

QUALIFYING FOR COUNTY EVENTS FROM LICENSED MEETS

We refer to the County's letter dated 17 December 2007 advising that, with effect from the Senior/Junior Championships 2008, it will be necessary for qualification for County events to be achieved from licensed meets. The County has received some questions and comments arising from the letter and the following hopefully summarises and addresses these.

Q1. Whilst we entirely support the proposal, the introduction of this is too soon to allow the younger swimmers to qualify for the Senior/Juniors 2008.

A. *We would remind everyone that the 9 year old age group was is excluded from the new criteria. **In an endeavour to assist clubs the Swimming Committee has agreed to extend this concession to the 10 year old age group.***

However, in any event, the first County Championships to which the new arrangement applies is the Senior/Juniors 2008 and generally very few younger swimmers qualify for the Senior/Juniors. The County therefore considers that the new criteria should not cause any problems for 2008.

Q2. Does this criteria apply to relay events?

A. *No.*

Q3. Has the criteria been introduced to reduce the number of swimmers who do not make the qualifying times? Is this getting worse?

A. *This was not the primary purpose of the decision as this reached an all time low in 2007. However, Block A 2008 did show an upward trend and therefore the introduction of the new criteria will mean that the County no longer has to monitor this.*

Q4. How does the County believe that this will "help improve the standard of swimming in the County?

a) *It will encourage Clubs to fall in line with the Long Term Athlete Development ('LTAD') Plan when organising their Club Championships. The LTAD Plan was introduced to improve the standard of swimming in the country as a whole.*

b) *It will encourage clubs to ensure that all competitors have a ratified Essex QT for the Championships and as such the swimmers will be in a better position to focus on qualification at higher levels e.g. the ASA Age Group or Youth Nationals.*

c) *By eliminating swimmers who do not have a ratified Essex QT from the Championships it will hopefully enhance the opportunities for those who do by improving the quality of the swimming environment by:*

- i having more space in the warm ups;*
- ii having more space in the swim-down facility;*
- iii reducing the length of sessions.*

d) *By focusing on the LTAD Plan competitive programme it will stimulate clubs to inform their parents of the LTAD Plan and its benefits.*

- e) *By giving swimmers a defined target that must be ratified it will give them the opportunity to attain targets set that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timebound, 'SMART' goals to which all ASA coaches should be working with the swimmers towards.*
- f) *It will ensure that swimmers are properly seeded in heats so that they race against swimmers with similar ratified times, to make racing closer and more competitive.*
- Q5. We do try to enter our swimmers into licensed meets. However, unfortunately, these are heavily oversubscribed and we receive a high number of rejections.
- A. *Unfortunately this is currently a problem, particularly in Essex. It is hoped that more clubs will start running licensed meets. However, in the meantime, it is possible for clubs to license their Club Championships to enable qualification (see below).*
- Q6. It is costly and time consuming to enter licensed meets.
- A. *Please see answer to Q5 above.*
- Q7. Does the new criteria apply to 800m and 1500m events as it doesn't for the Regional Championships?
- A. *At the present time, yes, although the County will keep this under review.*
- Q8. Will it be possible for swimmers to use qualifying times achieved in the Essex Swimming League?
- No.*
- Q9. Will it be possible for swimmers to use qualifying times achieved in the Speedo League?
- A. *Only the final of the Speedo League is currently licensed.*
- Q10. It is not possible for Clubs who swim in a 33.33 metre pool to run licensed meets.
- A. *This is not correct. It is possible for such Clubs to run Level 3 and Level 4 meets.*
- Q11. We cannot run licensed meets as we cannot afford to hire in the electronic timing.
- A. *It is not necessary to have electronic timing for Level 4 Meets. Is it however necessary to enter the results into an appropriate software package.*

- Q12. It is too costly for Clubs to purchase the software.
- A. *It is understood that the cost of Sportssystem (which is the package used by the County) is £390 which includes support and updates. There are other packages available which are acceptable to the ASA for ranking purposes. When comparing costs, however, we do recommend that Clubs consider whether these include support and upgrades.*
- Q13. We have purchased the software but are struggling to understand how to operate it.
- A. *If Clubs have Sportssystem, the County may be able to provide some assistance/training. If Clubs are using other packages, we may be able to introduce you to someone from another club who also uses the same software to see if they could assist.*
- Q14. Our club does not have the volunteers to run open meets so there is no point buying the software.
- A. *The County recognises the difficulty in getting volunteers. However, even clubs which do not run open meets usually run Club Championships. It is possible for Clubs to license Club Championships at Level 4. For Level 4 Licensing there is a flat fee of £25 payable for one year.*
- However, in the spirit of Swim 21 Accreditation, the County would encourage all Clubs to identify and nurture volunteers. It is anticipated that the County will in future be calling on Clubs more and more to provide volunteers to help run the County Championships. Therefore the more people that clubs can recruit as volunteers and train to assist running Championships/open meets the better.*
- Similarly, there is nothing to stop clubs swimming in other clubs' Club Championships. Indeed, we understand that one club has already extended such an offer to two clubs which currently use 33.33 metre pools.*
- Q15. Our Club Championships include events which are not suitable for qualification for County Championships.
- A. *See answer to Q4 above. Clubs should be running their Club Championships taking into account the requirements of the LTAD Plan.*
- Q16. Will the County accept conversions from 33.33m times for 100m times and above?
- A. *Yes, provided these are calculated from the official ASA conversion programme/tables.*
- Q17. Are there any other benefits to the County in having this criteria?
- A. *This year we have experienced some problems with swimmer registration details not matching the ASA database. The new criteria will hopefully ensure that the majority of such problems will have been sorted out by Clubs before the County Championships.*

We hope the above has covered all the points raised. However, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact:

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