

Swim England East Region

2026 Regional Open Water Championships

Sunday 12 July 2026 – Whitlingham

1. General Conditions

1.1 The Championships are open to Club Compete members of clubs affiliated to Swim England, Swim Scotland, Swim Wales, or to clubs affiliated to World Aquatics. Members registered as Club Train or Club Support **must upgrade to Club Compete** before entering.

1.2 The event will be conducted under Swim England Laws and Regulations, World Aquatics (WA) Open Water Technical Rules, and World Para Swimming (WPS) Rules for Para athletes.

1.3 Ages for entry are determined as at **31 December 2026**.

1.4 The Championships operate as a single competition but incorporate four components:

- (a) Swim England East Region qualifying event for Swim England Open Water Nationals.
- (b) County Championships for counties within the East Region. *
- (c) Regional Para and Special Olympics events for eligible Para (S7–S14) and SOGB athletes.
- (d) An open competition for all other eligible swimmers.

* Essex clubs within the East Region may use this event for National qualification. Essex clubs in the London Region must attend the London Region Open Water Championships for National qualification.

1.5 The Female category is restricted to swimmers whose birth sex is female, in accordance with the Swim England Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy. Entry into the Female category confirms compliance.

1.6 Swimmers should seek medical advice if they have any concerns about their health. By entering the event, swimmers confirm that they have not been advised by a medical professional to avoid Open Water Swimming, and they are not aware of any medical condition that would make it unsafe for them to take part. By entering, swimmers also certify that they are physically fit to participate. They agree to inform the Promoter of any medical condition that may affect their ability to take part in the event.

Any change to a swimmer's medical condition between making their initial entry declaration and the day of competition, must be notified to the promoter.

2. Coaches and Team Managers

2.1 All swimmers under 18 must be supervised by a qualified Coach or Team Manager.

2.2 The Swim England Team Manager, Coach and Chaperone Policies apply at all times.

2.3 Coaches' passes must be purchased via the Swimming Results online system (**£15** per person).

2.4 Pass holders are entitled to a BBQ lunch, plus free refreshments (Tea, Coffee, Soft Drinks, Cakes) from Pod 8. Passes must be worn at all times. No access to the decked area is permitted without a valid pass.

3. Entry Process

3.1 All entries must be submitted via the designated online entry system. Submission confirms that **the competitor** has read and **accepted all conditions**.

3.2 The closing date for entries is **15 June 2026**.

3.3 The Promoter may limit entries. If oversubscribed, entries will be accepted in order of receipt, with priority to East Region members and to swimmers in National-qualifying age groups.

3.4 The Promoter may refuse entry to any competitor, coach, or spectator. Matters not covered in these conditions will be determined by the Technical Director and Promoter, who may make changes necessary for the safe and effective running of the event.

3.5 Entry Fees:

- 1 km: **£25**
- 2 km, 3 km, 5 km: **£30** per race

3.6 Refunds. Refunds will be issued only if:

- the competition is cancelled, or
- a significant schedule alteration resulting in a change of venue or session prevents the swimmer from competing.

3.7 Medical withdrawals will be considered only where a request is submitted via Swim-Meet before the event begins. Supporting medical evidence may be required.

4. Events and Eligibility

4.1 Events Offered:

- Event 1: 3 km (including Para S7–S14 and Para Masters)
- Event 2: 1 km (including Para S7–S14 and SOGB athletes)
- Event 3: 2 km
- Event 4: 5 km

4.2 Entry Rules:

- Swimmers may enter any distance for which they meet the minimum age.
- Swimmers may enter more than one event, but the only permitted combination is: Event 1 + (Event 3 or Event 4).
- To be eligible for Swim England Open Water Nationals, swimmers must compete in the qualifying event for their age group and achieve the required placing.
- Para athletes may enter Event 1 or Event 2 only.
- SOGB athletes may enter Event 2 only and will be divisioned by gender, wetsuit use, and age where appropriate.

5. Venue Access

5.1 Access to the decked area is restricted to:

- Coaches and Team Managers with passes

- Event staff and officials
- East Region invited guests
- Swimmers

5.2 Swimmers may enter the decked area 15 minutes before their briefing and must leave once changed after their swim.

5.3 Swimmers may enter the deck area to collect county and regional awards, but are to immediately leave once they have done so.

5.4 Parents are not permitted on the decked area unless invited by the Referee, Event Director, or East Region staff.

6. Time Limits and Minimum Ages

6.1 Time Limits (from wave start):

- 1 km: 25 minutes (Para & SOGB: 45 minutes)
- 2 km: 60 minutes
- 3 km: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 5 km: 2 hours 20 minutes

6.2 Minimum Ages (as at 31 December 2026):

- 1 km: 11 years (Para & SOGB: 14 years)
- 2 km: 12 years (Nationals qualifier age 13)
- 3 km: 13 years (Nationals qualifier ages 14–15)
- 5 km: 13 years (Nationals qualifier ages 16, 17/18, 19+)

7. Equipment Requirements

7.1 All competitors must wear:

- the numbered swim hat issued by the organiser (as the outside hat if two are worn)
- the numbered wrist/ankle band
- the timing chip wristband

Failure to: wear the numbered hat, return the band or chip, may result in disqualification.

