



Open Meets and Galas – what’s the difference?

An Open Meet is where the swimmer decides what events to enter. Typically the cost is £5 - £7 per event and they are usually held over a weekend. Spectators also have to pay.

Galas are where swimmers are selected to represent the Club. The Head Coach and Team Manager decide who is swimming which events – this may be an individual event or a relay. There is no charge for swimming, but spectators will be charged admission. These usually take place on Saturday Afternoon/Evenings. Swimmers are expected to stay at a Gala until the end to cheer on their team mates – this is a very important part of being selected for the Team.

Open Meet Levels explained

Open meets are divided into '*licensed*', and '*unlicensed*'. This distinction refers to whether the meet has a licence from the ASA, who impose certain conditions for a meet to be licensed such as the requirement for officials to be qualified.

With '*unlicensed*' meets there are normally no qualifying times – but the times achieved in the meet then aren't entered on to the ASA Rankings.

The '*licensed*' meets fall into 4 classes –

Level 1 meets are held in 50m pools and will expect entry times to be converted to an equivalent 50m pool time if set in a 25m pool. Times recorded can be used as entry times for National & Regional Championships. Qualifying times will be used.

Level 2 meets are held in 25m pools, so you need provide times for 25m (you may need to convert from 50m pool times). Times recorded can be used as entry times for National & Regional Championships. Qualifying times will be used.

Level 3 meets can be held in 25m or 50m pools. Times recorded can be used for County or District qualification (and Level 1 & 2 meets). Qualifying times will be used plus 'upper limit' times ('not faster than').

Level 4 meets are relatively uncommon, and have been redefined for 2012 by the ASA to be for just one club entry (e.g. club championships).



Meets held in 50m pools are usually called 'Long Course (LC) meets, and 25m pools 'Short Course' (SC) meets.

The qualifying times for licensed meets reflect the different standards (fast for Level 1 and 2, not so fast for Level 3), and Level 3 meets will also have a 'not faster' than time. Some meets will issue 'speeding tickets' if you are too fast.

National qualifying times are accepted from meets licensed at level 1 & 2 (depending on whether National event is LC or SC).

Regional qualifying times are accepted from meets licensed at level 1, 2 & 3.

County qualifying times are accepted from meets licensed at level 1, 2, 3 & 4.

Examples of Open Meets

NPSC will compete at a number of meets during the season. Swimmers can enter depending on their age & times.

Level 1

Summer Nationals are Level 1, however there are a number of other Level 1 meets during the season. NPSC have attended such meets in Sheffield (Ponds Forge) but only the fastest swimmers are usually accepted.

Level 2

Winter Nationals are Level 2 and so are Counties because they are swum short course, unlike Summer Nationals. There are few Level 2 meets but these are good to compete in as they usually attract the faster swimmers.

Level 3

The majority of meets that NPSC attends are Level 3. These can be short course like CMK meets or long course like Luton.

Level 4

NPSC Progress Meets are licensed at Level 4 so that times appear on the ASA Rankings database and can therefore be used to enter other Open Meets if specified in the Promoters Conditions.



Galas

NPSC also competes in a number of galas – Mk Junior League, Chilterns League. Swimmers are selected by the Team Manager and Coach and will receive an invite via email. Unlike Open Meets, swimmers do not decide what they are swimming; this is decided by the coach. There are usually relays and a swimmer may be invited to a Gala as part of the relay team and may not get an individual swim.

First Come First Served Meets

These meets will accept entries until they are full. This is why the deadline for getting your entries in can seem very tight and often several months before the Open Meet. Usually an entire club is either accepted or rejected rather than individual swimmers.

Other Open Meets will accept entries until their closing date. If they are then oversubscribed they will reject (or scratch) some swimmers from the programme. It is usually the slowest swimmers for an event (within each age group) that are scratched, so it is worth carefully selecting events for such meets as you may end up with only 1 swim per session.

Qualifying Times

Depending on the level of the Open Meet there will be different qualifying criteria. It is the responsibility of the swimmer to ensure correct times are noted on the entry form. Many open meets now insist that times come from Licensed Meets (and are on the ASA Rankings database). They may also need to be swum within a certain time frame.

Times from Galas will not appear on the ASA website – it is the responsibility of the swimmer to maintain a record of their times from a Gala.

No Faster Than (NFT)



Some open meets set 'No Faster Than' times for entry. This means that the time entered cannot be faster than the time being entered. Entries exceeding this time will be rejected.

Upper / Lower Qualifying Times

The entry time must fall within the time band specified. Entries outside of this will be rejected.

No Time Entries

Unless specified, L3 meets and above will not accept No Time entries. There are very few open meets that accept No Time entries so it is really important to take advantage of these when you start swimming competitively otherwise the number of events a swimmer can enter during the season will be limited. NPSC Club Championships and Progress meets are a great way of getting times and are now licensed so the times will appear on the ASA Rankings database and can be used for entry into Open Meets and ONB County Championships.