



Events Guide

This guide has been put together to help you and your swimmer understand and prepare for the various swimming events they will be involved in. The events have been broken down into categories with specifics for each. Farnham Swimming Club expects swimmers to attend all relevant squad sessions, achieve squad qualifying times and regularly attend events. Failure to do so could jeopardise your swimmers place in their squad.

General Advice

Swimmers who have not yet reached their ninth birthday are only (under ASA rules) able to participate in Internal events. However it is important to get on the first 'rung' with an officially-recorded personal best (PB) time.

As a general rule, young swimmers start by competing over 25m and 50m distances, the 200m and 100m IM distances are then added. At 10 years the 400m events are added and generally only once you are 11 (girls) or 12 (boys) can you compete over 400m distances.

The club will usually try to put your swimmer in a relay race for their first experience of a Gala competition - this helps to control the inevitable 'first race nerves'.

For most events there are no heats or finals, just races where there will be Heat Declared Winners. Swimmers race against swimmers with similar qualifying times but not necessarily the same age. The times are then recorded for each race and the winner is the quickest swimmer in that age group. Disqualifications are inevitable especially for the younger swimmer and for the more technical strokes. Your swimmer will be disappointed but should be praised for their race effort. In the long run it is better for them to be disqualified in the early stages of their career as they will quickly learn to be competitive. They will have plenty of other opportunities to race again!

Swimming Events

See notices on Farnham Swimming Club website and notice board for dates.

1 Internal

These will only have Farnham Swimming Club swimmers in the event and notification will be emailed, posted on the website under events and put in the weekly newsletter.

2 Open or Graded Meets

These are hosted by other swimming clubs and will include swimmers from many clubs. An entry fee is payable once entries are accepted by the organiser, and collected by FSC.



3 League Galas

Swimmers will be selected by the club to swim in these and will be told which event they will be swimming once they have arrived at poolside.

4 Championships

These include events such as Surreys, South East Regionals (SER), Nationals, Open Water, Winter Regionals and Zonals . These have qualifying times and a qualifying date which can be found on the relevant web sites.

1 Internal Events

These include Time Trials (for specific squads), Race Mornings and Club Championships (for whole club). Often the coach will decide which stroke the swimmer should do. They are encouraged to use these events to gain times in their less favoured strokes, to achieve a qualifying time for a forthcoming event or for squad progression. We also hold a Last Chance Qualifier which is a no frills meet with the aim to give a last chance of qualification for the County Championships. All events and races internal and external, for all ages are run under ASA Laws and ASA Technical Rules

Ages

For internal events and squad qualification, the club uses year of birth or age as of 31st December which means the age your swimmer will be at the end of that year not the age they are on the day of the event. The notable exception is club records which are age on the day of the swim.

Club Championships

Once a year, in November/December Farnham Swimming Club runs its Club Champs. They are held over several days using existing pool times for various squads, usually weekends at Farnham Leisure Centre.

There is an entry fee to cover extra costs such as medals and hire of pool. Entry forms are given out and should be returned with payment to your squad rep/coach. Club Champs are open to all squads. However it is most appropriate for the younger swimmer and a good event for them to get times and have a try at the longer races. They are expected to enter all events they are eligible foreven the 200m fly. It's definitely a 'have a go' competition but there will be disqualifications so you should prepare the younger ones for this. The races are within age groups, across squads, which enables coaches to compare times across the club. Results are posted after all ages have swum the stroke/distance. Medals are awarded in age groups for the top three in each stroke/age group.



2 Open or Graded Meets

An open meet is very different from other events in several ways, so requires a bit 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 “age on the day”, so the age your swimmer will be on the last day of the event. Any swimmer who is age 9 or older can enter open meets provided they meet the entry qualification or consideration time for their age. Open meets are graded with ‘B/C’ or L2/3 meets designed for swimmers who are developing and are not the fastest in their age group.

Level 2/3: These can have upper and lower qualifying times – swimmers must be faster than the lower limit but slower than the upper limit. These meets are usually suitable for children trying to qualify for the county/regional championships as the upper limits are normally set just above the relevant qualification times. This is a good level of competition to start at – assuming your child is not faster than the times published!

