

### ***What's the difference between a Gala and a Meet?***

A Gala is an event where different swimming clubs compete against each other as teams. Individual swimmers from the club are selected by the coach depending on the nature of the gala and compete in individual events and team relays in various age categories. Points are awarded for places in each race and the overall total at the end of the gala determines the winning team/club.

In contrast, a Meet is an event which individual swimmers enter to compete in races of their choice, usually against swimmers of the same age, with the aim of competing for medals and to register times that are uploaded to the official ASA Ranking database. It is these times that are used to qualify for invited events such as County, Regional and National swimming championships.

### ***What's the difference between an 'Open' and 'Closed' meet?***

In theory, any swimmer can enter an 'Open Meet' as long as they satisfy any stated eligibility criteria (which can usually be found in the relevant event Meet Pack) and there are enough spaces to swim. Open meets are usually arranged by individual clubs and Hertford Swimming Club support at least three open meets during the year with Hertford coaches present at these events to help at the poolside. Hertford Swimming Club encourages as many swimmers as possible to enter these open meets to compete for medals and to register official times.

In contrast, only swimmers who are specifically invited can compete in 'Closed Meets.' These include Meets which require swimmers to reach a certain designated standard, usually a specified 'qualifying time.' Examples of such meets include County, Regional and National Championships. Another example of a 'Closed Meet' is our very own Club Championships which are restricted to members of Hertford Swimming Club only.

### ***How do I enter an open meet?***

In contrast to galas, you do not need to be invited by one of the coaches to enter an open meet. For meets supported by Hertford Swimming Club, an email will be sent out by the club to all members encouraging you to enter and instruction on how to do so. Don't worry if you are unsure which events to enter - your coach will be happy to advise.

Many other meets run throughout the year and are usually publicised on the British Swimming licensed meet calendar which can be found online (<https://>

[www.swimmingresults.org/licensed\\_meets/](http://www.swimmingresults.org/licensed_meets/)). In theory, any British Swimming registered swimmer can enter a meet but please let the club know if you are entering in case there is an obligation for Hertford Swimming Club to provide further support at poolside.

### ***What is a 'licensed' event?***

Swimming at licensed events is the only way for you to get qualifying times as an individual to be able to enter County, Regional and National events. It's a way of measuring yourself against others, improving your Personal Best times and maybe even winning medals.

All licensed meets are subject to ASA laws and regulations and the ASA Technical Rules of Racing. They are graded into four levels:

1. **Level 1 Meets** are long course (50m) only and cover National, Regional and County Championships. Their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve qualifying times for entry into National, Regional and County Championships.
2. **Level 2 Meets** are short course (25m) only and cover National, Regional and County Championships. Their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve qualifying times for entry into National, Regional and County Championships in short course.
3. **Level 3 Meets** are long and short course events. Their purpose is to enable athletes to achieve times for entry into Regional and County Championships and other Meets at Level 1 or Level 2.
4. **Level 4 Meets** are entry-level events in pools 25m or longer. Borough Championships are an example. They are for inexperienced athletes and swimmers seeking to compete outside their club environment. If times are good, athletes can then progress to Level 3 Meets.

Times registered at these 'licensed' events are uploaded to the British Swimming Rankings database (<https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualrankings/>)

### ***Which galas do Hertford compete in?***

Hertford Swimming Club enters teams into three league competitions:

## **1. London Arena League - *Part of the National Arena Swimming League***

This is the major national team competition in England and Wales and consists of three galas held in October, November and December. Galas may be held as far away as Essex and South London. The strongest team will be selected to swim for Hertford at these galas with the aim of achieving the maximum points possible. This might mean some swimmers competing in a large number of events when swimming up an age group, and some swimmers might get just one relay leg (meaning that all swims are very important). Final league positions are decided by league points and then gala points.

**This is a licensed event.**

The winning club in each of the seven constituent leagues will be invited to participate in the national Cup Final in April following the rounds.

Age Groups are U12, U14, U16 and Open (age at 31st December)

## **2. Hertfordshire Major League**

This competition is open to all Hertfordshire clubs and consists of three galas held in January, February and March. The strongest team is selected and there are currently three divisions.

**This is not a licensed event.**

Age Groups are U12, U14, U16 and Open (age at date of final round)

## **3. Hertfordshire Peanuts League**

This competition is open to all Hertfordshire swimming clubs and consists of three galas held in May, June and July. The strongest team is selected and there are currently three divisions.

**This is not a licensed event.**

Age Groups are 9 Year Old, U11, U12 and U13 (age at 30th June)

Hertford also compete in a number of interclub 'friendly' galas. These competitions are arranged by different clubs and are normally held at the home pool of the club arranging the gala. Most of these galas are held within our area of Hertfordshire.

The team for this type of event is selected:

- To give as many swimmers as possible the chance to compete for the Club.
- To provide opportunities for swimmers to gain experience of competing in different strokes and events.

