

Open Water Age Group Championship Conditions 2026

2026 South East Region Age Group Open Water Championship
incorporating Hampshire ASA, Berkshire & South Buckinghamshire ASA and Sussex ASA, County Age
Group Open Water Championships
Distances of 1km, 2km, 3km and 5km

1. A competitor must be a Club compete Swim England member or equivalent SASA or WASA member at the time of entry and on the day of competition. Overseas competitors will be accepted if they are members of a national association affiliated to World Aquatics. Swimmers being members of clubs in more than one Region cannot compete in the South East Region event if they have previously competed in the Championships of another Region under their other club.
2. The Female category is for birth sex females in accordance with [Swim England's Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy](#). By entering the 'Female' category you confirm that your birth sex is female.
3. In the absence of appropriate registration, a Swim England Temporary Membership must be purchased at <https://www.swimming.org/members/swim-england-temporary-membership/>
4. An entry fee of £30 is payable on entry.
5. Swimmers under 18yrs **MUST** be accompanied by an adult.

Access to the swimmers enclosure is restricted to swimmers competing in the Championships, coaches and team managers in possession of the recognised Swim England accreditation, officials working during the session and assigned volunteers.

- 5.1.1 Accreditation must be downloaded ahead of the competition through the Swim England Member Options portal and must be visible at all times.
 - 5.1.2 In special circumstances an exception may be made at the discretion of the Event Manager or their Deputy.
6. There will normally be a maximum number of entries accepted in each event as detailed below:
 - i. 1Km - 2 waves x 50 swimmers (maximum 100 swimmers)
 - ii. 2km - 3 waves x 50 swimmers (maximum 150 swimmers)
 - iii. 3km - 3 waves x 50 swimmers (maximum 150 swimmers)
 - iv. 5Km - 2 waves x 50 swimmers (maximum 100 swimmers)

If it becomes necessary to restrict entries, the following priorities will be used:

- i. Rejection of Temporary members.
 - ii. Rejection of swimmers from outside the region.
 - iii. Acceptance priority to those swimmers where their Age Group is involved in qualification for the National Event.
 - iv. Final consideration will be based on first come first served basis.
7. Every effort will be made to ensure that competitors in the same age groups will swim in the same wave to ensure swimmer safety at the start and during the race.

8. Swimmers must seek appropriate medical advice if they have any concerns as to their state of health. By entering, swimmers confirm that they have not been informed by any medical practitioner and do not have any knowledge of any medical condition which would make it inadvisable for them to participate in Open Water Swimming. Accordingly, they certify that they are physically fit to participate. They undertake to inform the Promoter of any medical condition which may affect their participation in the event.
9. Swimmers must be aware of and appreciate the inherent risks involved in open water competition, including the possibility of injury or accident. They undertake to always conduct themselves in a responsible manner.
10. Swimmers undertake to inform the Referee of any concerns they may have as regards safety.
11. Swimmers acknowledge that during Open Water Swimming events the Swim England South East Region cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to personal belongings.
12. Swimmers agree to abide by and be governed by the rules of Swim England and all other laws and regulations applicable including the Swim England Safety Laws and the Conditions of Swim England South East Region.
13. Swimmers must attend registration, get checked by Clerks of the Course and attend the briefing for their event. Failure to attend the briefing will prevent the swimmer from participation in the race.
14. Photographs of the event may be used for publicity purposes and may be put on websites and social media.
15. In the event of cancellation by the Swim England South East Region Open Water Committee full refunds will be offered.

Swimmers withdrawing from the event before the closing date will only be offered refunds in exceptional circumstances. All refunds must be authorised by the event manager. No requests for refunds will be considered after the closing date (Tuesday 16th June 2026.)

