Swimming Domestic Competition Plan

2025-2026 Season Explanatory Notes

Swimming Domestic Competition Plan (2025-2026 Season)

Please consider the content of this document alongside the associated 2025-2026 Domestic Season Plan

Galas

The emphasis for galas is on 'fun' in individual and/or relay swimming. If prizes are to be awarded, they are for participation rather than awards for first, second and third positions within a race. The focus is on club/team representation and athletes compete for a finishing position which provides their club/team with a point score towards a club/team accumulative score

Meets

The emphasis for meets is on individual/relay performance for a time and a finishing position. Meets will usually swim consolidated heats with outcomes declared from either a Heat Declared Winner basis (HDW) or from athletes qualifying for finals from heat swims

General

All Swim Ireland competitions are open to all Swim Ireland registered members subject to relevant qualification criteria as applicable. At National Meets, specific qualification criteria are available for athletes with disabilities. Clubs and Regions should make reasonable adjustments to include athletes with disabilities at their meets.

In all cases, coaches should ensure athletes meet an adequate standard to enter any competition

All competitions (other than schools' competitions or Inter/Intra Club Galas) to be age classified as of 31st December within the year in question. The plan follows a sequential swimming development model in age bands as follows:

- Intra-Club Galas from 7 years upwards. Such galas can be organised on 'blank' weekends on the season plan
- Inter-Club Galas from 8 years upwards (other than the Swim Ireland Christmas Cracker Gala which will be from 7 years upwards). Such galas can be organised on 'blank' weekends on the season plan
- Club Invitational/Open Meets from 9 years upwards. Such meets are predominantly to be utilised for entry into the Future Challenger Series and/or the Aspiring Champions Series. However, they may also be used to qualify for Regional Championships and National Meets subject to licencing requirements. Such meets can be organised on 'blank' weekends on the season plan
- Regional Future Challenger Series from 10 to 14 years (see notes on page 3)
- Regional Aspiring Champions Series from 13 years upwards
- Regional Age Group & Senior LC Championships and Irish Summer National Championships (50m) from 12 years upwards
- Regional SC Championships, Irish Winter National Championships (25m) and Irish Open Championships (50m) from 13 years upwards

Swim Ireland Tech Suit Policy

Athletes aged 12 years old and younger (age as that prescribed by each meet's entry conditions) will not be permitted to compete in a tech suit in any swimming competition which falls under the jurisdiction of Swim Ireland – all Swim Ireland licensed/sanctioned meets on the island of Ireland. The following statement must be added to the meet conditions/information for all competitions in Ireland:

"Athletes aged 12 years and younger (age as defined in the meet conditions) will not be permitted to compete at this meet in a tech suit. A tech suit is defined as a suit manufactured with the following 4 elements – water repellent fabric, compressive material, taped or bonded seams, and leg grippers. Athletes aged 12 years and under will be disqualified if officials observe such an athlete competing in a tech suit."

The full policy is available here.

Definition of Qualifying/Consideration Times

- When an athlete achieves a Qualifying Time set within the parameters of a particular set of meet conditions, such an athlete is guaranteed entry into this event
- When an athlete achieves a Consideration Time set within the parameters of a particular set of meet conditions, such an athlete will be considered for entry into this event. Meet managers will make their decisions based on entry numbers and cut off accordingly per event
- When an athlete does not achieve a Qualifying/Consideration Time set within the parameters of a particular set of meet conditions, such an athlete will NOT be considered for entry into this event

Annual Season

- The season will be defined as the period 25/08/25 – 31/08/26
- The Swim Ireland Performance Team (in consultation with the Performance Advisory Group) will provide a required Programme of Events for all National and Regional Championship Meets
- The Swim Ireland Performance Team will provide a Programme of Events for the Future Challenger, and the Aspiring Champions Meets. However, each Region may adjust the order of events to suit their needs
- The Swim Ireland Performance Team (in consultation with the Performance Advisory Group) will write the Qualifying Times for all National Championships
- Each Region will write their own Qualifying and/or Consideration times for Regional events based on the demographic of their athletes

Short Course Season (Period 1)

- All events to be competed in short course pools only in the period 25/08/25 – 31/12/25
- The Regional culmination of the short course season will be each Regional SC Championships
- The National culmination of the short course season will be the Irish Winter National Championships (25m)
- The International culmination of the short course season will be the European Aquatics Championships (25m)

Long Course Season (Period 2)

- Events to be competed (as much as possible) in long course pools in the period 01/01/26 – 31/08/26
- The Regional culmination of the long course season will be each Regional Age Group & Senior LC Championships
- The National culmination of the long course season will be the Irish Open Championships in the first training cycle and the Irish Summer National Championships in the second training cycle
- The International culmination of the long course season will be the Irish Open Championships for Senior athletes in the first training cycle and the benchmark summer international meet in the second training cycle. In 2025-2026, this is the Commonwealth Games (NI athletes) or European Aquatics Swimming Championships (50m) for senior athletes and the European Aquatics Junior Swimming Championships for junior athletes

