

WHAT IS AN OPEN MEET?

Open meets are competitions where swimmers compete against swimmers from other clubs in various parts of the country as well as each other, swimmers enter under the name of their club, i.e. Stratford Sharks A.S.C.

At some of these meets a prize for top swimmer and top club is awarded, to win top club, points are awarded for all swimmers who make finals. Medals are given to 1st, 2nd & 3rd placed swimmers in finals, sometimes all finalist receive medals.

Swimmers will swim in a heat, times are then put together for the age group and the fastest 6 go on to the final, (dependent upon how many lanes the pool has).

You must swim as fast as you can in your heat to stand a chance of getting into the final.

There may be several heats in each event, and you may be seeded in a low heat, you could still make the final if you swim hard.

If you have **HDW** written on your card that means it is a heat declared winners event and no final will be swum, the fastest times from all swims will be awarded the Medals/Trophies in the respective age groups.

ENTERING AN OPEN MEET:

Information will be given to swimmers re: events, age groups, days & dates of the competition. Enter all events and not just your favorites! As you get older you will find that you're strokes change and specializing in one event will not happen until you are much older.

To enter fill in the entry form, if there is not an entry form contact the Club Gala Secretary if Stratford Sharks are doing an entry, if not you will need to contact the Gala Promoter.

If there is no club entry a coach should sign the form confirming your entry times.

Example:

Swimmers name: Joe Bloggs DOB: 21/05/1991

ASA registration number: 120545

Your number will be on your **ASA registration card**, If you have not received your registration number write applied for.

Event numbers, event and your current time if known. Remember you may be asked for Long Course (50M) or Short Course (25M) times:

1. 50m Butterfly 48.56

6. 50m Free 36.03

9. 50m Back 43.82

Amount: 3 events @ £4.50 = £13.50

Place the cheque in envelope payable to the name on the entry form – this could be Stratford Sharks, the current Gala Secretary or the Meet Promoter

All Open meets are own transport unless otherwise stated.

THE MEET:

If the organizers of the meet receive a large amount of entries, either the slowest competitors from some events will be rejected or the later entries received rejected and your entry will be returned. Normally payment will be refunded (but not always) to the club coach on the day of the Gala.

Swimmers will then receive cards back from the organizers. Usually blue for boys and pink for girls. **Some meets do not have cards.**

Information on the cards will be:

Swimmers name, club, event & competitor number, entry time, session number, warm-up time, start time, and the most important of all, **post cards by (time).**

ON THE DAY:

Before leaving home make sure you have your kit, 2 towels, 2 or 3 costumes/trunks, plenty of drink (very important) a couple pairs of goggles tightened ready to wear, appropriate snacks for poolside, not chocolate/crisps, on the poolside you will need 2 T-shirts, leggings or shorts and poolside shoes. **AND YOUR CARDS**

Always arrive in plenty of time, to post your cards.

Boxes for cards are usually situated by the entrance to the pool or by the changing rooms, if you cannot find them, **ASK** someone.

If you forget to take your cards tell the organizers and you will be issued with cards, you will need to write them yourself.

What to do if you miss posting your cards?

Take your cards to your Coach, who will then take them to the organizers, (if the coach is busy he may ask you to do this).

If the events have already been sorted out and there is a space in the first heat you will normally be offered that space.

If there are no spaces you will not be able to swim that event. If the event has not been sorted, your card will be placed in the correct order. This is all at the discretion of the organizers.

WHAT NEXT:

Get yourself changed and go onto the poolside. You will need to look for the Sharks coach(s) on the day and the rest of the swimmers. Doesn't worry just keep looking, you will find them eventually.

Report to the coach and tell him/her who you are, you must not leave the poolside without informing the coach.

The coach will organize you for warm-up and tell you when your swim is coming up. Keep an eye on what is going on and cheer all the Stratford Sharks swimmers during their swims.

YOUR SWIM:

The announcer will call your event usually 2 events before you swim; the Coach will send you to a marshalling area.

Do not wander off or mess about you need to pay attention to everything that is going on.

Your card will either have been given back to you before you enter the marshalling area or you may have to look for it on a table or filing trays. Don't worry there will be adults there marshalling you. If you are worried **ASK.**

Sometimes the Coach will send an experienced swimmer up with you to show you the ropes, don't worry you'll soon get the hang of it.

The marshals will then call your heat and send you to your blocks, your heat and lane number will be written on your card.

ONCE YOU ARE ON YOUR BLOCKS NOBODY ELSE MATTERS, SWIM AS FAST AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN, DO NOT BE TEMPTED TO LOOK AROUND.

Sometimes your swimming does not go as well as you expect, do not worry there is often a good reason for that, do not get upset, put that swim behind you and concentrate on the next one.

BAGCATS:

(British Age Groups Categories) were introduced to nurture swimmers through to senior level. The development of Children (nervous, muscular and cardio vascular systems) was studied in relation to swimming and it was concluded that skills were best developed by a multi-stroke approach to training and competition. This would reduce the likelihood of injuries and get away from early specialization which was seen as partly responsible for swimmers retiring early from the sport.

In January 2010 BAGCAT/GB points were abolished and now FINA points are used exclusively, however the BAGCAT categories remain for competitions even though now points are awarded regardless of age/gender.

To be in contention for a BAGCAT award the swimmer should aim to get at least one swim in each of the four categories. As the swimmers get older so the number of possible events to swim gets larger (e.g. 400 free, 400 IM, 800 free, 1500 free). By then you should have worked out the system. Things do change for girls 14 years and over and boys 15 years and over, when the swimmers are more likely to start to specialize.

And remember.....ENJOY IT!