16. Regional Open Water Age Groups use age on 31st December 2026 for all entries. The Age Groups for the 2026 Open Water Championships are:
 - i. 1km Freestyle; 11yrs, 12yrs, 13-14yrs, 15-16yrs and 17yrs+
 - ii. 2km Freestyle; 12yrs, 13yrs, 14yrs, 15-16yrs and 17-19yrs
National Age Group Qualifier 13yrs
 - iii. 3km Freestyle; 14yrs, 15yrs, 16yrs and 17-19yrs
National Age Group Qualifier 14yrs and 15yrs
 - iv. 5km Freestyle; 16yrs, 17-18yrs and 19yrs+
National Age Group Qualifier 16yrs, 17-18yrs and 19 & over
17. The Championships are a qualifying event for the National Open Water Championships. The top 7 open/male and female swimmers in each age group and each qualifying event will qualify.

18. To qualify for the National event, a competitor must be a member of a club affiliated to Swim England South East Region.
19. The first 3 South East Region open/male and 3 female swimmers in each age group will be awarded medals. Should any Para swimmers enter these events, then medals will be awarded accordingly. It is the responsibility of each swimmer to collect their awards by the end of the event. Awards not collected will not be retained.
20. Commemorative medals will be awarded to competitors from outside the South East Region when placed first, second or third in individual events.
21. A maximum duration cut off time limit will be in force taken from the start of each race heat, where more than one heat is swum. Swimmers exceeding these times may be allowed to finish at the discretion of the referee, but no result will be recorded.
Cut off times are:
 - 1km - 30mins,
 - 2km - 50mins,
 - 3km - 75mins, and
 - 5km - 90 minutes.
22. Competitors must have their number clearly displayed on their back, upper arms and the back of each hand, plus wear the timing band, wristband and hat provided. Location of numbers may differ if wetsuits are being worn. The hat provided by the organisers is latex; competitors with a latex allergy must inform the organiser on entering the event.
22. No swimmer shall be permitted to use or wear any device, which may be an aid to their speed, endurance or buoyancy or might cause injury to any swimmer during the event. Goggles, cap, nose clip and earplugs may be used. Only one costume is allowed and must comply with World Aquatic Open Water Rules:
 - For Open Water Swimming competitions in water with temperature below 18°C, the use of wetsuits is compulsory.
 - Wetsuits are not permitted in Open Water Swimming competitions in water with temperature 18.0°C and above, except, when conditions are hazardous for the competitors, the Chief Referee may, upon recommendation from the Safety Officer & Medical Officer, declare wetsuits as mandatory in temperatures up to 20.0°C.

Wet suit definition:

For the purposes of World Aquatic Rules (7.3), a wet suit is defined as a swimsuit made of a material providing thermal insulation. A wet suit shall completely cover torso, back, shoulders and knees. They shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists or ankles.

The guidance provided by Swim England as an interpretation is that any wet suit would be approved provided it meets the minimum coverage requirements stated above and that the outer surface does not include any shapes such as ridges or fins.

Guidance Note:

The water temperature will be measured and announced at the start of the briefing.

Since the Championships started, the water temperature has not been low enough for wet suits to be worn.

NOTE: wet suits will not be provided or available to rent from Swim England South East Region or Aqua Sports on the day of competition.

23. Grease can be used or other substances such as sunscreen. HOWEVER, IT MUST NOT be applied before marking up with competitor number has been completed and it is not deemed excessive by the Chief Referee.
24. Closing date for entries is Tuesday 16th June 2025. After the closing date, there can be no changes made in the event of an incorrect entry due to the requirements for the electronic timing.
25. If an event is abandoned for the safety of competitors and/or officials, swimmers who are still in the water at the time of abandonment being announced will be deemed to have not finished even if their safest means of exit from the water is via the finish.
26. Where an event is abandoned, results will only be announced and medals presented where all competitors in an age group had the opportunity to complete their swim, or if in the view of the organiser, those not able to complete their swim would not have influenced the outcome.
27. Drone technology cannot be used at this event for safety reasons. The use of a drone by a swimmer, their support team or their club may result in the swimmer being disqualified.
28. The entry forms and entry procedure documents form part of these conditions.