

SWIM ENGLAND HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026

BSSC Brief Guide to Counties

By BSSC Communications Team

Every year Swim England Hertfordshire, alongside all other County-level organisations, stages the Hertfordshire County Championships. They are the first formal rung on a ladder that runs through Counties, Regionals and Nationals, right up to World Championships and the Olympics.

When & Where: Hertfordshire Counties typically takes place across three weekends in January and February of each year. The major change last year was that the Championships were held at Westminster Lodge, St Albans (not Borehamwood).

Who can compete: anyone in the respective age group can compete if they meet the appropriate Qualifying Time (QT) for that race in an event where times were submitted to the [British Rankings database](#), typically Level 1 to 4 meets.

Most 25m Open Meets that BSSC swimmers attend that are run by other clubs would be Level 3 and our own internal club meets (e.g. No Frills events) are Level 4. If the number of Qualifiers does not reach or exceed the Race Size (see next page), then swimmers with times on the [British Rankings database](#) that meet the Consideration Time (CT) will be eligible to enter, fastest swimmers first, up to the point at which the Race Size is met.

QTs and CTs: each year the bands for the short course (25m) Consideration & Qualification Times are tweaked and published on the [Swimming Competitions](#) page of the Swim England Hertfordshire website so you know in the final few months of the year what times you are aiming for. Times can be achieved in a 25m or 50m pool (50m times will be converted), but must be in the specified timeframe (for 2026, it's 17th May to 7th December 2025). We've snapshot 2026's times below, but you can also get an idea from Swim Manager - go to your swimmer's page and look at the Qualifying tab

AGE	OPEN											
	10/11		12		13		14		15		16 & over	
	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT
50m Free	00:35.00	00:37.80	00:32.66	00:35.27	00:30.88	00:33.35	00:28.58	00:30.87	00:27.25	00:29.43	00:25.26	00:27.28
100m Free	01:17.58	01:26.11	01:13.00	01:21.03	01:07.28	01:14.68	01:03.16	01:10.11	00:59.38	01:05.91	00:54.86	01:00.89
200m Free	02:47.06	03:05.44	02:37.00	02:54.27	02:27.29	02:43.49	02:17.77	02:32.92	02:13.77	02:28.48	02:01.84	02:15.24
400m Free	05:35.00	06:11.85	05:22.39	05:57.85	05:06.54	05:40.26	04:46.81	05:18.36	04:33.62	05:03.72	04:16.97	04:45.24
800m Free			10:41.00	11:51.51	10:14.70	11:22.32	09:52.10	10:57.23	09:32.70	10:35.70	08:56.89	09:55.95
1500m Free			21:00.00	23:18.60	20:00.00	22:12.00	19:00.00	21:05.40	18:18.31	20:19.12	17:05.83	18:58.67
50m Breast	00:47.02	00:52.19	00:43.52	00:48.31	00:40.38	00:44.82	00:37.40	00:41.51	00:35.94	00:39.89	00:32.41	00:35.98
100m Breast	01:42.00	01:53.22	01:35.70	01:46.23	01:30.00	01:39.90	01:23.00	01:32.13	01:17.76	01:26.31	01:11.00	01:18.81
200m Breast	03:41.40	04:05.75	03:23.73	03:46.14	03:15.00	03:36.45	03:02.05	03:22.08	02:56.66	03:16.09	02:39.12	02:56.62
50m Fly	00:40.61	00:45.08	00:37.09	00:41.17	00:33.84	00:37.56	00:32.38	00:35.94	00:30.32	00:33.66	00:27.78	00:30.84
100m Fly	01:40.44	01:51.49	01:29.00	01:38.79	01:22.49	01:31.56	01:12.74	01:20.74	01:08.63	01:16.18	01:01.44	01:08.20
200m Fly	03:48.99	04:14.18	03:38.00	04:01.98	03:33.00	03:56.43	02:59.09	03:18.79	02:37.05	02:54.33	02:25.86	02:41.90
50m Back	00:40.50	00:44.96	00:37.24	00:41.34	00:35.55	00:39.46	00:33.49	00:37.17	00:31.82	00:35.32	00:29.19	00:32.40
100m Back	01:28.00	01:37.68	01:23.10	01:32.24	01:16.55	01:24.97	01:11.94	01:19.85	01:09.66	01:17.32	01:02.65	01:09.54
200m Back	03:08.43	03:29.16	02:56.14	03:15.52	02:45.20	03:03.37	02:35.75	02:52.88	02:28.70	02:45.06	02:17.45	02:32.57
100m IM	01:29.87	01:39.76	01:23.51	01:32.70	01:19.03	01:27.72	01:13.00	01:21.03	01:10.17	01:17.89	01:04.13	01:11.18
200m IM	03:07.68	03:28.32	02:59.00	03:18.69	02:50.80	03:09.59	02:37.90	02:55.27	02:31.25	02:47.89	02:20.26	02:35.69
400m IM			06:01.74	06:41.53	05:49.96	06:28.46	05:29.28	06:05.50	05:16.17	05:50.95	04:54.29	05:26.66

