



Gala Information

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1. Introduction

We thought that some parents, especially those of our younger swimmers, and those new to the club and competing, might find the following information about galas useful.

2. Types of Galas

Swimming galas (also often called meets) are usually run according to rules set out by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). These galas take various forms. In our club we are involved in different types; the main ones being:

- **Open Galas** – Licensed Meets
- **Open Galas** – Non Licensed Meets

(Any times gained at these galas cannot be used for area /national championships.)

- **The County/District Championships**
(The Essex Championships & The London Regional Championships)



The Killerwhales Swim Club of Havering

2a. Open Galas/Licensed Meets

These galas are usually open to swimmers who are at least 9 yrs old at the date of the gala. These are designated (licensed by the ASA as a level 1, 2, 3 or 4).

Level 3 and 4 meets are the lowest levels and times achieved at these can, subject to the swimmer meeting the qualifying times, be used to enter County Championships. Level 2 is the next level up, whilst Level 1 Meets are the most challenging. Times achieved in the Levels 1 and 2 Meets can, subject to the swimmer meeting the qualifying times, be used to enter County, District and National Championships.

Level 3 and 4 Meets tend to state a time that the swimmer must not have swam faster than (an upper limit). Level 2 meets tend to specify an upper limit and also a lower limit- i.e. the swimmer must have swam faster than the lower limit times. Level 1 Meets just specify lower limit times – i.e. swimmers must have swum faster than a specific time in order to enter. Some Level 3 /4 Meets give speeding Tickets to swimmers who swim faster than the stated times.

Each organiser of a gala will state what level it is and what times swimmers need to have met. These can vary between organisers – even at the same level of gala. **Not all entries are accepted** as most galas are generally very popular and the organiser will then accept the fastest swimmers in each age band and many run on a first come first served basis. Many parents have asked why we enter galas months/weeks in advance and this is the reason. We therefore try to avoid disappointment. Refunds will be given for rejected entries.

2b. Essex County Championships

These take place over Jan / Feb / Mar and are open to swimmers who will be 9 and over by a specified date in March of the year of the competition, and have achieved the required qualifying time at a licensed meet for the event they wish to enter. Submitted times must have been achieved 12 months prior to the entry date.



The Killerwhales Swim Club of Havering

2c. District Championships – London Region

These are open to all swimmers above the age of 10 who have achieved the qualifying time for their events and must have been achieved at a Licensed Level 1 or 2 and 3 only.

These Championships are divided into:

- **London Regional BAGCATS** (boys aged 10 – 14 years and girls 10 – 13 years) which take place over two weekends in early June (2008 – 7th & 8th / 14th & 15th June). Age is taken as at the last day of the Championships.
- **Regional Youths** (boys aged 15 and over and girls 14 and over) which take place in May. Age is taken as at the last day of Championships.

2d. National Championships

These are open to swimmers who have achieved the required qualifying time for the event. They can only achieve the times at a Licensed level 1 or 2 meet (held between 1 Oct and 31 May) or in the County Championships (Jan to Mar) or in the District championships (May/June).

These are divided into British Age Group Category (BAGCATS). Ages are usually taken as of the last day of the competition

3. General

Competitors are selected by their coaches who decide which events they are to be entered for. This is then passed onto the Competition Secretary who then notifies the swimmers via Whalemail and our notice boards. On these lists there are two dates to be aware of one is the notification date. This is the date you must inform the competition secretary by of your intent to compete. If no notification is made by this date then the swimmers name will be removed from the list. The second date is the last day for payments this is our club's closing date. If payment is not received by this date then the swimmer will not be entered. No late entries will be accepted and all squad fees must be up to date to be able to compete.

All swimmers' entered must pay the cost of their races and the coaches' supplement (this is usually the cost of 1 race or a set fee of £10 for away galas). If a swimmer only has 1 race, they still have to pay the supplement all payments must be received by the clubs closing date or their entry will not be submitted.

Most galas only accept one cheque per club so we cannot make any exceptions if your payments are not in by the closing date your entry will not be submitted.



Remember to take enough towels and costumes/trunks and poolside shoes (usually flip flops). Being wet/cold will not help a swimmer swim their best. Also as poolside seating is limited you can take a small fold away chair to sit on when you are not racing.

Make sure the swimmer has enough drinks (no fizzy drinks) for replacing lost fluids during races. Water is best but some swimmers prefer sports drinks or squash.