Level 1: These are the highest level of meets and only have lower qualification times – ie the swimmer must be faster than the entry times shown. These are suitable only for the top swimmers and are aimed at swimmers trying to obtain national times.

For your swimmer, it is a great opportunity to compete in a wide range of strokes/distances against swimmers from many other clubs. It is also a chance to get new “personal best” times, see how their swimming has improved and where they are seeded amongst the external competition.

Preparing entries

During the course of the year the coaches choose which open meets the Club wishes swimmers to attend based upon the appropriate level of competition. The choice of open meet may be different for different squads. Details of the meet, such as the entry form and qualification times, are put on the web site. Several weeks before an open meet your swimmer will receive an entry form from your Events rep /coach, with details, date, available events, closing date etc. These details can also usually be found on the host club’s web site.



Open meet events are in sessions with the first session often requiring you to check in by 7:30am and the last session ending in to the evening. Session details can also usually be found on the host club's web site or with the details sent to you. If you are not sure which events to enter, speak to your swimmer's coach for advice but in general, especially for inexperienced swimmers, it is advisable for the initial open meets, to check which session each swim is in and to choose events that will not involve: a long day, long gaps in between or too many races in one session. Please *clearly* mark which events you want to enter & return the form to your squad rep/coach with the correct amount of money made payable to Farnham Swimming Club. It is advisable to return the form before the closing date rather than on the very last day, so that any queries can be sorted out early. If you miss the closing date your swimmer will not be able to participate.

Acceptance

Even though your swimmer is inside the consideration or qualifying times their 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 so check if you were near the qualifying times for that event. Usually accepted entries will be sent via email and on the host club web site. Refunds will be given via Farnham Swimming Club for rejected entries.

On the Day of the Open Meet

Warm up is 30 minutes to an hour before the event starts and is usually separate for boys / girls and, depending on numbers; the older swimmers will often warm up after the younger ones. There is no diving 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, getting out at the other end and walking back. The Coach may give your swimmer advice on how much warm up to do and what thing to concentrate on depending on the event they are swimming that day. When the event starts, announcements will be made calling each event in turn. When the announcement is made for the relevant event your swimmer will be called by the Coach for last minute talk and then sent down to the marshalling or Whipping area. The younger ones especially will want to wave to you as they go down to the Whipping area and at this point you start to panic they haven't got their goggles, hat etc.



In the Whipping area your swimmer should put their goggles on their head or push them down around their neck. If they are carrying them it is possible they will put them down or get in a faff at the last minute. It will also stop them chewing and biting them - goggles always snap in the whipping area never in the pool - now why would that be? They should also have their swim-cap on in plenty of time. Lads need to tie their costumes up tight - double-knot! Swimmers will be lined up in the whipping area in heat order and then asked to go forward and stand behind the relevant lane. The timekeeper for the lane will ask your swimmer to confirm their name. For a card open meet your swimmers card will be handed back to them in the Whipping area and they should hand the card to the timekeeper for their lane. Depending on how many competitors there are in an event there can be a lot of heats and it can take absolutely ages! However your swimmer's race will be over pretty quickly so be sure you don't miss it by an inappropriate moment for the loo, coffee or a snooze.

After your swimmer's last event they may go home. Although it is advisable to tell the Coach, so he/she knows who is still on the poolside, your swimmer does not have to wait for the end of the event unless the Coach advises otherwise.

Results

When the races have been swum the times of each swimmer are recorded on the computer system which produces the final result sheet after all the races for a particular event have been swum. Results sheets are displayed around the poolside for the swimmers and around the spectator area for you to read as soon as it is possible to do so.

Speeding Tickets

For some lower graded open meets there are a set of upper cut-off times (usually UQT or UQT plus a few seconds), which swimming faster than these times earns a 'speeding-ticket'. Check the small print in the gala conditions, usually found on the host club's website, to see if there will be speeding tickets and if so whether the cut of times are UQT or above. Getting a speeding ticket means that the swimmer is not eligible for medals (and is effectively disqualified) but it is a very positive indicator of a 'good time' for that race, in that age group. So your swimmer should be reassured that a speeding-ticket is a good thing just as is a win or a placing or personal-best.

