



## Competitive Swimming at CWSC – The Basics

CWSC squads compete in many events during the year. But what does it all mean?? Here are some wording and definitions to get you around the “delicacies” of competitive swimming!

<b>EVENT</b>	<b>CWSC SQUADS</b>	<b>POOL LENGTH</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS</b>	<b>How do you sign up?</b>
<b>Club Champs and Club Galas</b>	Blue Hats and older (usually 7+)	25m – held at a CWSC pool	None	<b>PARENT</b> must sign up ON TIME according to ClarionCall instructions sent by coaching staff
<b>Dual Galas</b>	Blue Hats and older (either 7+ or 9+)	25m – held at a CWSC pool	None	<b>PARENT</b> must sign up ON TIME according to ClarionCall instructions sent by coaching staff
<b>Development Meets (run by Middlesex County or other swimming clubs)</b>	Blue Hats and older (9+)	25m – held at pools throughout Central London	None	<b>PARENT</b> must sign up ON TIME according to ClarionCall instructions sent by coaching staff
<b>Selective Meets (usually run by other swimming clubs)</b>	Adv Dev and older (either 9+ or 12+)	25m or 50m	Set by meet organiser	Coach alerts parents that swimmer has qualified.
<b>League Events (where swimmers compete as a team)</b>	Adv Dev and older (either 9+ or 12+)	25m or 50m	Set by meet organiser	Coach alerts parents that swimmer has been picked for team.
<b>Counties</b>	Adv Dev and older (9+)	25m (Enfield or Gurnell )	Set by Middlesex ASA	Coach alerts parents that swimmer has qualified.
<b>Regionals</b>	Perf Squads (10+)	25m and 50m (Crystal Palace, Crawley or Aquatics Centre)	Set by London Region	Coach alerts parents that swimmer has qualified.
<b>Nationals</b>	Perf Squads (11+)	50m (Sheffield)	Set by ASA	Coach alerts parents that swimmer has qualified.
<b>Internationals</b>	Perf Squads	50m held outside of UK	Set by FINA/organiser	Coach alerts parents that swimmer has qualified.



## Competitive Swimming at CWSC – The Details

Swimming is a competitive sport. All the laps, teaching and training in the pool eventually leads to competitions, meets and galas. CWSC squads compete in a variety of events with each event being designed to accommodate different levels of swimmers, from our Blue Hats to our Olympic hopefuls. The CWSC fixture list is posted on the website, (<http://www.cswimming.com/sites/default/files/cwsc-competitions-fixtures-list-short-course-2013-2014-version-1.0-Aug.pdf>) but what does it all mean?

The first distinction between galas is those that are *non licensed galas* and those that are *licensed galas*. Licensed is a term which refers to a set of rules which govern the “the conduct of swimming events to ensure that, wherever possible, every swimmer will have the opportunity to swim in appropriate, quality competition to enable them to achieve their full potential.” Licensing therefore ensures that swimming galas are run in a consistent fashion and therefore the times can be submitted for future galas in which you would like to compete.

### NON LICENSED GALAS

These include time trials and friendly competitions against other local Clubs. There is usually no minimum age limit, and the aim is to give younger swimmers a chance to compete. Coaches will let swimmers know about suitable events. At CWSC, we are fortunate that our team of volunteers continues to grow, so we aim to run our galas as licensed meets. So then, what is a licensed meet?

### LICENSED GALAS

These events are licensed with the ASA, and swimmers gain licensed times which are hopefully fast enough to allow them to qualify for other competitive events.

Licensed meets can happen in any size pool, however normal pool lengths are 25m (short course) or 50m (long course). Some meets offer a range of events, others focus on sprints or distance events. Competitions are divided into *Levels* with a Level 1 gala being the most competitive.

### LEVEL 4 MEETS

These include Club Championships, licensed time trials and friendly galas with local Clubs where timekeepers are present but entries are restricted to members of those clubs. The meets serve multiple purposes: to introduce young swimmers into competitive swimming in a soft and exciting way, to go for PBs (personal bests), gain qualification times to other competitions, or simply as a great opportunity to meet all the swimmers and coaches in your club!

