Team Aretas

Your first fitness competition

Your first competition is mostly waiting, three short bursts of the hardest work you will do all month, and a lot of people cheering for strangers. This guide is for athletes: how to choose a category, what to do before the day, what to bring, and what happens from the moment you arrive.

It uses the example every Team Aretas resource uses, a one-day throwdown for **120 athletes on 8 lanes**, seen from the side of one athlete in it.

By Steven Batchelor · Last updated 20 October 2026 · 5 min read

The short answer

- **If you are not sure whether to enter Rx or scaled, enter scaled.** You will enjoy the day more, and you can move up next time.
- **Read the movement standards before the day**, and do each movement the way they describe in training.
- **Bring food.** Your three heats are spread across the whole day, with hours between them.

The worked example

You have entered the Scaled women's category at a throwdown with three workouts and 15 heats each. You are in heat 2 of every workout, so your day looks like this:

Workout	Format	You start	Be in the holding pen by
Workout 1	50 wall balls, 30 box jump overs, 20 power cleans, for time	08:44	08:30
Workout 2	Rounds of 5 pull-ups, 10 push-ups, 15 air squats	12:36	12:20
Workout 3	Heaviest clean and jerk	16:52	16:40

Your three workouts add up to about half an hour of effort, in a day that runs from 08:00 to the awards at 20:15. The gaps are where most first-timers get it wrong.

Choosing your category

Most competitions offer Rx and scaled, split by sex, and often masters (usually 35 and over) and teens. To choose between Rx and scaled, look at the Rx version of every workout and ask one question: could you do every movement, as written, at the Rx load, for all the reps?

Rx in workout 1	Ask yourself
50 wall balls at 6 kg to 2.7 m	Can I hit the target for 50 reps, not just 10?
30 box jump overs on a 20" box	Can I jump, not step, 30 times when I am tired?
20 power cleans at 40 kg	Can I clean 40 kg for 20 reps with good form?

If the answer to any of them is no, enter scaled. Rx athletes who cannot do one movement spend the workout stuck at it while the clock runs out, and that is the least fun way to spend 10 minutes. Entering as a pair is another good first step: someone to warm up with, and someone to share the work.

Before the day

- **Read the movement standards** for every workout, and watch the videos if there are any. They are what your judge will count against.
- **Train the movements the way the standards say.** Full depth on every squat, all the way to the target on every wall ball.
- **Check your heat times** once they are published, and plan your travel around the first one.
- **Read every email from the organiser.** Check-in times, parking and late changes arrive there.

What to bring

- **Training shoes**, and lifting shoes if you use them for the heaviest lift.
- **Two tops**, so you are not sitting in a wet one for three hours.
- **A warm layer** for the gaps. You will cool down faster than you expect.
- **Water and real food:** something for after each workout and something to eat in the gaps.
- **Your own belt, wraps or grips**, if you train with them and the rules allow them.
- **Your booking confirmation**, on your phone, for check-in.

On the day

Arriving

Get there as the doors open, or an hour before your first heat if you are later in the day. Check in, find the warm-up area and the holding pen, and work out where the clock is.

Warming up

Start warming up about two heats before yours, which is around half an hour. In heat 2 of workout 1, that means straight after check-in. Too early and you have cooled down before you start; too late and you are warming up on the floor.

In your heat

- **Go to the holding pen when the heat before yours starts.** The marshal will take you to your lane.
- **Your judge will introduce themselves and count out loud.** Listen for the count rather than counting in your head.
- **If you hear "no rep", do the rep again and keep moving.** Arguing costs you more time than the rep.
- **At the end, check your score, sign the sheet and thank the judge.** If you disagree, say so to your judge before you sign; the head judge decides.

Between heats

Eat something within an hour of finishing, stay warm, and watch the other heats. That is where you will see what a good wall ball looks like.

Your score

Most competitions add up your place in each workout, and the lowest total wins: 12th, 14th and 15th make 41 points, so a steady day often beats one brilliant workout. Here three athletes finished level, and the last workout separated them:

#	ATHLETE	WALL BALLS	BURPEES	POINTS
1	Megan Price	3 (137)	2 (63)	5
2	Grace Shaw	2 (142)	3 (61)	5
3	Sophie Clarke	1 (151)	4 (58)	5
4	Amelia Hughes	5 (128)	1 (66)	6
5	Hannah Murphy	4 (135)	6 (49)	10
6	Ellie Wood	6 (116)	5 (54)	11

Common mistakes

- **Entering Rx to look good.** A workout spent stuck at one movement is no fun to do or to watch.
- **Not eating.** Three hours between heats on an empty stomach shows in the afternoon.
- **Missing the holding pen.** Your heat goes without you.

Find a competition on Team Aretas

Team Aretas lists competitions near you. Once you enter, your heat times, the workouts, their standards and the live leaderboard are on the website and in the app.

- Find a competition near you
- Get the Team Aretas app