our entries, to meet the closing date of the organising club. If you miss the deadline or fail to pay, entries cannot be accepted.

### What usually happens at an Open Meet?

Most open meets are held at the weekend, over one or two days. Open meets are split into sessions of up to 3 hours each. Depending on the number of races your child enters, you could be there all weekend! Since COVID, a lot of pools have reduced spectating arrangements, so we will communicate individual meet arrangements with parents when entry is confirmed - but it is generally expected that a parent/carer will attend during the sessions that their child is swimming.

Warm up times will be given on the entry paperwork for each event and it is very important to arrive about 30 minutes before warm-up time. There is usually a sign-in desk where swimmers must sign-in when they arrive. Failure to sign-in may mean your child won't be able to swim, so please let them know how important it is. Swimmers will need to enter the changing area without parents and parents will need to go to the spectator area or can enter poolside if they are volunteering. There will be coaches and Team Helpers on poolside to help swimmers prepare for races. Depending on numbers competing and event schedules there can often be a while between races for each swimmer, so it is important that swimmers remain sat with their club and do not leave poolside without speaking to a club volunteer.

### **Open Meets – Not supported by the club**

The club may choose not to support some events during the year for various reasons; clashes with other competitions, too many galas/meets in the calendar, and poor timing in relation to the annual training plan. If you decide to enter an unsupported event independently of the club then you must get prior permission from the Head Coach.

### **Gloucester County Championships (Youths 14+ & Age Groups 9-12 Years) & South West Regional Championships**

These are highly anticipated events in our annual calendar. Swimmers must achieve qualifying times within a qualifying window to participate in these events (qualifying windows are usually Jan-Dec for County's , Oct-May for Regionals). Qualifying times can only be achieved at the correct level of licensed open meet (Level 3 and above for Regional entries). Specific dates, qualifying criteria and entry information are made available to our members as soon as it is available.

### **Team Galas**

#### What is a Gala?



Great fun and great for building team spirit! These are much smaller swimming events where Brockworth Swimming Club will put a team of swimmers together to race various events against other clubs. Swimmers are chosen from across the various squads to compete in their given age range.

The biggest gala event we attend is Cotswold League galas during the early months of the year. This is a fantastic event, so as many swimmers as possible can experience the gala format and competitive swimming in a light-hearted, friendly and relaxed team atmosphere (although they can be loud when the cheering starts!) The heats are usually held on a Saturday evening lasting between 2½ and 3 hours. We usually put on coach travel from Brockworth to these events as they can be all around the South West so it reduces travel and is also a great way of making friends in the team! There is usually limited spectating, so adult places are usually limited to parent helpers - always gratefully received!

We publish the gala dates on our website as soon as they are announced, therefore if swimmers are chosen, we expect them all to attend. We do understand this isn't always possible so please respond promptly when invited to attend a gala; this gives us time to invite other swimmers if your swimmer can't attend and ensures we have a full team.

The different clubs take it in turns to host the galas. These galas are a great introduction to competitive swimming. Swimmers do not have to dive or tumble turn if they are not able to and younger swimmers are only expected to swim 25m. Swimmers compete for points for their club rather than for themselves and the coaches pick which race they swim in which may be an individual race or a relay.

Times achieved in these 'unlicensed' team galas like Cotswold League do not count towards qualification to the County or Regional championships.

## **Useful information about Gala's and Open Meets**

### What to bring – For Swimmers

Swimmers should bring the following in their swimming bag:

- 2 towels – one for drying, one to sit on, possibly a 3rd if doing multiple sessions
- 2 swimming costumes/trunks
- 2 pairs of goggles (in case one pair gets lost or breaks)
- A T-shirt – preferably a Brockworth Swimming Club T-shirt, please contact the club to order
- A Brockworth Swimming Club hat - please contact the club to order
- Poolside shoes – flip flops or similar
- Plenty to drink - ideally squash or water (nothing fizzy). It can get very hot poolside and it is important to stay hydrated.
  - Snacks – fruit, nuts, pasta, rice, sandwiches, wraps etc. When attending a long meet it is important that children have enough food to eat. If they have a lot of races, they need to get used to eating smaller quantities more often to keep topped up throughout the day without getting too full to race.



- Things to do such as books, magazines, games. At smaller Galas electronic devices are discouraged so that children can enjoy the team atmosphere and support other team members but at longer Open Meets many children choose to bring a phone, ipad or similar. Please ensure they do not leave anything valuable in the changing rooms and be aware that valuables are taken at your own risk.
- Tracksuit/shorts to wear over swimming costumes between races

*Please remember all belongings are the swimmer's responsibility, not that of the club.*

#### What to bring – For Parents/Carers.

- Wear layers – swimming pools get very hot, but you may be cold when you leave, especially for longer sessions!
- Bring plenty of drinks and food! Your child will probably want more than you have packed and you will probably get hungry too – it's all the shouting! Not all venues have cafe's or food nearby.
- Mobile phone - with **Meet Mobile** App installed!

Meet Mobile is a dedicated swimming meet app, where you can see the meet information, including your swimmers heat line ups, entry time and results, which are usually uploaded in real time - with added information like how much slower/quicker they were from their entry time etc. The basic app is free but there is a small yearly charge if you wish to use all functions - well worth it if you are going to be entering multiple open meets. This is not usually used for the smaller gala's ie Cotswold League.

- Cash and debit cards – there is always an entrance fee which varies from club to club and depending on the level of meet. There is also usually a raffle and sometimes (at open meets) you also have to pay for a programme. Sometimes there is a swim shop and/or meet hoodies or T-shirts for sale.

#### Other useful things to note

- Ages for Galas and Open Meets - Please note that some events have age restrictions. This will usually be indicated on the meet pack. Sometimes the age is age on the date of competition, and sometimes it is the age on 31st December of that year. The meet pack will specify which it is.
- How to find your child's Swim England number - All members of BSC are also members of Swim England (SE). You will find your child's number by going to the following internet address and entering your surname:- <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/club-member-check/>
- How to find your child's times - When you enter licensed meets, the swimming times achieved will be entered onto the Swim England National Rankings database and can be found here: <https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/> Only times achieved at licensed meets can be used for level 2 or 1 meets. Sometimes meets specify that the times must have been achieved during a certain time-period so look out for this in the conditions in the meet packs.
- Volunteering - Open Meets would not happen without a lot of volunteering parents! Nearly all the adults you see on poolside at an open meet (with the exception of some coaches) are volunteers. This includes the announcer, the officials (people in whites), people handing out medals, people on the door and many more. We ask all parents with swimmers at our own club's open meets to volunteer for at least one session. If you are



new to volunteering, you can always offer to shadow a role to learn more about it. Volunteers will still be able to watch their child swim and it does help pass the time. Sitting on the spectator seats watching a whole session can seem very hot and long at times! Some roles require further training but can be very rewarding.

Hopefully you found this information useful, but if you have any further questions or wish to speak to anyone at the club about any aspect of competing - please email [brockworthsc20@outlook.com](mailto:brockworthsc20@outlook.com)