At CWSC it is usually our Blue Hats, Pre-Development, Black Hats, Advanced Development and Club Squads who will compete in these events. Every swimmer in these squads is usually eligible to compete, assuming the minimum age is met. **It is up to the parent and swimmer to submit an entry form for these events to the coaches. CWSC meets will have the same strict guidelines as external competitions in that no late entries will be allowed.**



### LEVEL 3 MEETS

These are often called “development meets”. These are open to many clubs and are almost always swum in 25m pools. The qualifying times for these events are usually quite achievable for CWSC swimmers. Because of this facet, development meets are a great opportunity for CWSC swimmers to get their first competitive experience outside of our training pools. It is also an opportunity for stronger swimmers to compete in their weaker events. Middlesex County run development meets, which provide swimmers with the opportunity to gain qualifying times for County competitions.

There can also be maximum, or cut-off, times, so some swimmers may not be eligible if they swim faster than the upper time limits. Sometimes speeding tickets are issued. These go to swimmers who swim faster than the cut-off time at the event itself. The times will still count for entering other competitions, but the swimmer will not be eligible for medals in the development meet.

Sometimes a swimmer will not be able to swim all of the events he/she wishes to swim. This typically happens for two reasons: i) by swimming every event for which the swimmer has qualified, the swimmer will not perform to his/her best ability so on occasion, the coaches will limit the number of races swum or ii) the organiser will cut a team’s entry before the event if the event is over-subscribed or on occasion at the event if the meet is running over time.

At CWSC, our Pre-Development, Black Hat, Advanced Development and Club Squads are the most frequent competitors. Don’t forget to check Coaches’ Tips on the website, especially: <http://www.cswimming.com/sites/default/files/Getting%20Ready%20for%20Your%20First%20Gala%20.pdf>

### LEVEL 2 MEETS

The biggest of these is the annual Middlesex County Championships, which takes place over several weekends in March. Level 2 meets are swum in 25m or 50m pools. Entrance to the Championships is through qualifying times that are achieved in the 12 months prior to the event. Swimmers can start competing at County level from the age of 9 years as long as they meet the qualifying times. These meets are the first step for swimmers headed to regionals and nationals in that they can start earning FINA points. Qualifying times can be found at: <http://www.cswimming.com/competitions/qualifying-times>. More information on FINA points can be found at: [http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1373&Itemid=641](http://www.fina.org/H2O/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1373&Itemid=641)

### LEVEL 1 MEETS

These have the most competitive qualifying times and are only swum in 50m pools. The main Level 1 competition for CWSC swimmers is the annual London Regional Championships, held each May (for Youth swimmers) and June (for Age Group swimmers).



The National Championships take place in late July/early August. In recent years, swimmers have needed to be at least 10 years old for Regional and 11 years old for National Competitions. Only swimmers who meet the qualifying times are eligible to compete in these meets.

Our Region is the London Region. It encompasses four counties: Middlesex, Surrey, Essex and Kent. and has three competitions per year. The Youth Championships are held in May, the Age Groups in June and the Open Champs in November/December. The age grouping are:

- BAGCAT Age Group Championships for swimmers aged 10 to 14 years
- Youth Championships for swimmers aged 15 to 19 & over
- Open Championships for 16+ swimmers, but younger swimmers who qualify may compete

Nationals (held by the ASA) are the next step up from the Regional Championships and have traditionally been held at Forge's Pond in Sheffield. Again swimmers have to attain the qualifying standard in order to compete. As with the Region there are three levels of competition. These are generally held in July and August.

- National BAGCAT Championships, for swimmers aged 11 to 14 years old
- National Youth Championships for 15/16 years old, 17/18 years old and 19+

The British Championships (held by British Swimming) are also an event which the very best CWSC swimmers attend. These are held in March/April and often double as trials for Olympic, World, European Championships, Commonwealth Games, European Junior Championships and European Youth Olympics.

CWSC also competes internationally and has taken a team to the annual Internationales Schwimmfest in Darmstadt, Germany in early July, along with other international competitions. Individual CWSC swimmers have also successfully qualified for events such as the European Junior Swimming Championships. CWSC will continue to support swimmers with times to enter competitive international events

## **TEAM COMPETITIONS**

Most of the above meets are mostly individual, with a few relays included, but there are opportunities for swimmers to represent CWSC or other organisations as part of a team.

