



Gt Yarmouth SC

OPEN MEET GUIDE

Liam Harvey | August 2016

An Introduction to Open Meets

The aim of this guide is to help those new to the world of competitive swimming with the basics of Open Meets. Many parents who are new to swimming rarely have any idea what we they are supposed to do, what any of the 'technical terms' are or even how it all works. Hopefully by the time you finish reading this you'll have a much better idea of what's what in the swimming world (and I'll try to keep it as short and light hearted as possible!)

First of all though: acronyms, rule makers and some common phrases...

- British Swimming – these are the big guns, they are the governing body for all aquatic sport in Britain (diving, synchronised swimming, open water, water polo, and of course SWIMMING).
- The ASA - next in the food chain is the Amateur Swimming Association, this is the governing body for English swimming, they hold all the records of swimmers in England
- ASA Regulations – how you can and cannot swim in competition, basically the rules, if you break these you get disqualified – don't worry though, this is rare thanks to our excellent coaching staff.
- ASA Rankings – these are a list of each individual swimmer's best times, also known as PB's or Personal Bests.
- ASA Number – this is like an insurance number, it is generated when you join the club and allows you to compete in open meets, but don't worry you don't need to know it.
- Open Meets – well that is what this whole thing is about so just keep on reading!

What is an Open Meet?

It is a competition organised by a Club which is open to members of other swimming clubs to enter. At GYSC these competitions are listed on the website and brought to swimmers and parent's attention by email. Our Head Coach decides which of the many and frequent Open Meets we as a club will enter. Entry forms are emailed to you direct by either our Head Coach or Junior Squad coach, by email. This email will contain a link for you to either accept or decline your attendance and also the entry form. You will need to fill in the details on the entry form and return, along with payment, to one of the coaching team. Once we have collated all the entries we send them on the way to the host club, who processes them on your behalf. About 1-2 weeks before the competition we will post "accepted Entries" onto the GYSC website. You will need to check your entries are correct or let one of the coaching team aware if not. On the day of the competition the swimmers all sit together on poolside with the Head Coach and team managers. You swim in a race with people who have a similar time to you regardless of age.

Medals are awarded in age categories, so unfortunately winning your heat doesn't necessarily mean that you win your age category. Don't despair though – getting medals isn't everything – we want everyone to have FUN!

The 'Technical Terms' - Licensing and Levels

Most Open Meets are Licensed at different levels ranging from 1-4. Level 1 is the highest and level 4 is the lowest. For example, Club Champs are normally licensed at level 4 whilst a level 1 meet will have qualifying times set so only the fastest swimmers are able to attend. However entering a level 3 meet doesn't mean you're slow – National swimmers still enter these!

Why do we need Licensed Open Meets?

To be licensed a Meet has to conform to standards set by the ASA, for example the number of qualified poolside officials. The point of licencing is to make sure that people don't enter Counties, Regionals and Nationals with times that have been made up and to make sure that their technique and stroke is within ASA regulations. Only times achieved at licensed meets appear on the ASA Rankings database. You can see all your licensed times by going to the ASA Rankings website <https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest> and searching by either your surname or ASA number if you know it.

Qualifying Times

These are probably the most difficult thing to understand when you are first starting out as they can be expressed in a number of different ways – which is less than helpful! Firstly they will be either short course (times achieved in a 25 metre pool) or Long Course (times achieved in a 50 metre pool). This will always be clearly stated. They can then be:

- Upper Limit Times – this means you have to be slower than the time stated to enter. Often meets with Upper Limit times will allow swimmers with no official time to enter unless otherwise stated in the meet conditions.
- Lower Limit/Minimum Times – this means you have to be faster than the time stated.
- Upper and Lower Limit Times – here you have to be between the two times to enter.

Unfortunately, just because you meet an Open Meet entry time does not always guarantee acceptance of your entry. Sometimes meets are over-subscribed and swimmers get rejected.

Team Galas

Team galas, often referred to as B Grade galas are not licenced. The team is picked by the Head Coach and email invitations are sent to your email address direct, again with a link to confirm your attendance. Times set at these galas **cannot** be used to enter Counties, Regionals or Nationals.

GYSC is involved in several team galas, these include the Suffolk Summer League, Norfolk Junior League, and Norfolk County Relay Gala.

I hope that this has proved useful to anyone who wants to start entering open meets. If you have any further questions your Club Captains will be more than willing to help you (they don't bite so don't be shy!). You can find pictures of them on the Club website near the bottom; they are also at almost all open meets so if you're feeling a bit lonely or worried or scared talk to them – they've been through it all themselves remember!