Uniform - The Club swimming hats, polo tops, t-suits, bags etc are all available from the Club Shop. All KW swimmers must wear the clubs uniform to all galas. Only navy blue shorts are to be worn poolside.(no garish shorts allowed!)

4. Entry Cards

Once the club receives them (*usually 1-2 wks before gala*) we will give them to the swimmer. The cards are the TICKETS that the swimmer needs in order to compete in the event. Swimmers names, club, event, entry time, competition number, session number, warm-up and start time and most important of all **deadlines for posting cards**, are all on the entry cards. The cards must be taken and posted by the swimmer in the appropriate pigeon-hole by the time stated by the organiser. This is usually before the beginning of every session.

5. Signing in

More meets are being run on a cardless system these days. With such meets the swimmers have to enter for the races by a signing-in process. There are usually lists set up on tables or on the wall either at the changing rooms or at the pool entrance. Each race is listed individually and has the swimmers names listed. The swimmer has to just write their names next to their printed name to confirm they are racing.

Some galas like you to sign for all races at the first session and some like the swimmers to sign in per session. There are usually volunteers at the signing sheets who help the more novice competitors but if there are any problems the swimmer needs to see their coach. It is the swimmers responsibility to sign in for their own races. They are not to sign for anyone else and parents are not encouraged to sign in for their swimmers!

Each event will be divided into heats with the slowest going first. The winner is decided either on times (Heat Declared Winner/HDW) or a final when the fastest 6 or 8 competitors will swim for their places. Medals are usually awarded to the top 3 or top 6 or 8 depending on the gala.



6. On the Day

Before leaving home, make sure you have your entry cards (*if needed*), your kit, 2 towels, 2 costumes, KW hat, plenty of drink (very important), a couple of pairs of goggles- tightened ready to wear, snacks for poolside (*not chocolate or tonnes of sweets !!*) On poolside you will need your KW polo shirt navy blue shorts and poolside shoes.

Always arrive in plenty of time to post your cards or sign in.

Boxes for cards or signing in sheets are usually situated by the entrance to the pool or by the changing rooms. If you cannot find them, **ASK** someone.

What to do if you miss posting your cards or forget to sign in?

Tell your coach ASAP who will then take you to the organisers. If the events have already been sorted out and there is a space in the first heat you will normally be offered that space.

If there are no spaces you will not be able to swim in that event. If the event has not been sorted out you will be placed in the correct position. However this is at the discretion of the organisers. Your best approach is not to forget to post your cards or sign in. Swimmers are **NOT** allowed to post anybody else's cards or sign in for anyone else.

What Next?

Get yourself changed and go onto poolside. You will need to look for the Killerwhales Team and coaches. Don't worry if you can't see them straight away keep looking and you will find them.

Report to the coaches and tell them who you are, you must **not leave** the poolside without informing your coach.

The coaches will organise you for the warm-up and tell you when your swim is coming. Keep an eye on what is going on and help cheer for your KW team mates during their swims and they will cheer for you.



7. Your Swim

The announcer will call your event usually 2 events before you swim and the coaches will send you to the marshalling area.

Do not wander off or mess about, as you need to pay attention to everything that is going on. All swimmers must let their coaches know if they are to leave poolside.

The marshals will put you into the right order and tell you your lane. Don't worry there will be adults there to help you. If you are worried, ASK.

Sometimes there will be an experienced swimmer with you to show you the ropes. You'll soon get the hang of it.

The marshals will then call your heat and send you to the blocks. Your heat and lane number will be told to you again, but if you forget them, keep calm - the time keepers will help you. Go to your lane. There is usually a box or basket to put your pool shoes, t-shirt and drinks bottle in, so you can collect them after your race.

Get ready.....

- **Put on your hat and goggles**
- **Once you are on the blocks, focus, nobody else matters.**
- **Swim as *FAST* as you possibly can.**
- **Do not attempt to look around.**
- **Concentrate on your own race.**

Sometimes your swimming does not go as well as you want or expected, don't worry. There is often a good reason for that. Don't get upset, just put that swim behind you (learn from it) **Concentrate on your next race.**

Collect your belongings from the blocks and stand still when the next race is about to start. Go back to your coach to go through your race and find out your time.

ALLSWIMMERS ARE EXPECTED TO STAY UNTIL THE END OF THE SESSIONS THEY ARE SWIMMING IN!

DON'T FORGET YOU ARE AN AMBASSADOR FOR KILLERWHALES

After all of your hard training – we wish you all

GOOD LUCK!!!