

Introduction

1. The purpose of interclub swim meets is largely two-fold – to provide an opportunity for Masters Swimming members to compete against others of the same gender in their age group; and to provide an opportunity for members to improve their personal best times in a competitive environment.

Swimmers nominate a time in which they expect to finish an event, so that each person swims in a heat with others of similar ability, regardless of age or gender.

2. The meets are held at various venues in the Perth metropolitan area and each is hosted by a Masters Swimming club. Some of the pools are 50m in length (considered to be long course) while others are 25m in length (considered to be short course). Venues may be outdoor (in warmer months) or indoor (in cooler months) and may also be at a country venue (E.g. Bunbury).

How things work

Nominating

3. Club members advise their Club Captain of which individual events on the program they wish to swim - usually a maximum of 3. There are generally about 6 events to select from – the distances and strokes vary with each meet. Distances range from 50m to 200m (long course pools) and 25m to 200m (short course pools) and may cover all 4 strokes and individual medleys. Individual medleys are swum in the order butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle. Swimmers are encouraged to swim in the maximum number of events allowed in order to gain points for their club.

4. As well as nominating events in which they wish to swim, each swimmer must also nominate a time for each event. The nominated time should be close to the swimmer's personal best for the event in the current year, as this provides the swimmer with an incentive to improve on that time during their swim at the meet.

5. The Club Captain forwards all the nominating swimmers' names, ages, events and times to the host club for sorting into heats. Swimmers' ages are as at 31 December in the current calendar year.

Heats

6. Swimmers are allocated to a heat for an event based on their nominated time, so that each heat (always mixed men and women and mixed ages) contains swimmers who have nominated roughly the same time. This is intended to avoid the situation and potential embarrassment where some swimmers in a heat might finish a long way behind the others. In theory, all swimmers in a heat should finish at roughly the same time, even though they may be in various age groups.

7. Heats are swum in order of slowest to fastest times. So, swimmers who have nominated slower times swim in earlier heats while those who have nominated faster times swim in later heats. The number of heats for an event will depend on the number of swimmers who nominated for that event.

Points

8. After all heats in an event are completed, the times are sorted into fastest-to-slowest for men and women separately, and in 5-year age groups (eg 35-39, 40-44 and so on). There are no "finals".

9. Points are then allocated for each “grouping” (eg Men, 35-39) as follows: - fastest time is allocated 1st place and 4 points - the next fastest time 2nd place and 3 points - the next fastest time 3rd place and 2 points; and - all other swimmers who finished their heat are allocated one point.

10. For some events, there may be only one or very few swimmers who compete from a particular age group. It is therefore possible for weaker swimmers to gain a 1st to 3rd placing and receive points accordingly.

11. Points are tallied for each club and club placings are determined at the conclusion of the meet based on the total points received by each club. A trophy is usually awarded to the first-placed club and at some meets, a handicap trophy is also awarded, determined by the points gained by clubs relative to the number of swimmers who competed for each club. This enables recognition of smaller clubs (or clubs with fewer swimmers at the meet) whose swimmers compete in the maximum number of events permitted and do well.

On the day

Program of events and heats

12. A program for the day indicating which swimmers have been allocated to which heats (including lane allocation) in each event is made available to each club at the beginning of the meet.

Warm-up

13. A warm-up period of around 30-45 minutes is provided before the start of the meet – usually, the whole pool will be made available for this purpose. During the meet, it is usual for one of the outside lanes to be reserved for swimmers to undertake a warm-up; and a cool-down after their heat.

Marshalling and starting

14. Swimmers are asked to report to a marshalling point some time before their heat, so that their name can be checked off against the program; and heat and lane number confirmed. Calling swimmers for marshalling is usually done via announcements and/or a whiteboard. Several heats are called at the same time.

15. After checking-in at the marshalling point, swimmers are handed a disc or token with their lane number imprinted on it. They are then directed to a waiting area to await call-up for their heat to the starting blocks. Chairs are provided for several heats in the waiting area, with each chair assigned a lane number. When swimmers are called up to the starting blocks to swim their heat, they start when the starter has given the order, and may dive from the block; dive from the pool edge next to the block; or start in the water by pushing off from the end.

Relays

16. Relay events are generally held at the conclusion of the individual events. Relay teams are determined by Club Captains and teams comprise swimmers present on the day. Each swimmer in a relay must have swum in at least one individual event on the program.

17. Each relay team comprises 4 swimmers and their combined ages determine their prescribed 40-year age grouping. For example, a team whose combined ages total 176 will be entered in age group 160-199 years (so for this age group, their combined ages must equal at least 160 years and be no more than 199 years).

18. Relay events may be freestyle or medley, and may be men only or women only or mixed, depending on the program. Mixed teams must comprise 2 men and 2 women.

19. **Medley relays are swum in the order backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle (ie alphabetical order).**

20. There is no requirement for relay members to swim in age order; or in mixed relays, alternating men and women. However, once a relay team has been determined and advised to the organisers, swimmers must swim in the order listed.

21. Points allocated for relay placings are double the value of individual events, ie a relay team first placing is awarded 8 points and so on. Clubs that can muster relay teams in as many age groups and events as possible therefore have a distinct advantage in obtaining extra points towards the “champion club” status or first placing at the meet. Clubs can enter only one team in an age group in an event to receive points.

Other interclub meets

22. Masters Swimming members may also compete individually at interclub meets in which their club is not participating. Permission will depend on whether the host club can accommodate the individual entries – obviously, participating clubs receive first priority. Interested members should provide relevant details (name, age, the events in which they wish to swim and a nominated time for each one) to their Club Captain and ask that they be entered in the meet (via the MSWA swim meet software program). At the meet, after the swimmer has completed their heat, a time is recorded for the swimmer. However, points and placings are not allocated and an 'X' is recorded in the results alongside the swimmer's time to indicate they are an external entry, ie not a member of a participating club.