Full Time National Centre Athletes

- On an individual basis, such athletes may enter a Regional Championships either within the Region in which their National Centre is based or in the Region of their home club
- Such athletes who enter a Regional Championships within the Region in which their National Centre is based (where this is a different Region to that of their home club), such athletes will be eligible to compete in heats and/or finals but will not be eligible to win medals from within that Region
- Such athletes may only compete in one Region's Championships during the SC season and one Region's Championships in the LC season. The selected Region for the LC season may be different to that of the SC season
- This clause is reserved for Full Time members of National Centre Athletes **ONLY**

Regional Future Challenger Series

- The series will be delivered in two rounds with two meets per round (four meets in total)
- Regions may choose to split their clubs into multiple venues and run each meet on the same or separate days within each window of opportunity
- No qualifying or consideration times are required to enter these meets except for entry into the 200m Breaststroke and 400m Freestyle
- The Future Challenger Series is open to all competitive members aged 10 to 14 years but athletes aged 13/14 years may only enter if they have not previously competed at the Aspiring Champions level or above and cannot compete at the Aspiring Champions Series in the same cycle i.e. the short course or long course season
- Meet formats will be provided to the Regions by the Swim Ireland Performance Team. However, each Region can adjust the order of events to suit their needs
- Regions may decide to limit the number of entries per athlete and/or the number of relay entries per club
- Times achieved by athletes aged 12 years only in the 200m Freestyle, 100m Backstroke, 100m Breaststroke and 100m Butterfly will allow them to enter all available events in the corresponding stroke at the Regional Age Group & Senior LC Championships provided they are achieved within the qualification period for that meet
- Times achieved at Future Challenger meets, **cannot** be used to enter the Irish Summer National Age Group Championships
- Regions may accept entries from athletes/clubs outside of Ireland but Irish clubs/athletes may only compete in their own Region (unless two or more Regions merge to run such an event) and such events should be considered as 'Closed' in this sense

Regional Aspiring Champions Series

- The series will be delivered as two 2-day meets – one short course meet in October and one long course meet in February or March
- The Aspiring Champions Series will be open to all competitive members aged 13 years & over
- Meet formats will be provided to the Regions by the Swim Ireland Performance Team. However, each Region can adjust the order of events to suit their needs
- These meets may have a qualification process and Consideration Times for entry to support athlete development and manage meet timelines. Club time trial results, signed off by the Head Coach, can be accepted for entry into these events
- Any meet can be utilised for entry and LC/SC conversions will be accepted
- Regions may decide to limit the number of entries per athlete and/or the number of relay entries per club
- Times achieved can be used to enter Regional and National Championship events provided they are within the qualification period for each respective meet and in the required pool format (SC or LC)
- Regions may accept entries from athletes/clubs outside of Ireland but Irish clubs/athletes may only compete in their own Region (unless two or more Regions merge to run such an event) and such events should be considered as 'Closed' in this sense

Regional SC Championships

- The schedule of events shall be set by the Swim Ireland Performance Team
- 2, 2.5 or 3-day competition with all four Regions running this event over one of three specified weekends. Regions may merge for this competition if required
- Age Groups as 13-16, 17/18, and 19 & over (for meet qualification purposes only)
- Qualifying Times and Consideration Times to both be utilised to allow maximising entries for meet managers
- SC Qualification times (plus Hy-tek LC conversions) may be used for entry. Any suitably licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be utilised for entry
- Full Olympic programme of individual events plus 100m IM
- Single Gender 200m Freestyle & 200m Medley relays and Mixed Gender 200m Freestyle & 200m Medley relays (two male/two female)
- 'A' Final or 'A' and 'B' Finals ONLY (for the fastest qualifiers irrespective of age) for all individual events
- Relays and 800m/1500m will be Heat Declared Winner events
- Times achieved can be used to enter the Irish Winter National Championships (25m) and the McCullagh International Meet

Through a unified endeavour across Irish aquatics, power a dynamic system and an ever-evolving culture to develop and support identified aquatic talent, those who wear the Green Jacket with pride, and particularly those who are driven to stand on World & Olympic podiums

- Regions may accept entries from athletes/clubs outside of Ireland but Irish clubs/athletes may only compete in their own Regional SC Championships (unless two or more Regions merge for this competition) and such events should be considered as 'Closed' in this sense

