



DAWLISH

SWIMMING CLUB



Gala & Competition Guide

Attending a swimming gala for the first time can be a daunting experience for both swimmer and parent.

There are two types of Galas:

League galas are team events where the whole team competes against other clubs, gaining points for each race. League galas are usually made up of individual races and team/ relay races for the different age groups.

Open Meets are advertised by the club and are for anyone who is eligible to take part. These events are individual races with the fastest swimmers gaining medals/ trophies.

The following is a general guide of what to take to a competition:

- Two Towels
- Trunks/Costumes
- Goggles including spares
- Swim Hat including a spare
- T-shirt
- Warm hooded top and trousers
- Shorts
- Plenty of snacks & drinks

It is preferred that you wear Dawlish Swimming Club team kit when representing the club. Club kit can be ordered from the club desk or website.

On arrival at a gala, you are required to sign in with the Team Managers.

Once signed in stay with the rest of the team and sit together once you have got changed.

Warm up sessions will start at the advertised times, the Team Managers will let you know when you are required to warm up.

When at a competition it is advisable to wear poolside clothes after warm up and between races. This will keep your muscles warm, ready for your race.

The Team Manager will tell you which events you are swimming in.

DO NOT leave the poolside area without letting the Team Manager know.

Always be ready to start your race as no one will wait for you if you aren't there or have forgotten your goggles.

Remember you are part of a team, so cheer on your team-mates when they swim and always create a good impression as you are representing Dawlish Swimming Club.

Information for Parents/ Spectators

- Check club notice board for team sign-up sheets
- Check notice board, emails & club website for entry packs, times and venues of the galas.
- Galas last between 2 – 3hrs on average (some can last all day)
- There will always be an admission charge & programmes on sale.
- Your child is required to stay with the team until the end of the gala in case of any last minute swim changes.

OPEN COMPETITIONS

A gala that is open to swimmers from any club within specific age groups.

These are licensed meets, which can be used to obtain qualifying times for county and regional competitions.

Licensed meet: A competition that has been approved by the ASA. There are 4 levels:

Level 1 – Highest level. These have the fastest qualifying times. Always a long course competition. Times achieved here can be used for entry to international competitions.

Level 2 – Slightly slower qualifying times. Always a short course competition. Times achieved here can be used in national, regional and county championships, and other competitions.

Level 3 – May only have cut-off times, but can have qualifying times as well. Short course or Long course. Times achieved here can be used for entry to Level 1 meets, regional and county championships.

Level 4 – These are closed competitions hosted by a local club e.g. club championships. No qualifying times.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

A competition that swimmers are selected for to compete for the club against other clubs, rather than as an individual. Swimmers will be selected to swim certain events for the best possible team outcome. A list will appear on the noticeboard with a list of names. Below are some examples of competitions we enter:

National Swimming League (Arena)

This competition is held over three rounds on the 2nd Saturday of each month from October, to December. Galas are held at locations across the South West of England and South Wales. The team normally travels by coach. Dawlish Swimming Club has a “Win at All Cost” policy for this league. The fastest swimmers will be selected even if this means younger swimmers swimming an age group higher. Swimmers are expected to attend even if they are only swimming in a relay as every swimmer makes a valuable contribution to the team effort.

Devon County Interclub

The gala is held in Plymouth. Parents are requested to deliver and collect their children to the gala venue. Dawlish SC has a “Win at All Cost” policy for this competition so the fastest swimmers will be selected.

East Devon Mini League

Galas are held at local venues such as Dawlish, Newton Abbot, Exeter and Exmouth. Faster swimmers are excluded from this event giving others a chance to compete for the club.

How to Enter an Open Meet

Regularly check emails, website and noticeboard for new competition notices and information

Read through all documents (Not just the entry form). Ensure you check age groups, what events your child can enter, and when they are.

Determine whether a swimmer is eligible to enter the competition by checking the level and qualifying/ cut-off times associated with this competition (keeping a list of a swimmers personal best times is always handy)

Since 2015 entry times have to be achieved at Licensed meets 1, 2, 3 or 4 and appear on the ASA Rankings list.

Check your Licensed individual best times: www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest

Complete the entry form as requested with exact cash or a cheque payable to “Dawlish Swimming Club”.

When first starting out do not choose to avoid a specific stroke. It is too early to specialise in the early stages and keeping all round experience is key to long-term success.

Please double check qualifying times at this stage

Hand this form, with the money attached, to the club desk by the closing date stated on the forms, noticeboard and website.

Open competitions generally take place over a whole weekend and are typically split in to two or three sessions each day. In some cases you may have to stay overnight if you participate on both days.

We attend competitions from Plymouth to Cardiff and Bristol to Bournemouth.

Exceptions to this are the County Championships and Regional Championships, which take place over a series of weekends.

Detailed parent guide to surviving Open Meets

Once your child has gained a few times (or even if they have not got times – speak to the coach) they can enter open meets. These are events run by various clubs in the county.

You need to develop a survival technique once your child starts attending open meets. After you have filled out the entry form, dusted off the cheque book yet again (each swim costs approx. £5), you will need to make sure you have planned the day or weekend.

Getting to the event can be tricky and usually involves a very early start at a weekend. Pack plenty of food to get through the day as you will be at the event for a long time. The swimmer needs pasta style food that last in the system and plenty of drinks. Parking can also be somewhat difficult but if you arrive in plenty of time this usually an issue.

Here are some parking tips:

Plymouth – main Life Centre car park or park and ride.

Tiverton – secondary school 5min walk away

Millfield – car park at the top of the school (5-10min walk through the campus to the pool)

Bristol – main Hengrove car park

Make sure your child brings all their clothes and bags with them to the swimmer's area. Also ensure you have some money with you to pay spectator entry fees.

Once poolside there will usually be one of the coaches or team manager to organise your child. They will often be seated in another part of the pool with parents restricted from the swimmer area. The kids all try to cheer each other on and parents can shout at their child as loud as they like to spur them on during races!

At Dawlish we all try to sit together as it helps keep up the team atmosphere. Your child will also need plenty of clothes for wearing over their swimming costume and flip flops or equivalent as they need to queue for their races and therefore need something on their feet and plenty of towels.

It also helps to keep a track of your child's times and record PB's in a logbook. Next time you enter an open meet the new time can be submitted.

Above all, despite all the trials of getting to an open meet they are good fun and if lots of children are there they all enjoy each other's company and entertain themselves through the day. Parents can have a good old chat too! The main reason for entering these competitions is to achieve qualifying times that will allow a swimmer entry into county, regional and national competitions. It also allows the coaches and teachers to see progress and to further improve a swimmer's technique.

Entering a variety of these competitions will increase a swimmers confidence in a live setting and hopefully help you see continued progression by swimming faster times at each competition and improved individualised feedback.

Terminology

Qualifying times:

Set times by a competition organiser that a swimmer must be faster than to be able to swim a particular event in a competition

Cut-off times:

Set times by a competition organiser that a swimmer must be slower than to be able to swim a particular event in a competition

Ages as at....

This determines the age at which a swimmer is classed during the competition. This is normally the last day of a competition but for some competitions it may be set at 31st December

Long course:

Competition or training in a 50m (Olympic sized) pool. We generally attend these competitions from January to August.

Short Course:

Competition or training in a 25m pool. We attend these competitions throughout the year but primarily during the first part of the season from September to December

County Championships:

Annual competition for all club swimmers in Devon. January and February. All swimmers who achieve qualifying times at a licensed meet should enter.

Regional Championships:

Annual competition for all club swimmers across the southwest region. May and June. All swimmers who achieve qualifying times should enter.