**Championships - County, Regional and National**

***How are ages calculated?***

Ages for Championships are usually age on the 31st of December of that year.

Once the qualifying times are made available, swimmers strive to obtain these times until the cut-off date for the particular Championships.

***County Championships***

You might have heard the terms “County times” and “Surrey Counties” mentioned a few times and wondered what they refer to.

The “Counties” 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. 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.

Swimmers work hard to achieve “county times” (i.e. they try to meet the qualification times for the next County Championships). If your swimmer achieves county qualification times, the club would expect your swimmer to compete.

***Regional Championships***

This is the next level of Championships and they are held in May or June. Clubs from the South East Region, like FSC, are eligible to enter swimmers who have achieved regional qualification times. (These are published on the SER 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, i.e. not internal, meets. An added complication is that at the South East Regionals (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 Championships***

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!