### **National Swimming League ("Arena" League)**

Arena is England's premier inter-Club competition. CWSC is in the London First Division. The competition takes place over three galas in the autumn, and includes individual and relays events for both boys and girls aged from 9 to 17+. It is a competition that tests the overall strength of the Club rather than simply the speed of the fastest swimmers. If selected by the Head Coach it is important that swimmers make every effort to attend. The following link provides more information: <http://www.nationalswimmingleague.org.uk/>



### **London Youth Games**

London boroughs field teams in a variety of sports, including swimming, for the London Youth Games and London Youth Mini Games held at the end of the summer term. Competitors need to either live or attend school in a particular borough. CWSC helps identify eligible swimmers for the Local Authorities teams. The Local Authority contacts the swimmers directly. CWSC encourages our swimmers of all levels to participate in these games to support our local boroughs.

### **Schools Competitions**

CWSC swimmers may swim for their school teams in competitions organised by the English Schools Swimming Association (ESSA), their Boroughs, or by the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS). These can also lead to national level competitions at which CWSC swimmers have competed in the past.

### **County, Regional and National Teams**

Each county selects swimmers for the National Inter-County competition that takes place each autumn. Middlesex, along with the London Region, often select swimmers to attend competitions around Europe, and the Club's strongest swimmers can also be selected for national teams based on performance in national competitions or selection trials.



## **CWSC GLOSSARY: WORDS ONLY A SWIMMER WOULD USE.....**

### **SHORT COURSE v LONG COURSE**

Short Course is a 25m pool and Long Course is a 50m pools. Traditionally the short course season runs from September through March, and the Long Course season from April through July/August. Despite this traditional calendar, there are meets in 50 metre pools well in advance of April and there are events in 25 metre pools after March. This is traditional nomenclature that exists in swimming. Almost universally times swum in the shorter pools will be quite a bit faster as the extra turns provide swimmers with an extra boost of speed and energy. While conversion charts can be useful, a swimmer's long course compared with his/her converted short course times can often be quite different.

### **What is an Open Meet – did someone forget to close the door?**

Open Meets are available for all standards of swimmer, from novice to senior international. In these events, swimmers are not selected as part of a club team, they qualify for the meet based on their personal bests (PBs). Although, still representing their club, they are competing for themselves.

### **What is a “skin” ... wait, I thought this was swimming, not biology?**

Skins is an open entry where the 8 fastest swimmers in the 200 IM, regardless of age group, compete in the “skins” race. They first race 50 free with the last person eliminated. As they climb out the pool the last person chooses the next stroke from a hat and the remaining 7 swimmers have to swim that stroke and so on. The tactic is to do just enough not to come last than then surprise the field, saving your fastest race for last. It is fast and furious as there is very little rest between races.

### **What is a qualifying time and where do you find it?**

- Middlesex County will publish the qualifying times for the County Championships in October of each year. These can be found on the Middlesex County website: <http://www.middlesexswimming.com/calendar/competition/>
- Regional Qualifying times can be found at the London Region website: [http://www.londonswimming.org/comp\\_aqu/competitive-swimming/](http://www.londonswimming.org/comp_aqu/competitive-swimming/)
- The ASA generally publishes qualifying times for the National events in October each year. They can be found on the ASA website at: <http://www.swimming.org/asa/>

### **What, or who, is FINA?**

FINA, the Fédération Internationale de Natation, is the world governing body for the five Aquatic Disciplines of swimming, diving, water polo, synchronised swimming and open water swimming. [www.fina.org](http://www.fina.org)

### **What, or who, is the ASA?**

The ASA (Amateur Swimming Association) is the governing body for swimming in Great Britain. For more information on the ASA, see the link: <http://www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/the-asa/>

### **BAGCATS:**

BAGCAT stands for British Age Group Categories. Change from Age to Youth Championships is different for boys and girls to recognise the difference in maturation rates. The Youth Championships for Girls begin at 14 years and for Boys at 15 years.