

# Swimming Competition Guide



## What is a swimming competition/gala?

A swimming competition is where a swimmer races against other swimmers who are of similar ability and speed. There are four different levels of competition which swimmers can race in:

**Level 4** – These are internal competitions where swimmers are racing against people from the same club. These can be swam short course (25m Pool) or long course (50m Pool). Times set at level 4 meets can be used as entry times for county championships but not regional or national.

*e.g. Club Championships.*

**Level 3** – This is the level at which a competition can be called an Open Meet. Swimmers from the hosting club and external clubs come together to race against each other. These can be short course or long course and you do not always need to have previously set a time to enter an event. Times achieved at level 3 open meets can be used for entry into Counties and Regionals. Times set at level 3 meets can also be used for short course (but not long course) nationals.

*e.g. Cranleigh Open Meet, Hart Open Meet, Crawley Level 3 Open Meet.*

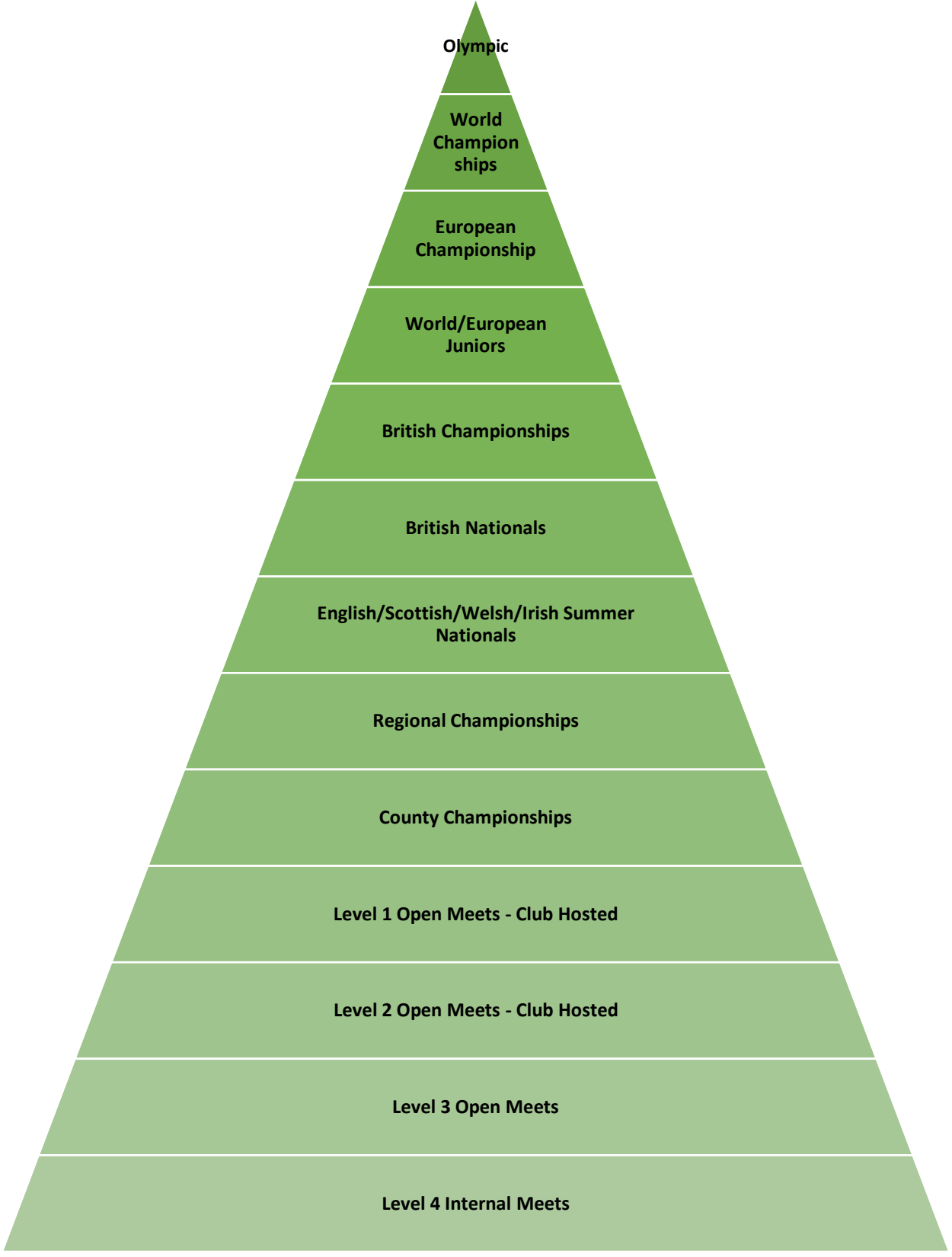
**Level 2** – This level of competition is short course only. County, Regional and National competitions which are short course are all classed as Level 2 meets. Some clubs may also host level 2 open meets. Times set at a level 2 meet can be used for entry into other short course competitions. Times set can also be converted to allow entry into long course counties and regionals.

