**What is an Open Meet?**

Unlike galas swimmers aren’t selected to swim as part of a club team at an Open Meet. Instead they qualify based on their personal best times and can choose which events they would like to enter, rather than in galas where they are selected to swim specific events. They still swim as part of the Witney team but they are competing for themselves to gain specific times, rather than to gain club points.

To compete at ONB County Championships each year swimmers must have times from a licensed meet. Licensed swim times will show up on the national/regional/county rankings. Often to compete at higher level/licensed meets, swimmers must have licensed entry times.

* ***What are the different licensed open meets?***

Each open meet is licensed to a certain level, so the first part is to get the level of the meet correct so that your swimmer is competing at the correct standard:-

Open Meets are licensed according to the purpose of their competition as Level 1, 2, 3 or 4.

**- Level 1** is aimed at national/regional qualifiers and swimmers close to national qualification looking for opportunities to achieve national qualifying rankings. These meets take place in 50m pools (long course) and have set minimum qualifying times for entry.

**- Level 2** is also aimed at national and regional qualifiers and swimmers close to regional qualification. These meets take place in 25m pools and also have a set minimum standard for entry.

Level 1 and 2 meets are likely to have quite challenging lower limit QTs, i.e. your swimmer must have achieved a faster time in that particular event to enable them to enter.

**- Level 3** is for club swimmers who are seeking regional and county qualifying times. These meets have qualifying times and upper limit times set at an appropriate level and will provide a programme throughout the year to support the requirements of swimmers below regional level. They can be short (25m) or long course (50m).

Level 3 meets might have upper limit times to restrict the standard of swimmer entry. If your swimmer has a time faster than the upper limit time then they won’t be eligible to enter that event. Regional qualifying times will be accepted from meets licensed at Level 1, 2 and 3.

**- Level 4** is for club/county swimmers and those beginning to enter individual open competition. Level 4 meets relax the qualification times further. These events can mostly be entered with 'no times', as they are low level or development meet and you can use these to start recording personal bests in events your swimmer has not completed before. Witney does organise its own level 4 meet in May/June each year and runs club championship and Diddy finals at Level 4 so swimmers can gain County times in home events.

The swimmers age is either ‘as of the last day of the meet’ or ‘age at the end of the year’. Each meet specifies what the age categories are. Events can also vary depending on the swimmers age group. For example 8yr olds don’t tend to compete in the 200m events.

* ***What are target open meets?***

Throughout the year the club chooses specific open meets to attend as a club with coaches/team managers. These are target meets. Each open meet is selected by the Head Coach to fit in with the gala fixture list and have different aims. Some open meets will be to gain qualifying times (e.g. county, regional and national ranking) and others to gain experience and personal best times. When a target open meet is selected by the Head Coach, Karen Good (our External Meets Co-ordinator) will send information out via our W&DSC Team Unify website to those eligible to enter the meet. It is then up to parents and swimmers to enter by completing the club online entry system on our website (under events) by the announced club closing date. Some meets will say specific swimmers in squads/ ages; others will be open to all depending on any possible upper/lower qualifying times. That will be made clear if specific squads are invited.

* ***Which events to enter?***

So the target meets have been announced and information emailed out, and you have worked out which meet is suitable for your swimmer. This does not mean every meet on the list needs to be entered – you need to select the right level according to your swimmers PB’s. Your swimmers may not have the achieved qualifying time for the event so you must check each event. The next step is to decide which events should be entered – not all of them! You need to look at the programme of events and sessions for that specific meet as they are different for each meet. If you are entering the meet for a specific time in a specific event (e.g. regional qualifying time) then there is no need to enter other events that may affect performance, unless stated by the Head Coach for supporting or warm up events. However, if aiming to get some experience of open meets and trying to get some PB’s in events you may not have swum in a while (not generally picked for in gala’s) then a combination of events is ok, but there needs to be sufficient rest time between races. So doing 4 events in the same session is not recommended. Normally 2 events per session is ok, sometimes 3 if a long session or the shorter events (e.g 50’s). Please check all event entries carefully - Any incorrect entries (ie too fast, too slow or NT) will be scrubbed at the point the club entry is submitted even if that leaves a swimmer with only one swim.

**If you’re not sure which events would be best then ask to speak to the squad coaches or Head Coach (depending on your swimmers squad) and they can advise you on what is best.**

* ***Communication of entries***

Our club will send all the W&DSC entries to the host club - you should not enter direct with the host club.

If there are any incorrect entries parents will be communicated to once the club entry has been compiled. Once all the entries have been received from all clubs, the host club of the open meet will announce the accepted and rejected individual entries (normally on their website and emailed from Head Coach). Some meets are on a first come/first served basis with others on qualifying cut-off times. This is detailed in the promoter’s conditions of the specific meet (always worth a read to check ages, signing in etc). If all or some of the events have been accepted then you will need to check all the session times/travel times etc closer to the meet so you are prepared. The Head Coach will send a final reminder email to clarify all the details closer to the meet date. There will be a Team Manager/coaching team from Witney at each target meet to look after the swimmers on poolside and offer any advice but swimmers/parents are responsible for travel to/from the meet, possible accommodation, meals and signing the swimmers in if required to. Remember – you are responsible for your swimmer at the event when they are not poolside.

* ***Payment***

The club will ask for your entry fees **AFTER** the accepted/rejected lists are released. You will only pay for the events you have been accepted into and we request prompt payment. If any entries are rejected then you will not have to pay for those events. However if you are accepted and then choose not to swim for whatever reason then you still have to pay for that event. In some cases of medical withdrawal we can request a refund to the host club if done in advance, however the host club will require a doctor or hospital note as proof of the medical withdrawal.