7.2 Swimwear Rules – Water $\geq 18^{\circ}\text{C}$: Only WA-compliant textile swimsuits may be worn. Suits must not cover the neck, extend past the shoulder, or below the ankle. Only one swimsuit, in one or two pieces, may be worn.

7.3 Swimwear Rules – Water $< 18^{\circ}\text{C}$: Wetsuits are compulsory. Wetsuits may also be mandated up to 20°C if conditions are deemed hazardous. Only one swimsuit may be worn underneath the wetsuit.

7.4 Wetsuit Definition. A wetsuit must:

- provide thermal insulation
- completely cover torso, back, and thighs
- not extend beyond neck, wrists, or ankles (though body parts after the shoulder and/or below the thigh do not necessarily need to be covered)

- include functional zippers/fastenings if present

7.5 SOGB Athletes may wear any wetsuit or technical suit offering buoyancy or protection, subject to approval by the Meet Director to ensure fairness.

7.6 SOGB Temperature Limits:

- Races will not take place if air + water $\leq 33^{\circ}\text{C}$, unless deemed safe.
- Races will not take place if air + water $\geq 63^{\circ}\text{C}$.

7.7 Wetsuits are not available for hire at Whitlingham.

7.8 Prohibited Items. No devices (including 'smart' devices) that aid speed, endurance, or buoyancy. No jewellery. Nails must be trimmed. GPS or biomedical sensors are permitted only if WA-approved and must not provide real-time feedback to the swimmer.

7.9 Drones are not permitted.

7.10 Grease may be used if not excessive. Numbers must be applied **before** grease.

8. Safety, Briefings, and Conduct

8.1 **All swimmers must** attend the briefing for their event and answer roll call.

8.2 All events are swum as freestyle.

8.3 The Promoter and Event Director is: Paul Kendall – openwater@eastswimming.org

8.4 Protests will be handled in accordance with Swim England Regulations.

8.5 Swimmers must be members of the club under which they enter. County results are based on the club's registered county.

9. Photography and Safeguarding

9.1 Parents/carers taking photographs must focus on their own child and avoid capturing others where possible.

9.2 Concerns about photography should be reported to the Promoter.

9.3 Swim England's Wavepower guidance on photography and social media applies.

9.4 Use of mobile devices in changing rooms is strictly forbidden. Anyone contravening this rule will be required to leave the venue without refund.

9.5 Official event photographs may be used for publicity in accordance with Swim England policy.

10. Abandonment of Events

10.1 If an event is abandoned due to weather or safety concerns, a proportion of entry fees may be refunded once expenses are covered.

10.2 Swimmers still in the water at the time of abandonment will be recorded as Did Not Finish, even if their safest exit is via the finish.

10.3 Results and medals will only be awarded where all swimmers in an age group had the opportunity to complete the swim, or where non-completion would not have affected the outcome.

11. Awards and Age Groups

11.1 Regional Age Groups

- 1 km: 11–12, 13–14, 15–16, 17+
- 2 km: 12, 13, 14, 15–16, 17–19, Masters
- 3 km: 13, 14, 15, 16, 17–19, Masters
- 5 km: 13–14, 15, 16, 17–18, 19, Masters

11.2 Masters Age Groups 20–24, 25–29, 30–34, continuing in 5-year bands.

11.3 Medals

- First three Open/Male and Female swimmers in each age group.
- Para medals (1 km and 3 km) awarded on multi-classification points (800 m and 1500 m equivalents).
 - Masters' medals awarded using age-adjusted times and British Para-Swimming Points.
 - WPS Rule 10.15.1 does not apply to this competition.
- SOGB medals awarded to top three in each division.
- Commemorative medals for non-East Region swimmers placing in the top three.

11.4 Nationals qualification. Eligible East Region competitors finishing in the first 5 at these Regional Championships, may enter the National Championships providing they meet the Age Groupings and club membership criteria for the National Championships.

11.5 The distances at the National Championships **will be longer than those at these Regional Championships** for each Age Group. Groups and Distances for the National Championships are Open/Male and Female:

- 13yrs – 3km
- 14yrs – 5km
- 15yrs – 5km
- 16yrs – 7.5km
- 17/18 – 7.5km
- 19+ – 7.5km

12. Data Protection

12.1 Personal data is processed for the purposes of event entry, management, and results submission, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

12.2 Submission of an entry constitutes consent to data processing. Where data is submitted by a club or third party, the club or third party is responsible for ensuring consent has been obtained.