*e.g. South-East Short Course Regionals, English/Scottish Short Course Nationals*

**Level 1** – This is the hardest level of competition to attend. These meets are long course only. County, Regional and National competitions which are long course are all classed as level 1 meets. Some clubs may also host level 1 competitions. Times set at Level 1 meets can be used for entry into County, Regional and National championships. National Championship times must be set within the qualifying window set by British Swimming each year

*e.g. Guildford Level 1 Open Meet, Surrey County Championships, South-East regional championships, English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish/British Summer Nationals, British Championships.*

# Competition Pyramid



## How does an Open Meet work?

### Before a competition

- Cranleigh SC coaching team will set out a competition calendar for the swimming season.
- When we get close to the opening date for a competition an email will be sent out asking for sign-ups. An internal club closing date for entries will be put in place. Please speak to your coach about what to enter.
- Once a club opens up the competition for entries, the entries will be sent away, by the club, for acceptance.
- Warm up times and competitions details can be found on the clubs website or will be sent out by email before the competition.

### During a competition

- Open meets are all day events from around 8am till around 6pm, some are just over one day but the majority are over both days of the weekend.
- A full day will be separated into 2 or 3 different sessions, with a warmup at the beginning of each session.
- Warmups are usually separated into sessions based on age and sex. Each warmup lasts around 10-20 minutes.
- For each event swimmers will be placed in heats according to their entry time. They will also be allocated a lane in which they will race. The other swimmers in the same heat will be of similar ability and entry time.
- There may be a long gap between races, so make sure you have clothes to put over swim wear to stay warm. Please stay on poolside and cheer on your fellow Cranleigh teammates.
- Swimmers can go out to see their parents in between the sessions but please make sure a coach/team manager knows where you have gone.
- Before every race talk to your coach for pre-race advice and after every race ask for feedback.

### After the competition

- Help tidy up the area the club have been sitting in. This is to help keep poolside as tidy as possible.
- Rest and recover for the next week of training.

## What to bring to an open meet?

1. Small draw string bag (NO BIG SWIMMING BAGS)
2. Swimming trunks/costume (+ spare in case lost or rips)
3. Swimming goggle (+ spare in case lost or breaks)
4. Cranleigh swimming club hat (+ spares in case lost or rips)
5. Towels x 2-3
6. Water bottles x 2-3
7. T-Shirt and shorts/joggers to keep warm while on poolside
8. Flip Flops
9. Inhaler/Medication (If needed)
10. Books, Games, entertainment on poolside  
(PHONES ARE NOT ALLOWED OUT OF SWIMMERS BAGS)

**Please remember having a technical race suit is not always necessary, particularly for younger swimmers (< 13).**

## What Drink and food to have throughout the day?

(Adapted from <https://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/factsheets/food-for-your-sport/food-for-your-sport-swimming/>)

### Pre-Competition

Swimmers should have a high carbohydrate meal 2 to 4 hours prior to first race of competition. Fluids (mainly water) should be sipped regularly in the lead up to the first race. To avoid stomach discomfort foods should be relatively low in fibre and fat. The pre-competition meal should be planned and practiced during training (don't try new foods or fluids on competition day!). Suitable pre-competition meals include:

- Wholegrain breakfast cereal with milk + fruit
- Fruit salad with yoghurt and nuts
- English muffin with jam or cheese
- Sandwich/roll with salad + lean meat/cheese
- Porridge with banana and cinnamon

A small snack can also be eaten up to in the 1-2 hours prior to a race as a final effort to top up energy levels. For example:

- Muesli or sports bars
- Fresh fruit
- Rice cakes
- Dried fruit & nut mix

### During Competition

If less than 60 minutes between races – keep options light and easy to digest. Carbohydrate rich liquids may be preferred as they are rapidly digested from the gut.

- Sports drink
- Juice
- Flavoured milk tetra packs
- Yoghurt pouches
- Dried fruit (e.g. banana chips)
- Small pieces of fresh fruit (e.g. grapes/banana)

If more than 1 – 2 hours between races – a more substantial meal can be eaten to top up energy needs and avoid getting hungry.

- Pasta/noodle-based dishes
- Sandwiches with simple fillings
- Sushi or rice paper rolls

**Competition and training venues do not always have suitable food and fluid options available so it is important that swimmers arrive at venues with food and fluids prepared. A cooler bag with drinks and food options should be packed and kept easily accessible for topping up with fuel and fluids throughout the day.**

## Post-Competition

Recovery nutrition is especially important during competitions that are held over several days or during weeks of heavy training loads.

Recovery meals and snacks should contain carbohydrate (fuel), some protein (for muscle repair and development) and plenty of fluids and electrolytes to replace sweat losses.

A recovery meal or snack should be consumed soon after exercise period, particularly when the next training session or race is the following day. Fluids (mainly water) should also be consumed, based on estimated losses.

Some recovery food suggestions include:

- Ham, cheese and salad roll or wrap
- Dairy-based fruit smoothie
- Omelettes or poached eggs on toast
- Homemade pizzas with chicken, cheese + veggies