

Guide to Opens

An open meet is different to a development gala in several ways, so requires more preparation. An open meet takes place over a longer period of time than other events, often a whole day or weekend rather than a single evening. Open meets are generally either 'age at the 31st December' or 'age on the day' (the age you will be on the last day of the open). Any swimmer aged 9 years or over can enter open meets provided they meet the entry qualification or consideration time for their age.

What you need on the poolside

You will need a Faversham club top, either a polo shirt or T-bag and poolside shoes. Some swimmers also wear shorts or tracksuit bottoms to keep warm. An extra towel to dry you off after the warm up is also a good idea. Bring plenty of drink and a light snack, like a cereal bar, to boost your energy after your warm up too. It is also a good idea to bring a spare set of goggles in case your first pair breaks.

Levels

The ASA operates a system of licencing to ensure that appropriate competition is offered to all abilities. There are presently four different licenced levels, level one being the highest.

Level 1: For swimmers seeking National and Regional qualification.

Level 2: For swimmers seeking National and Regional qualification.

Level 3: For swimmers seeking up to Regional Qualification or also for entry to Level 1 and 2 open meets.

Level 4: For swimmers seeking County Qualification, less experienced swimmers, or for Club events.

Entering Opens

During the course of the year the coaches choose which open meets Faversham S.C. wishes swimmers to attend based upon the appropriate level of competition. Details of the meet, such as the entry form and qualification times, are put on the notice board. Several weeks (or even months) before an open, swimmers can obtain an entry form from the Competition Secretary with details, date, available events, closing date etc. These details can also usually be found on the club's web site.

Open meet events are generally sign in sessions with the first session often requiring you to 'sign in' by 9:00am and the last session ending in the evening. Session details can also usually be found on the hosting club's website. Before entering any opens you should discuss the entry with your swimming coach, they will advise which events are appropriate.

Please clearly mark which events you want to enter, including your personal best time (PB) & return the form to the Competition Secretary with the correct amount of money or a cheque made payable to Faversham Swimming Club. The completed form should be returned, with your payment, by the closing date stated so that all the entries can be processed in good time before the closing date. This is to ensure that all our entries are accepted and to allow any queries to be sorted out early. If you miss the closing date you **will not** be able to participate.

Acceptance

Even though your times are inside the consideration or qualifying times your entry may not be accepted if the host club receives too many entrants. In this case the host club will reject entries starting with those nearest to the cut off time, i.e. the slower swimmers. The accepted entries will be posted on the notice board and on the host club's website. Refunds will be given via the club for any rejected entries. All the swimmers will be emailed with the details of their warm up times about a week before the event by the Competition Secretary.

Signing In/Out at meets (Opens)

You should take your ASA card along, as you may be required to present it for identification and proof of ASA membership. Most meets require you to 'sign in' against your name for each event. Signing in is required by a certain time, usually before the warm up for each session but be aware some meets have a queue to sign in. The signing in sheet is usually found by the changing rooms and includes one sheet per event, printed with the swimmer names in alphabetical order. If you are swimming in more than one event in the session make sure you sign in for all the events in that session. Often sheets for afternoon sessions come out during the earlier session, so, if you have finished your morning swimming, you can sign in early and avoid the pre warm up rush.

Some meets involve signing out. At these meets there is usually a financial penalty for not signing out. If you are unable to attend a competition due to illness etc., please email the specified coach as soon as possible so that you can be 'signed out'.

On the day of the Open meet

Warm up is from 30 minutes to an hour before the event starts and is usually separated for boys / girls and, depending on numbers; the older swimmers will often warm up after the younger ones. There is no diving initially during the warm up but towards the end of each warm up session, listen for the announcement, some lanes will be dedicated as sprint lanes where swimmers can dive in and sprint one length, get out at the other end and walk back.

When the event starts, announcements will be made calling each event in turn. When the announcement is made for the relevant events you will be sent down to the Marshalling area by your poolside coach.

In the Marshalling area you should put your goggles on your head or have them down around your neck. If you are carrying them it is possible that you may put them down or lose them. You should also put your swimming hat on in plenty of time.

Swimmers will be lined up in the Marshalling area in heat order and then be asked to go forward and stand behind the relevant lane. The timekeeper for your lane will ask you for your name to confirm you are in the right place.

Depending on how many competitors there are in an event there can be lots of heats and it can take a long time. After your last event you may go home. However you must tell the Coach, so he/she knows who is still on the poolside, you don't have to wait for the end of the event.

Results

When the races have been swum, the times of each swimmer are recorded on the computer system. A results sheet is then produced after all the races for a particular event have been swum. Results sheets are then displayed around the poolside for the swimmers and around the spectator area as soon as it is possible to do so. Some events now use smartphone apps to publish results. It's best to ensure you have installed the app prior to the event.

Speeding Tickets

For some open meets there are a set of upper cut-off times (usually UQT), which, if you swim faster than these times, earns you a 'speeding-ticket'. Check the small print in the gala conditions, usually found on the host clubs website, to see if there will be speeding tickets. Getting a speeding ticket means that the swimmer is not eligible for medals but it is a very positive indicator of a 'good time' for that race, in that age group. So you should be reassured that a speeding-ticket is a good thing just as is a top six or personal-best.

Medals

Generally medals are awarded for the top three in each stroke/age group. But sometimes there are medals for 4th to 6th places too. These can be collected at the event once the results are published.

Results at the club/ Press report

The Faversham S.C. results are published as soon after the event as possible. These will then be displayed on our notice board at the next training session. The Press Officer will also arrange for a photograph to be taken of all the Faversham swimmers who competed in the event. This is then submitted with a press report to the Faversham News ready to be published in the following week's newspaper.