Regional Age Group & Senior LC Championships

- The schedule of events shall be set by the NPD
- All four Regions shall run this event over one or two weekends within the designated window. Where a Region runs their own Championships, the event shall be a meet of two and a half days or three days (if one weekend is used) or 2 x two days (if two weekends are used). Where two or more Regions merge to run their Championships, additional days may be used by request from the National Performance Director
- Age Groups for qualification purposes as 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & over
- Age Groups for finals and medal purposes as 12, 13/14, 15/16, 17 & over
- Qualifying Times and Consideration Times to both be utilised to allow the maximising of entries for meet managers
- LC Qualification times (plus SC conversions) may be used for entry. Any suitably licensed onshore or similarly licensed offshore meet can be utilised for entry
- Full Olympic programme of individual events for all age groups
- Mixed gender 200m Medley and 200m Freestyle relay events for athletes aged 12 years (two male/two female)
- All Olympic relay events, mixed and per gender (age as 13-14 years and 15 years & over)
- Finals in each age group for all events other than relays and 400m/800m/1500m (Heat Declared Winner events)
- Times achieved can be used to enter the Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (50m) or Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m)
- Regions may accept entries from athletes/clubs outside of Ireland but Irish clubs/athletes may only compete in their own Regional LC Championships (unless two or more Regions merge for this competition) and such events should be considered as 'Closed' in this sense

Regional Swim Festival

- A one- or two-day competition and the schedule of events shall be set by the Regional Coaching Advisory Group
- The purpose of this competition is to provide a meaningful end of season competition for athletes who do not achieve entry into the Irish Summer National Championships

Irish Winter National Championships (25m)

- Three-day competition and the schedule of events shall be set by the Swim Ireland Performance Team
- Age Groups as 13-16, 17/18 and 19 & over (for meet qualification purposes only)
- SC Consideration Times and Hytek converted LC times
- Qualification Window 01/12/24 to 23/11/25
- Level 3 Club Open Meets organised by Irish Clubs and Offshore meets in the period above which meet similar standards may be nominated in advance to Swim Ireland as a Qualification meet
- Full Olympic programme of individual events plus 100m IM
- Single Gender 200m Freestyle & 200m Medley relays and Mixed Gender 200m Freestyle & 200m Medley relays (two male/two female)
- Finals as per the meet conditions for 50m, 100m, 200m, and 400m individual events
- Relays and 800m/1500m events will be Heat Declared Winner events

McCullagh International Meet (50m)

- Three-day competition and the schedule of events shall be set by the Swim Ireland Performance Team
- Age Groups as 13/14, 15/16, 17/18, 19 & over (for meet qualification purposes only)
- LC Consideration Times and Hytek converted SC times
- Qualification Window 26/06/25 to 25/01/26
- Level 3 Club Open Meets organised by Irish Clubs and Offshore meets in the period above which meet similar standards may be nominated in advance to Swim Ireland as a Qualification meet
- Full Olympic programme of individual events
- Age Group (13/14 years) athletes may qualify for the 50m events via the 100/200m events in the corresponding stroke
- All Olympic relay events per gender and mixed to be classed as the 'National Relay Titles' for 2026
- Finals as per the meet conditions for 50m, 100m, 200m, and 400m individual events
- Relays and 800m/1500m events will be Heat Declared Winner events

Irish Open Championships (50m)

- Five-day competition
- Irish Trials for International selections with the schedule of events set by the Swim Ireland Performance Team
- Age Groups: 13-16, 17/18 and 19 & over (for meet qualification purposes only)
- LC Qualification times only – no SC or SC conversions
- Qualification window 26/06/25 to 15/03/26
- Level 3 Long Course Club Open Meets organised by Irish Clubs and Offshore meets in the periods above which meet similar standards may be nominated in advance to Swim Ireland as a Qualification meet
- Full Olympic programme of individual events
- Finals as per the meet conditions for 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m individual events
- 800m/1500m events will be Heat Declared Winner events

Irish Summer National Age Group Championships (50m)

- Four-day LC competition and the schedule of events shall be set by the NPD
- Age Groups for qualification and medal purposes as 12, 13, 14 years
- LC Qualification and Consideration Times published, and Hy-tek converted SC times, both may be used for entry
- Athletes representing Irish Clubs **must** achieve the published standards at a Level 3 Licensed Meet on the island of Ireland. Athletes representing non-Irish clubs may achieve times from a similarly licensed offshore meet
- Qualification window 01/01/25 – 09/06/25
- Full Olympic programme of individual events
- Mixed gender 200m Medley and 200m Freestyle relay events for athletes aged 12 years
- All Olympic relay events, mixed and per gender (ages as 13/14 years)
- Finals as per the meet conditions for 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m individual events
- Relays and 800m/1500m events will be Heat Declared Winner events

Irish Summer National Youth & Senior Championships (50m)

- Five-day competition and the schedule of events shall be set by the NPD
- Age Groups for qualification and medal purposes as 15, 16, 17, 18 & over
- LC Qualification and Consideration Times **only** – no SC times or SC conversions
- Athletes representing Irish Clubs **must** achieve the publish standards at a Level 3 Licensed Meet on the island of Ireland. Athletes representing non-Irish clubs may achieve times from a similarly licensed offshore meet
- Qualification window 01/01/25 – 09/06/25
- Full Olympic programme of individual
- All Olympic relay events (15 years & over)
- Finals as per the meet conditions for 50m, 100m, 200m and 400m individual events
- Relays and 800m/1500m will be Heat Declared Winner events

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