

Notes about Qualification Times for the Regional Championships 2026

The region's Swimming Competitions Group (SCG) have worked very closely with the Regional Coaches Forum to deliver an effective Long Course Championship programme for 2026 that supports swimmers and recognises the challenges that we face as a region; being by far the largest in terms of clubs, swimmers and geography, access to appropriate facilities (we have no ten lane pools) and the time constraints for competition imposed by Swim England.

As in previous years the Age Group Championships will be held in two venues (K2 Crawley and Winchester) while the Youth Championships are being held in High Wycombe.

Everyone involved recognises that the Regional Championships are, for many swimmers, their Olympics and we need to provide the very best experience and opportunities. However, given all the constraints we must work with, we also need to make the Championships a key competition for our very best athletes.

Coaches have been very keen that our times reflect the quality of swimming in a highly competitive region. The SCG and Coaches Forum agreed that this year's qualification times need to be progressive and faster than in recent years.

By tightening our QTs we are being realistic about the high standard of swimming in the region and what is needed to qualify rather than having easier times that result in lots of rejections; in some events we have seen twice as many rejections as there were accepted swimmers. The impact of rejection is also hard on swimmers, and we need to be mindful of the long-term impacts this can have on younger swimmers at the beginning of their careers.

The Coaches Forum are also particularly keen that clubs help parents and their swimmers appreciate how competitive the South East Region is and to help them understand that they are still great swimmers even if they don't make a regional time.

This year's QTs have been formulated using last year's results as a guide. The team also used algorithms, the revised race programme and available pool time to produce draft times that could be compared to previous years to identify any areas where we had potential issues accommodating the largest number of swimmers across all ages and both genders. The team also looked at rankings to see if there were any major issues.

The huge amount of work that has been done by everyone involved in the process with redesigning the programme and the qualification times this year we believe will allow the best swimmers to compete and produce great competition across the whole programme.

Swimming Competitions Group