

SWIMMING GALAS AND HOW TO ENTER

Swimmers should aim to enter at least 2 swimming competitions each term. Galas give swimmers a goal and a purpose for their training but are also good fun. It is important that swimmers gain experience competing and regularly update their times at meets.

There are several different types of competition. Novice swimmers generally start with Beta League, Novice and graded meets and work their way up to North District and Open meets. Most competitions are run over a whole day and are split into morning and afternoon sessions. Each session starts with a warm-up and generally ends with a medal ceremony.

TYPES OF COMPETITION

Beta League

The Beta League is a series of informal competitions held between local COAST clubs once or twice a term. These meets last only 2 or 3 hours and are ideal for anyone new to competitive swimming. Beta league events are divided into time bands and swimmers race against others of a similar ability regardless of age. Points are awarded according to the swimmers place but not if a swimmer is faster than allowed for that time band. The team with the most points wins so there is always plenty of friendly rivalry and cheering at these events. (No fee)

Deeside Challenge

Held annually, this is similar to the Beta League with Otters competing against 3 non-COAST clubs from the Aberdeen area. (No fee)

Graded Meets

For graded meets a cut-off time is given for each event and swimmers entry times must be slower than the time given. These are designed to encourage novice swimmers and give them the opportunity to do well in a competition. "Speeding tickets" are given to those swimming faster than the cut-off time on the day (swimming "through" the cut-off time).

Sometimes meets require entry times to be faster than given times for each event. These are aimed at the more experienced/faster swimmer.

Novice Gala

This is a relaxed meet aimed at the younger, less experienced swimmer.

Open Meets and Events

At an open meet (or in an open event within a graded meet) there are no restrictions on speed or club affiliation.

Club Championships

Held annually, usually in December, the Club Championships are the highlight of the club year. All swimmers are entered for all events appropriate for them. Everyone in the club is encouraged to participate and have fun. (Fee included in club membership fee)

HOW TO ENTER

The coaches select a number of appropriate galas for Otters to enter each term. A Competition Calendar is posted on the Cults Academy Pool notice board and the Cults Otters website. Please look ahead and note the dates of suitable galas in your diary. The competition calendar shows which squads the galas are aimed at but if you are unsure, please ask your squad coach for advice.

Entry Forms

About 2 months before a competition, entry forms are emailed to all the swimmers that are suited for that particular gala (based on age and times). A copy is also placed on the Cults Academy Pool notice board and the website. Swimmers should select the events that they wish to compete in (ask your coach for advice if you're not sure). Forms should be completed and returned to the Match Secretary before the form deadline, with a cheque payable to Cults Otters ASC. Please don't leave it until the last minute because the club entry has to be processed and sent to reach the Gala organisers before their deadline.

Entry Fees

At most galas there is a £3 to £4 fee for each event entered. Once our entry has been sent to the competition organisers, refunds cannot be given for withdrawals. In some competitions we can also enter relay events (if enough swimmers have entered). The club pays for relay entry fees and the coaches decide who should be entered in each relay (based on age, sex and times).

Parental Help

There is also a section on entry forms for "parental help". Swimming galas rely on swimmers' parents volunteering as timekeepers and judges. The organisers always ask for officials to accompany the swimmers, as large numbers of officials are required to run a gala. Please consider helping as, in addition to helping the

Parental Help - continued

swimmers, it is the best way to watch the races when spectator seating is limited. At North District meets we are required to provide a certain number of officials to enter our swimmers. The entry form will tell you when this is the case.

Confirmation of Swims

A couple of weeks before a competition, the Match secretary will receive a draft programme and will send the swimmers who entered, an email to confirm the accepted swims. The “confirmation of swims” notice will also be posted on the Otters notice board and the website. This will also contain the names of the volunteer technical officials for the day.

Reserve and Rejected Swims

Competitions are sometimes oversubscribed in a few events and when this happens the fastest swimmers are accepted, 2 or 3 swimmers are allocated a reserve swim and the rest are rejected. If you are a reserve then you may still get to swim if one of the accepted swimmers has to pull out. This often happens but reserve swimmers often only find out if they can swim on the morning of the gala. A few weeks after the gala refunds are given for unsuccessful reserve swims and for rejected swims.

Withdrawals

If you are ill and wish to withdraw a few days before a competition let the Match Secretary know so that you can be withdrawn officially. Unfortunately the gala organisers will not refund your entry fee. If you are ill on the day let the Otters' poolside coach for that gala know (text is best).

Results

Results for an event at a gala are usually available 2 or 3 events later. They are generally posted on the pool notice board or foyer walls. At the end of each session copies of all the session's results are often available for a small fee. Otters results can be viewed on the Otters website a little while after the gala. The complete competition results are usually available on the North District Website at <http://www.sasa.org.uk> or on the Swim Scotland Website at <http://www.swimscotland.co.uk>.