Medals

Generally medals are awarded for the top three in each stroke/age group and ribbons for 4th to 8th places. These can be collected at the event any time after the results are published.



3 Galas

Throughout the year the club enters teams in galas and leagues at different standards of competition. Swimmers will be selected by the club to swim in these and there are no entry fees or forms to fill in. Not participating in a Gala for which your swimmer has been chosen may jeopardise their squad place.

The age groups are (usually but not always) determined as age on the date of the gala, or, if in a series of galas, the date of the last gala so your swimmer will be swimming against other swimmers of a similar age who may be faster or slower. Swimmers will be told which event they will be swimming once they have arrived at poolside. The A team of each age group will generally swim in the higher division of the league and the B and sometimes a C team will swim in lower divisions at different locations. Galas and League events take place in a single evening. The races are within age groups against five other (usually local) clubs. The exact number of teams competing depends on the league and the number of lanes at the host pool. For younger swimmers the races are generally 50m (except 25m fly for the youngest age groups) individuals for each stroke, a Medley relay, a Freestyle relay and a Squadron relay. Swimmers may swim up an age group but may not swim down. You must read all emails relating to galas and regularly check the website. If you are selected to swim in a gala you must follow the instructions given on the team selection notice.

On the night

Club transport is normally not provided so you may want to share lifts or ask someone else to transport your swimmer if you cannot take them. Arrive at the host pool at the time requested on the email. The requested arrival time allows for confirmation of arrival to the Coach, changing and warm up but getting there late will worry the Coach who at some point will have to reallocate your swimmer's races. Once on poolside (although sometimes after warm up) a team sheet will be available and your swimmer will be able to read this to see which events they are swimming. Swimmers swim the stroke and distance allocated to them. There is no discussion about this as in the weeks prior to the competition a great deal of thought has gone into what stroke each swimmer should do. Relays are always swum in the order stated. The club will usually put a swimmer in just a relay race for their first experience of competition as this helps to control the inevitable 'first race nerves'. So do not be disappointed if your swimmer only does one length in the evening - it is an honour to be chosen to swim for their club. All swimmers are expected to stay until the end of the event and to support their team mates and to congratulate the winning club and the other participating clubs.



4 Championships

Ages for Championships are usually age on the last day of the meet. Entry forms can be found on the relevant web sites but will also be distributed via your squad rep/coach. Please clearly mark which events you want to enter & return the form to your squad rep with the correct amount of money made payable to Farnham Swimming Club. It is advisable to return the form before the closing date rather than on the very last day, so that any queries can be sorted out early. If you have not got a consideration time for an event but expect to get it in an event before the championship then please speak to your swimmer's coach for advice. If you miss the closing date your swimmer will not be able to participate.

County Championships

These are the first major championships a competitive swimmer will encounter. They are held over a series of weekends in February and are similar to a Level 1 Open meet in that there are only lower Qualifying times. However, it is not an open meet because they are only open to swimmers of clubs affiliated to the relevant County ASA which for Farnham is Surrey ASA. In the autumn of each year, the following year's "county qualification times" are published on the Surrey ASA website. They alter a little each year (usually getting faster), but the previous year's can be used as a guide. If your swimmer is faster than the time(s) published the club would expect your swimmer to compete. Entry forms will be distributed via your squad rep /coach and should be returned with the relevant payment (made out to Farnham Swimming Club).

Regional Champs

This is the next level of Championships and are held May/June. Clubs from the South East Region are eligible to enter swimmers for this event who have achieved regional qualification times (these are published on the South East Region website). This is a high level of competition and the club would expect swimmers obtaining these times to compete. Qualifying times need to be achieved at recognised, ie not internal, meets. An added complication is that at SERs (and Nationals), no qualifying times are set for the youngest age groups in 100-metre events - you can enter these only if you make the relevant 200-metre entry time. Although the meets are long-course, entries require short-course times.

National Champs

This is the top level of "age group" swimming for swimmers aged 11-13 (girls) and 11-14 (boys) followed by the National Youth Championship for girls 14+ and boys 15+. It is held in July and is open to all swimmers who achieve a national qualifying time. These are available from the ASA website. If your swimmer gets this far you probably know what you are doing by then!