

Gala Information (updated January 2015)

This is a brief guide to help parents of all swimmers select the right gala for their child. If anything is not clear or you are unsure as to what events to enter, please do speak to your child's coach or one of the committee - we are happy to help.

As a competitive swimming club, Ledbury & District SC attend galas throughout the competition season. There are many types of galas and this can be quite confusing for parents until they have been involved for a while. This page aims to provide some useful information and compliments the A GUIDE TO SELECTING GALAS FOR NEW SWIMMING PARENTS document also to be found on the club website.

All the different gala grades and licenses can be quite confusing when a swimmer first starts to compete.

Here is a brief guide:

Licensed Meets

Meets do not have to be licensed by the ASA, but where they are, specific ASA guidelines must be followed. Results from these are submitted to the ASA for the National Rankings database which can be found on-line.

Level One Meets

These galas are intended for qualifying for National Championships

Minimum entry times apply equivalent to the County qualifying times.

A Level 1 gala must be a long course (LC) event in a 50m pool.

Level Two Meet

These galas are intended for qualifying for Regional Championships

Minimum entry times apply and can be equivalent to the County qualifying times depending on the meet.

Level 2 meets are a short course (SC) event and can only be run in a 25m pool.

Level Three Meet:

These galas are intended for qualifying for County Championships and are aimed at most swimmers.

Upper and lower limits can be required for qualifying times but often a swimmer with no time (NT) can enter and the event will have a Not Faster Than (NFT) upper limit. Level 3 meets can be in a pool of 25m (SC) or 50m (LC).

Level Four Meets:

These galas are aimed at all swimmers.

ASA rules state that a licensed Level 4 meet is a single club event. These meets can be 25m SC or 50m LC events.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO TAKE TO GALAS?

A swimmer needs to have the basic 'tools of the trade' - Trunks/costume, towel, goggles, (inc spare pair) and LADASC hat together with LADASC T-shirt and plenty to drink (not fizzy). It is also advisable to take some food, as children tend to become hungry quickly. Energy giving food such as bananas and malt loaf are good for sustaining energy. More ideas can be found in the nutrition sheet to be found on this website. Swimmers are not allowed to leave the poolside without footwear, so flip-flops or pool shoes can be useful. Some swimmers also like to have shorts to wear poolside - these are optional.

What can I expect at the Gala?

The gala details, available on the host clubs website or the Ledbury Swimming Club Website, will have details for the Warm Up time and start time of each of the sessions. Your swimmer will have been entered into events within a session so you can work out what time you need to get to the gala. You need to arrive in time to sign in / post your cards and get changed in time for warm up. IF the host club is using entry cards, which is increasingly rare, these will be given to you by your coach prior to the event. Only post the card for the session that is about to start, you can post your cards for later sessions at the allotted time before they start of that session.

For some galas the organisers will issue cards – one card per event with details of the session and warm up time as well as your name, club, entry time etc. The cards will be sent out by the organising club prior to the event to Ledbury Swimming Club and will be given to you by your coach. If there are fewer cards than events you were entered for then you have been scratched from the missing events. You will receive a refund for those events. These have to be posted before the session starts or you will be scratched as a non-attendee. There is usually a card post box near the entry desk or changing area to post your cards. More commonly, there are also cardless galas, for these you arrive and sign in at the desk to show you have arrived and can swim your events in that session. You will have to sign in again for the later sessions. For cardless galas you will be told by your coach what events you have been accepted for, or the club will send an e-mail with the accepted entries list included and you may also find out this information from the club website and notice board where we will occasionally post the “scratch” list, detailing the events swimmers have and have not been accepted for.

Parents and spectators will normally have to pay a fee to be a spectator at the gala and may also be charged for the gala programme. Some galas allow photography but you will have to sign the photography book and provide address and phone contact details to get a pass to take pictures or video. This is to satisfy child protection policy.

Having signed in, the swimmers should proceed to the changing rooms and meet the club coaches poolside. The swimmers should sit with the coaches so that when the gala organisers ask for swimmers in a given event to go to the marshalling area,

the club coaches can find them and get them to the right place. Swimmers should attend the warm up to ensure they are warmed up and ready to race. Although at the event, parents are still responsible for their swimmers. Swimmers should let the coach know if they are going to the toilet or leaving poolside at any time.

Once a swimmers event has been called by the gala organisers, the club coach will inform the swimmer to go to the marshalling area, once there, the organisers will get the swimmers into the order that they will swim the race. They ensure the swimmers are in the right heat and lane. If the gala is issuing cards, the card for that event will be given back to the swimmer by the marshal. The swimmer then gives this to the time keeper for their lane when they walk out to race. After that, the swimmers wait your turn, take your marks, GO!

The swimmers will be swimming against people placed in the event according to their entry time, not age. Hence, it is not uncommon to see 12 year olds racing 14 year olds etc. At the end of the event the times are examined and ordered by age group. Whether you get a medal or not depends on where you came in your age group NOT your heat. Usually the first 3 in a given age group get the medals - Bronze, Silver and Gold. IF you swam faster than the fastest allowable entry time for your age group and event, you will be given a SPEEDING TICKET, whilst you'll probably be disappointed you didn't get a medal a Speeding Ticket is a good thing to have swum faster than the allowed Not Faster Than (NFT) entry time for the gala and will probably be qualifying for higher level galas in future.

There are several officials around the pool when you go out to race. There is a starter, referee, time keepers on each lane and several judges looking at starts, turns and stroke technique. They are identified by those wearing white shirts. If you breach one of the rules surrounding starts, turns or stroke you may be Disqualified or DQ'd. The trick here is to find out what you did that got you DQ'd and work on it in training with your coach to make sure you don't do it again. Generally, if you are DQ'd, the results will show a DQ code and your coach will be able to work out where you went wrong. So, if you are DQ'd, ask your coach what happened and what to do to stop it happening again.

Printed results are usually posted throughout the gala so if you are swimming in the later sessions it is always worth waiting for the results. These will show your official time for the event and your placing and hence whether you got a medal. If you did win a medal, go and claim it at the medal desk. If you were DQ'd this will also be shown. Results are also sent out to the clubs taking part in the event and Ledbury SC generally posts these on the Results page of the club website.

So, off you go, enjoy the events, have a great time with your team mates and we'll look forward to your great results for team Ledbury!