FEMALE												
AGE	10/11		12		13		14		15		16 & over	
	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT	QT	CT
50m Free	00:35.00	00:37.80	0:32.64	00:35.25	00:31.05	00:33.53	00:29.96	00:32.36	00:29.60	00:31.97	00:28.60	00:30.89
100m Free	01:18.00	01:26.58	01:11.89	01:19.80	01:07.51	01:14.94	01:05.19	01:12.36	01:04.00	01:11.04	01:00.84	01:07.53
200m Free	02:51.23	03:10.07	02:35.67	02:52.79	02:23.23	02:38.99	02:20.58	02:36.04	02:18.30	02:33.51	02:13.97	02:28.71
400m Free	05:52.32	06:31.08	05:18.71	05:53.77	04:57.02	05:29.69	04:47.31	05:18.91	04:42.30	05:13.35	04:39.93	05:10.72
800m Free			11:29.09	12:44.89	10:15.00	11:22.65	09:52.95	10:58.17	09:47.00	10:51.57	09:42.57	10:46.65
1500m Free			20:25.00	22:39.75	19:49.20	22:00.01	19:10.20	21:16.72	18:51.50	20:55.97	18:35.20	20:37.87
50m Breast	00:47.00	00:52.17	00:43.00	00:47.73	00:40.00	00:44.40	00:38.44	00:42.67	00:38.24	00:42.45	00:36.20	00:40.18
100m Breast	01:42.48	01:53.75	01:35.66	01:46.18	01:29.71	01:39.58	01:25.75	01:35.18	01:22.50	01:31.57	01:19.36	01:28.09
200m Breast	03:43.00	04:07.53	03:20.48	03:42.53	03:09.19	03:30.00	03:00.86	03:20.75	02:58.48	03:18.11	02:52.08	03:11.01
50m Fly	00:41.00	00:45.51	00:37.00	00:41.07	00:34.00	00:37.74	00:33.69	00:37.40	00:32.46	00:36.03	00:31.33	00:34.78
100m Fly	01:37.22	01:47.91	01:29.22	01:39.03	01:18.94	01:27.62	01:15.00	01:23.25	01:12.29	01:20.24	01:08.95	01:16.53
200m Fly	03:44.33	04:09.01	03:31.50	03:54.76	03:04.00	03:24.24	03:01.29	03:21.23	02:53.70	03:12.81	02:41.70	02:59.49
50m Back	00:40.69	00:45.17	00:38.00	00:42.18	00:35.59	00:39.50	00:34.34	00:38.12	00:33.86	00:37.58	00:32.27	00:35.82
100m Back	01:28.00	01:37.68	01:22.00	01:31.02	01:15.44	01:23.74	01:14.00	01:22.14	01:12.55	01:20.53	01:09.64	01:17.30
200m Back	03:12.12	03:33.25	02:52.00	03:10.92	02:43.35	03:01.32	02:37.35	02:54.66	02:36.38	02:53.58	02:30.57	02:47.13
100m IM	01:31.00	01:41.01	01:22.54	01:31.62	01:18.00	01:26.58	01:15.00	01:23.25	01:14.00	01:22.14	01:11.27	01:19.11
200m IM	03:18.09	03:39.88	02:59.11	03:18.81	02:44.65	03:02.76	02:42.00	02:59.82	02:38.00	02:55.38	02:33.72	02:50.63
400m IM			06:20.90	07:02.80	05:45.00	06:22.95	05:43.00	06:20.73	05:37.52	06:14.65	05:26.50	06:02.42

Remember, when you are looking at the entry times in the months before Counties (i.e. during the calendar year before), you will need consider the age your child will be on the 31st December of the following year! For example, a child born in 2012 who is 13 this year (2025) will need to meet the 14 year old Qualifying or Consideration Times for the next Championships in January 2026.

