

A GUIDE TO RUNNING MASTERS COMPETITIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guide is for those intending to run a Masters competition for the first time. Each competition is different and it is recommended that the competition promoter produces their own version of this guide which would be specific to their particular competition. Such a guide should prove invaluable in running subsequent competitions and can provide the promoter with a means of handing over responsibility to others.
- 1.2 The steps outlined in this guide were identified through running the Swim South East Masters long course and short course competitions which started in 2006 and have been running every year since then. Some of the steps will not apply to all competitions and promoters will certainly wish to add steps not included here.
- 1.3 Notes are added to the steps detailed in this guide to explain their significance. The original guide was in the form of an Excel spreadsheet with a cell for the date each step was started and another for when it was finished. By using fill-in colour for these two stages it is easy to see what's been done and what is outstanding. A column showing who is responsible for each step can also be useful.

2. Before the Competition

- 2.1 Update the schedule statistics from the previous year.
For a first meet this does not apply, but for subsequent years it can be useful to consider the programme (schedule) from previous years before producing the schedule for the current competition.
- 2.2 Produce the schedule of events and estimate the duration of the session(s).
This will require an appreciation of the effects of grouping events and which events are acceptable to be adjacent in the schedule. The schedule is never ideal for all competitors and experience is needed to produce one that will prove attractive to most competitors.
- 2.3 Book the pool, the equipment required and a room for the officials (for food, briefing, etc.)
The pool should be booked as soon as the decision to run the meet is made. The equipment includes the pool dressed for competition with lanes, starting blocks, PA system, tables and chairs, etc.
- 2.4 Recruit operators for the AOE and the meet management computer.
These are key people and should be found early in the process.
- 2.5 Estimate the costs of pool hire, officials' expenses, medals, catering, etc.
Initially, this will be difficult but needs careful attention.
- 2.6 Estimate the entry fees based on the costs and the likely number of swimmers.
Use entry fees from other meets to get an idea of what to charge.
- 2.7 Decide how entry fees are to be collected (e.g. PayPal, by cheque, etc.)
By far the easiest way to collect entry fees is to set up a PayPal account to allow credit card, debit card and PayPal payments to go straight into the meet's account. Efficient handling of the money can save a lot of work as entries come in.

- 2.8 If a swim shop is to be provided contact the supplier.
A swim shop can provide a useful revenue stream to supplement the entry income as commercial swim equipment retailers will pay for the opportunity to sell their equipment.
- 2.9 Produce the Entry Instructions to include the schedule of events, the estimated timing, warm up arrangements, the competition conditions, venue address, plus any notes to competitors needed.
- 2.10 Create the meet in a meet management application (e.g. Sportsystems, Hytek, etc.)
- 2.11 Send information to the entry application provider.
This applies if an on-line entry application is to be used. Once this application has been produced then links to it should be included in the Entry Instructions above.
- 2.12 Finalise the Entry Instructions and publish on all or some of the British Swimming Masters Calendar, the regional web site, the county web site and the club web site (but see below).
- 2.13 Contact hotels re: accommodation package.
For major competitions which could attract entrants from far afield it can be helpful to find local accommodation, maybe at a discount, and to publish the details with the Entry Instructions.
- 2.14 Send the Entry Instructions and the accommodation package to last year's entrants.
Care must be taken to ensure that restrictions imposed by GDPR are not violated.
- 2.15 Estimate the number of medals and order.
- 2.16 Monitor the entries as they come in and deal with queries that arise.
This is important, the effort required to handle questions and problems should not be underestimated.
- 2.17 Monitor the duration of the sessions using the promoter's application provided by the entry application supplier.
How this is done depends upon the entry process being used. It may be necessary to close the entries before the published closing date if the response warrants this.
- 2.18 Ensure that the sessions do not overrun and if all the allocated time is used close some or all of the events in the session as necessary.
- 2.19 Send out requests for officials
Obtaining officials for Masters competitions can be the most challenging task so needs a lot of attention.
- 2.20 Recruit helpers, people to help with the front desk, the medal table, taking round officials drinks and sweets.
- 2.21 When sufficient officials have been recruited select the referee(s) by mutual agreement.
- 2.22 Send the list of officials to the referee(s) so that they can allocate the other roles.
- 2.23 Contact the catering supplier, get menus (if providing a meal), select meals and drinks and order.
- 2.24 When entries are closed produce the event programme.

It maybe that it is decided to publish the start lists on-line and not to provide a printed programme. This is the trend, not producing a printed programme can save a lot of effort and money.

