



## SENER Short Course Championships – Consultation

### Background

This year we pre-released a “*save the dates*” note with the long course meet info (during April) for the events due to take place in November, and the original concept was to separate the 15yrs+ (‘open’) event from the age groups. This was for a number of reasons;

1. We wanted to give both age groupers and older swimmers the opportunity for a standalone event with heats and finals without any clashes of schedule
2. We always struggle to recruit enough volunteers for the 2 pool setup at Sheffield
3. The days were 12+hrs long last year – which is not enjoyable for athletes, coaches, volunteers or parents

Feedback received from clubs highlighted concerns about the additional demands that a separate event structure would place on coaches, families and volunteers. As a result, we revisited the proposal and returned to the concept of a single-weekend championship. We invited clubs to give feedback on the suggested format so that we could explore whether we could reduce the number of events on offer (we currently deliver every single Olympic event PLUS 100m IM over 2 days – in both pools simultaneously) and shorten the days.

The competition falls very early in the new season (only 7-8 weeks back after summer break for most clubs) and we thought about what swimmers might need from an early season meet in a short course format – other than a few Swim England guidelines for the ‘open’ pool, and aligning with level 2 licensing conditions, we have a degree of freedom to choose the events.

We noticed a few standout issues last year which shaped our suggestions for 2026;

1. Finals in the open pool – we recorded 38 withdrawals on Saturday and 51 on Sunday, resulting in repeated event reseeding and, in some cases, empty lanes in finals.
2. Distance events – only 25% of 800m swims and 36.4% of 1500m swims were faster than entry times, suggesting that many swimmers may not have been targeting peak endurance performances at this stage of the season.
3. 12+hr days – coaches, volunteers and some swimmers (and their families) were in the building from 6:30am until 7:50pm each day – this is too much

The schedule currently includes 15 events for females and 15 for males/open:

Freestyle: 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, and 1500m

Backstroke: 100m and 200m

Breaststroke: 100m and 200m

Butterfly: 100m and 200m

Individual Medley (IM): 100m, 200m and 400m

Coaches were invited to provide feedback on the following proposals:

- Remove finals for the open pool
- Remove 800/1500m events for both pools
- Introduce Relays (for all) during the evening finals slot

## Outcome

Thank you to all clubs and coaches who took the time to provide feedback. The responses received were thoughtful, constructive and demonstrated a shared commitment to delivering the best possible championship experience for swimmers across the region. While views varied on some aspects of the proposals, there was clear support for maintaining a single-weekend format.

The feedback highlighted several consistent themes, including the importance of retaining finals opportunities for older swimmers, preserving distance events within the programme, maintaining age-group opportunities, and ensuring any changes remain accessible to clubs of all sizes.

Having carefully considered the feedback received, we have agreed a championship format that seeks to balance athlete development, championship experience, operational practicality and the wellbeing of coaches, officials, volunteers and families.

The 2026 Short Course Regional Championships will therefore operate as follows:

- A Friday evening session will be added to accommodate the 800m and 1500m freestyle events.
- Finals will be retained for all 50m, 100m and 200m events in the 15yrs+ pool.
- Age Group events will continue to operate as Heat Declared Winner competitions.
- Relay events will be introduced at the end of each morning session within the Age Group pool for 11–14 year olds. Clubs may enter up to two teams, with teams able to include swimmers from any age within the 11–14 category.
- The championships will continue to be delivered over a single weekend in Sheffield.

We hope this summary provides clarity on both the challenges involved in delivering an event of this scale and the rationale behind the final programme. We remain committed to working collaboratively with clubs to ensure our championships continue to provide meaningful development opportunities and a positive experience for swimmers, coaches, volunteers and spectators alike.

## Swimming Management Group

**June 2026**