Race Size: the number of swimmers to be accepted depends on age group and event and the maximum sizes are published on the Qualification and Consideration Times document. The race sizes for 2026 Counties are shown below. In a particularly strong year with lots of swimmers meeting the QT, the number of eligible competitors could be bigger than the Race Size, but this doesn't tend to happen often.

10/11 year olds 50 & 100m events - TOP 17 entrants	10/11 year olds 200m events - TOP 16 entrants	10/11 year olds 400m events - TOP 8 entrants
12 /13/14 & 15 year olds 50 & 100m events - TOP 25 entrants	12 /13/14 & 15 year olds 200m events - TOP 20 entrants	12 /13/14 & 15 year olds 400m events - TOP 14 entrants
16+ year olds 50 & 100m events - TOP 33 entrants	16+ year olds 200m events - TOP 24 entrants	16+ year olds 400m events - TOP 16 entrants
800m	12 year old - TOP 6 entrants	1500m
	13/14 year olds - TOP 10 entrants	
	15/16+ year olds - TOP 12 entrants	
		12 year old - TOP 4 entrants
		13/14 year olds - TOP 8 entrants
		15/16+ year olds - TOP 10 entrants
Swimmers achieving the Consideration Time for an event will be accepted subject to the entry caps above.		
Qualifying window : 17th May - 7th December 2025		

Relays: there are eighteen different relay events that also run over the three weekends and BSSC submits a team for each. Some selected swimmers may not have qualified for an individual event, but may still compete in a relay. The eighteen events are:

- Boys/Girls Age Grp (10-13yrs) - 4x50m Free, 4x50m Medley, 4x50m Mixed Free, 4x50m Mixed Medley
- Boys/Girls Jr Champ (10-15yrs) - 4x50m Free, 4x50m Medley, 4x50m Mixed Free, 4x50m Mixed Medley
- Men/Women Champ (10 & over) - 4x50m Free, 4x50m Medley, 4x50m Mixed Free, 4x50m Mixed Medley

What happens on the day: different events are run each day so check the [Schedule of Events](#) on the website for more details. Each event is run with heats of mixed age, seeded (i.e. ordered) by entry times, just like our BSSC meets. In 2025 there were age group finals for 50m, 100m and 200m events later on in the same session once all heats had finished.

The eight fastest swimmers are invited to swim again in the final. Two reserves are kept back for a short while after each event in case two of the fastest eight withdraw from the final listings, which can happen, so don't pack up and head home straight away if you are 9th or 10th.

The awards: there are a number of different individual awards that can be achieved:

- **Age group medals:** awarded to the 1st/2nd/3rd place finishers in the finals for 50m/100m/200m events, or the heat declared winners of all other individual events.
- **Junior Championship medals:** awarded to the 1st/2nd/3rd fastest finishers across the 15 and under finals for 50m/100m/200m events, or the heat declared winners of all other individual events.
- **Championship medals:** awarded to the 1st/2nd/3rd fastest finishers across all finals for 50m/100m/200m events, or the heat declared winners of all other individual events.
- **Top Overall Award:** For 2025, to be eligible for the award, swimmers had to compete and earn points in events in five different categories, showing prowess across all distances (50m, 100m, 200m & 400m+) and all strokes (eg, 200m Individual Medley). The total points (1st place 15 points, 2nd 12 points, 3rd 10 points etc) were added up and awards given to the top 8 in each age and gender group.

Spectators: Post-Covid, spectators weren't allowed at Borehamwood due to space issues. Instead, the whole Championships were streamed live on YouTube on the Swim England Hertfordshire channel.

For 2025, spectators were allowed at Westminster Lodge but tickets had to be purchased online in advance. These do sell out, so make sure you buy your tickets as soon as they are released.

If your swimmer is about to attend their first Counties, show them some of the [2025 YouTube footage](#) to get them ready! Check the [Swim Herts website](#) or check with the Competitions team for up to date information for spectators for 2026's County Championships.

Achieving a Consideration Time (CT) is a great achievement for a younger swimmer and should be celebrated but remember it doesn't guarantee them a swim at Counties. If they keep working hard at training and swim well at Open Meets in the qualifying window, they may grab a place! Good luck!