**These interclub galas are not licensed events**

### ***How are teams selected for galas?***

For **competitive league galas**, team selection is as follows for each age group:

For the youngest age groups, the fastest swimmer for each individual event is selected. This might be the same swimmer for a couple of events. For relays, the fastest four freestyle swimmers plus one are selected and the best permutation of swimmers for the medley relay. This will usually consist of six swimmers per age group in total but sometimes only five. This allows for someone dropping out at the last moment or for sickness at the venue.

For the older age groups, the selection is as per the youngest swimmers, but is usually only five swimmers per age group. However, if the next age group above has only three swimmers, then an additional swimmer is selected in order that we can swim an athlete up an age group in the relays.

For **friendly galas**, we would look to take a mixture of non-league swimmers and league swimmers and swim them off their number one strokes.

### ***What are 'qualifying times?'***

Competitions are limited to certain durations so this means that organisers have to limit the entries. This is done through qualifying times. Meet requirements usually include qualifying times and sometimes a separate list of slower 'consideration times.' If qualifying times are stipulated, only swimmers who have achieved those times or faster are able to enter that event. Even then, they are not guaranteed entry. If the meet is oversubscribed, swimmers with the slower entry times may be rejected or "scratched" from that event. Those entering with consideration times have to wait and see whether their entries are accepted or rejected. Lists of scratched entries are usually available on the relevant organisation's website, and the swimmer's coach will be informed in advance of the meet. The fee for a scratched entry is refunded via the Competition Secretary. Sometimes there is an upper time limit as well as a lower limit to prevent higher standard swimmers from entering lower level competitions.

### ***How do I find out my ranking?***

For a comprehensive database of swimming results and rankings, irrespective of size of event, go to <https://swimmingresults.org/>. Here you will be able to search by club, event or swimmer.

### ***Which other licensed events should I be aware of?***

#### **Hertford Swimming Club Championships - age at 31 December**

We hold our club championships in June and July and is for members of the club only. Everyone is expected to compete (being of one of the conditions of membership) and the event is **licensed at level 4**, meaning that the times achieved can count towards qualification for Level 1 and 2 meets.

#### **County Championships – age at 31 December**

The beginning of each calendar year is marked by the staging of the respective English County Championships as well as the Welsh Regional and Scottish District events. There is no requirement for these competitions to be held in a 50m pool so some counties chose to stage their meets in a short course pool and some in a long course pool. Age Groups: 10/11 Years, 12 Years, 13 Years, 14 Years, 15 Years, 16+ Years

The **Hertfordshire County Swimming Championships** have minimum age and time qualifications. They take place over two or three weekends in January/February, and are the first formal rung on a ladder that runs through Regionals, Nationals leading to the World Championships and the Olympics. The younger swimmers also compete in an age group competition.

**This is a licensed event.**

#### **Regional Championships – age at 31 December**

Hertford Swimming Club is affiliated to Hertfordshire ASA, which is in turn affiliated to ASA East Region (comprising Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk)

The English Regional Summer Championships (long course 50m) take place during April or May, as do the Scottish and Welsh National Age Group Championships. Unlike the county events, the eight regional championships are all held in long course pools. There is also a one year difference in the age groups and the addition of club relays. Age Groups: 11/12 Years, 13 Years, 14 Years, 15 Years, 16 Years, 17+ Years

**These are licensed events**

**The East Region Winter Championships take place in November/December and are either short course (25m) or long course (50m). This is a licensed event**

### **National Championships – age at 31 December**

The National Summer Meet is Swim England's biggest domestic swimming event of the year.

The Summer Meet forms part of a swimming competition structure in Great Britain whereby the top ranked swimmers in each event are invited to compete at the British Swimming Summer Championships.

The next ranked swimmers at Swim England affiliated clubs – or those who have chosen to be ranked as an English swimmer – are invited to compete at the Nationals.

The rankings are on swimmers' performances at level 1 meets between a qualification window, typically between March and May of the same calendar year. These national meets are structured as follows:

**British Summer Championships-** This is a long course event and swimmers will be invited based on the national rankings. The top 24 in each age group and event will be invited to compete at the Summer Championships. There is a qualification window. Age Groups: 12/13 Years, 14 Years, 15 Years, 16/17 Years, 18+ Years

**This is a licensed event**

**The National Summer Meet** takes place in the week after the British Summer Championships and is a long course event. The next 20 swimmers in each age group will be invited to compete. The event uses the same qualification window and rankings as the British Summer Championships and is for the top ranked English swimmers who did not qualify for the British competition. Age Groups: 12/13 Years, 14 Years, 15 Years, 16/17 Years, 18+ Years

**This is a licensed event**

**The National Winter Meet** brings the swimming calendar year to an end with Great Britain's top swimmers battling it out in a short course pool.

**This is a licensed event**