

## **Guide to attending your first Open Meet**

We have put this handout together, which will hopefully make it easier to understand everything that goes on at a swim meet, and make your first swim meet a great experience!!

### **Typically how long is a meet?**

This depends on the host club format. However, Open meets typically take place at the weekend and may include one or two days.

### **Will there be a charge for entry?**

Yes swimmers will be charged a small fee per event they enter. Payment is either made directly to the host club or via Ascot Royals who will collect fees and make payment for all entries to the host club.

### **Will swimmers have to qualify for entry?**

For those swimmers attending their first meet the Club will offer guidance on which meet a swimmer should enrol into.

For swimmers who haven't competed in an official meet we will need to start with competitions that allow those without official times.

After gaining these times they are given the opportunity to qualify for higher level meets.

### **Where can I find the relevant information about the gala?**

Information regarding the Open meet will be published on the website of the club that is hosting the meet. Typically this is labelled 'Promoters Conditions' and information will include:

- Location
- Dates
- Times
- Min/Max entry qualification times

Please check the Open Meet page regularly to see if any changes have been made by the host club.

### **Who will I be racing against?**

Swimmers are seeded into heats for each event from the slowest to the fastest using their entry times. Usually, the ages are mixed but events will always be separated into

male and female. Awards are made to the fastest swimmers in each event and age group.

### **What to bring?**

It is a good idea to pack your bags the night before, with everything you might need. Here is a checklist, which should be useful to you (No glass bottles or any other breakable items).

- Swimmers should have everything they need for the session in a bag on poolside with them
- At least 2 swimming costumes
- 2 towels
- A Club hat (plus a spare one)
- Goggles (plus a spare pair)
- Pool/Deck shoes
- A Club top (if you have one), shorts/tracksuit to keep you warm
- Enough food (easily digestible) to last the day including snacks to graze on in between swims
- Suggested food - pasta/rice, bread, pitta, bagels or muffins, rice cakes, popcorn, bananas and breakfast/cereal bars
- Sufficient drinks (1-2 litres) preferably water or diluted squash no fizzy drinks
- Entertainment (for open meets only) - Music/iPod, books, games anything to help pass the time
- Money in case of emergency

Please ensure all belongings are clearly labelled. Swimmers are responsible for any valuables that they bring poolside.

### **When should we arrive?**

- Please ensure you arrive in plenty of time (at least 20 mins prior to warm-up)
- Report to the Coach or Team manager
- Sign-in / Register - It is the swimmer's responsibility to sign-in. If you are unsure of where/how to sign in one of the team managers will help you. Failure to sign-in may result in you not being allowed to swim.
- Familiarise yourself with the pool layout (toilets, marshalling area etc), change ready for warm-up and join the team poolside.

### **Where should you be?**

Swimmers are expected to sit with the team and not with their parents in the spectator area.

When you are at a swimming gala and with an appointed coach/team manager, they are responsible for you and you must not leave the building without permission. If your

parents are there, please ask the coach for permission to leave the building with them. After your last race in a session, you may be given permission to go join your parents and take a break.

### **Managing expectations and achieving PB's**

The gala should be a pleasurable experience for all concerned. Please do not worry if a swimmer does not do as well as you had hoped. Times will improve when swimmers regularly train and enjoy taking part in meets.

Whilst it's great for a swimmer to get medals and achieve personal best this is not always achievable and as such more emphasis must be made on preparing well and enjoying taking part.

### **Tips for parents**

- If your child is ill and unable to attend, please let the coach know in plenty of time especially for team galas where a replacement swimmer may need to be called up
- Arrive in plenty of time, it is important for your child to have a warm-up
- Parents aren't allowed on poolside at any time during a competition
- Spectator areas are hot so wear appropriate clothes - shorts and t-shirts aren't out of place even in the depths of winter
- Be prepared and bring a drink (in case the machines are out of order)
- Team galas usually last 2-3 hours whilst open meets can last all day
- There is usually an admission charge so change is always appreciated by those on the door
- Most galas have a raffle
- Try to sit with other Ascot Royals parents, we're a friendly bunch and happy to answer any of your queries (we've all been there and learnt from others)
- A pen, paper and highlighter are a must to help you keep track of your child's swims and a stopwatch if you're very enthusiastic
- Get behind the team, don't be afraid to cheer and enjoy it.

### **What events should I enter**

It is beneficial for swimmers to experience a wide variety of events. By doing this a swimmer will gain official Swim England times which they can use to set future goals. In addition to this it is not unusual for a swimmer to realise their strengths may lie in an event that they were not expecting.

The swimmers coach will help to provide guidance should the need arise.