- 2.25 Send the meet management files to the person who will operate the meet management computer.
The entries must be processed as needed by the meet management application and the resultant files made available to the person who will operating the meet management computer at the competition.
- 2.26 If a printed programme is to be provided estimate the number of copies of the programme needed and send the proofs of the programme to the printers.
- 2.27 Write to the pool with a list of requirements, tables and chairs and where they should be positioned. Maybe visit the pool to make sure they understand what is required.
- 2.28 Produce the latest British, European, World and Meet records to take to the pool.
- 2.29 Receive the medals from the supplier.
- 2.30 List all the items to be taken to the pool on the day and assemble them.
- 2.31 If using phone registration check all is working properly.
It is advisable to insist that anyone registering by phone actually speaks to a person and does not leave a voice message, these can be confusing and misleading.
- 2.32 Collect the programmes from the printers.
- 2.34 Purchase water, sweets, drinks, chocolates, wine, etc. for the officials as appropriate.
- 2.35 Send an email to all the entrants giving any instructions needed and confirming warm-up arrangements, etc. and start lists, particularly if not providing a programme.
- 2.36 Write to officials saying who the referees are and where and when to assemble, include a tailored expense claim for their use if appropriate.
- 2.37 Write to the relay team managers to send them a Team Declaration Form, tell them when and where to hand them in.
- 2.38 Prepare a copy of all the entries on a memory stick together with any other documentation and files that might be needed at the pool.

3 On the Day of the Competition

- 3.1 Assemble all the items to take to the competition and transport them to the pool.
- 3.2 Set up all the equipment - Laptops, Printers, Tables, Chairs, etc.
- 3.3 Produce and display Registration Sheets.
This applies if the competitors are required to register before the start of each session to declare which events they wish to swim. To use this system should minimise empty lanes, particularly important if the meet is fully subscribed.
- 3.4 Display signage as appropriate, e.g. directions to changing rooms, officials' assembly room, etc.
- 3.5 Test the PA system.
- 3.6 Test the timing system and scoreboard operation.

- 3.7 Produce and post the Heat Sheets.
- 3.8 Check the catering arrangements are as ordered.
- 3.9 Arrange for the results to be posted and the medals distributed.
- 3.10 Make sure that all those claiming have expense forms and collect all completed forms (encourage forms to be completed and handed in before claimants leave).
- 3.11 At the end of the competition collect any medals over.
- 3.12 Remove all paper from pool walls (heat sheets and results).
- 3.13 Check all is tidy and nothing left.

4 After the Competition

- 4.1 Produce results and post on the web.
- 4.2 Send results files to Swim England for Rankings and Decathlon points.
- 4.3 Check and send any record application to Swim England.
- 4.4 Check and authorise all expense claims as appropriate.
- 4.5 Update “Meet Best Performance” list and send to regional web master for posting.
- 4.5 File all paperwork and results ready for the next competition.

Name	Completed	Date	Status
14-03-17	10-17-17	Update schedule database from previous year (SSE will do for 2018)	
14-03-17	14-10-17	Produce a schedule of events and estimate the duration of the sessions (SSE will do for 2018)	
14-03-17	17-04-17	Book the pool, the equipment required and a room for the officials (for food, bedding, etc.)	
14-04-17	16-04-17	Recruit operators for the ICE and the meet management computer (these are key people and should be found early in the process)	
15-04-17	11-10-17	Produce costs, print expenses, etc.	
15-05-17	11-10-17	Produce the entry pack based on the entry and the likely number of swimmers (a MAW document)	
15-05-17	11-10-17	Produce how entry fees are to be collected (e.g. PayPal - SSE will cover for 2018)	
15-05-17	11-10-17	If a cover slip is to be provided contact the supplier	
15-05-17	10-11-17	Produce the entry pack to include the schedule of events, the estimated times, warm up arrangements, the conditions, venue address, plus any notes to competitors needed (SSE will help for 2018)	
15-05-17	16-12-17	Complete the meet at a meet management application (e.g. Sportsman, meet, etc. - SSE will do for 2018)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Send information to the entry application provider (SSE will do for 2018)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Obtain links to the on-line entry application and include in the entry pack (SSE will do for 2018)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Produce the entry pack (SSE will do)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Contact hotels re: accommodation package (SSE will do for 2018)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Send the entry instructions and the accommodation package to last year's entrants	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Advise the meet in the British Swimming Masters calendar, on the regional web site and any other appropriate web sites	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Estimate the number of medals and order	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Monitor the orders as they come in and deal with any queries that arise (this can be a frustrating job)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Monitor the duration of the sessions using the program application provided by the entry application provider	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Ensure that the sessions do not overrun and if all the allocated time is used those times in all of the events in the session as necessary	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Send out a request for officials (obtaining officials for a Masters meet can be the most challenging part as needs a lot of attention)	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Accept helpers, people to help with the front desk, the medal table, taking medal officials desks and events	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Check officials/officials have been recruited using the references to mutual agreement	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Send the list of officials to the referees so that they can allocate the other roles	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Contact the catering supplier, get menu (if providing a meal), select medal and items and order	
15-05-17	16-11-17	When orders are issued produce the event programme	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Send the meet management list to the person who will operate the meet management computer	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Estimate the number of copies of the programme and send to the printer	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Write to the pool with a list of requirements, tables and chairs and when they should be positioned	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Produce the latest British, European, World and Meet records to take to the pool	
15-05-17	16-11-17	Receive the medals from the supplier	
15-05-17	16-11-17	List all the items to be taken to the pool on the day and assemble them	
15-05-17	16-11-17	If using phone registration check all working properly	

Example of Excel Spreadsheet for progressing Masters Competition Activities