



Why all swimmers should enter competitions

At BOBCATS we love competitions and the benefits they bring to our members who take part. We pride ourselves on running our own highly successful meets and regularly hold league matches and club championships. It's not just about being the fastest, there are lots of reasons why we think competitions are great:

- 1. They can be great fun.** Win or lose, competitions are a great place to build lifelong friendships with other swimmers. There isn't much time during training sessions for swimmers to chill-out and spend time with each other, a lot of swimmer's best memories come from the time travelling to meets, staying over or just hanging out together on poolside.
- 2. Teaches swimmers to set goals and make plans.** Swim meets provide the opportunity to work towards specific goals. This requires swimmers to make a plan and try hard to achieve it, something that will translate well to whatever they choose to do outside of the pool.
- 3. Learning to cope with disappointments.** Sometimes things don't go to plan, despite giving everything, swimmers may lose the race they wanted to win, come short of breaking their personal best, or their goggles filled up with water straight off the dive. Realising that things won't always go our way and understanding that the path forward is one we must pave, is a lesson that will come in handy during all stages of life.
- 4. Racing is the ultimate feedback.** Training can be demanding and it's important to be able check your progress regularly. It's difficult to fake the nerves and adrenaline you get in the moments before your race, competitions provide the opportunity to see how your skills and fitness hold up when challenged. Once the race is over you not only get a clear idea of just how fast you can go but can also figure out where the next improvements will come from.
- 5. Teaches the value of hard work.** The most dangerous swimmer in the pool is often the one who has just missed out on the win or a best time. Coming that close acts as motivation to double down on their effort and commitment in the pool so that they achieve their goals next time.
- 6. Gives you the opportunity to redefine your limits.** There is nothing quite like swimming faster than you ever have. That feeling of looking up at the scoreboard and seeing a number faster than you thought was possible. When you achieve a best time, your limits are forever altered, this can be a great boost to self-belief and confidence.



7. Camaraderie. Although swimming is often perceived as an individual sport, the swim meet is a team atmosphere. Whether it is taking a coach to a match, staying overnight for away meets or relay races, swim meets bring athletes together. Teammates cheer for one another, screaming themselves hoarse even though they have a swim of their own shortly after. A sense of camaraderie is inevitable when you go to battle together for a full weekend, each pushing the boundaries of what is possible.