

Asgard Swim Team

Gala Information

This document will try to give as much information as possible about the basic procedure of gala notification, entry and the day of the gala.

Gala details are emailed to our club from other clubs in the Leinster area. Swimming galas are run using swim manager software called HyTec and the gala events are included in a HyTec file. This file is imported into our own club Team Manager (HyTec) software and will show all the events and the swimmers eligible for those events.

The gala coordinator designs an entry form, which contains all the relevant information on the gala i.e. place, date, time, events, qualifying times (if applicable), cost, closing date, warm up times and order of events. The entry form is then given to the coaches who will hand it out to the swimmers with advice on which events they should swim. It is also posted onto the club notice board and on the club website www.asgard.ie. All parents and swimmers should keep an eye on the notice board for all club related information. Completed entry forms and fees should be given to the coaches or the designated person indicated on the form.

Once the entries have been received, they are entered into the HyTec software and emailed back to the hosting club. After the event has taken place, the results are emailed back to us and imported back into our club software. This allows us to keep an up to date file of all our swimmers times for entering future events.

The gala timetable is very important. Warm ups usually start about an hour before the races start. The warm up is important for the swimmer to prepare for the race. The flags across each end of the pool are used in the backstroke to indicate the distance to the end of the pool. The swimmer should know how many strokes it takes to allow them to turn correctly. It's a good idea to be at the venue about 15 minutes before the warm up time. This helps to calm any nerves and to get a seat around the pool- seating can often be very limited. (Not, however, in the NAC)

There are 3 different levels of galas- those run by other clubs, regional galas run by Leinster and National galas run by Swim Ireland.

There are two different types of swimming galas:

- Short Course (SC) held in a 25M pool
- Long Course (LC) held in a 50M pool

This will be clearly stated on the entry form.

Most galas will have 50M events and 100M events in all strokes and age groups, with some galas also having longer distances such as 200M, 400M, 800M and 1500M. These would generally be open

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events. *Distance* refers to the length of the race (200m and longer) rather than the length of the pool! Some galas will have qualifying times for the different events and if so, the swimmer must be able to swim that time, usually having been achieved at a previous gala. Generally, minnows galas with 25m and 50m events for the different age groups are more suitable for the novice swimmer.

Throughout the year, the swimmers try to achieve qualifying times for the National competitions held in June and July each year. There are 2 levels of competition- Division 2 and Division 1- Division 1 having the faster qualifying times. At the moment, only swimmers over 10 years can compete at National level. Their age on the day of the gala determines which age group they must qualify in. All the details of National competitions including qualifying times are published yearly in the Swim Ireland year book which is available to order from the Club Secretary.

Any events run by Leinster or Swim Ireland require the club to provide timekeepers. This involves sitting at the end of a lane with a stopwatch, starting it when the whistle blows at the start of the race and stopping it when the swimmer touches the wall at the end of the race. That time is then recorded by you on the time sheet provided. There are usually 2 people timekeeping at each lane. The finishing times are also recorded electronically but the manual timekeeping ensures that all swimmers will get their correct finishing time if there is an error with the electronic timekeeping. All parents are required to help with this. It will be indicated on the entry form when volunteers are required.

Swimmers will already have been taught the rules and regulations of competition by the coaches. If a swimmer does not start, swim, turn or finish correctly, they will be disqualified. The fastest time a swimmer achieves in an event is known as their Personal Best or PB. Swimmers will always try to better their PB. Achieving a 1 or 2 second PB can often be like winning the lottery!

It's a good idea when attending a gala to have 2 of everything with you: hats, goggles and as many togs as desired! towels, club tee shirts and hoodies and poolside shoes. Bring plenty of water and carbohydrates- the sports drinks are good for this. The competitors should also eat small amounts of high energy foods between races.

Gala days are long for parents too! Pools tend to be very hot places so remember to drink plenty yourself. Talk to other parents about these events, some venues have better facilities than others.

All the swimmers should sit together at a gala. Coaches will want to speak to the swimmers before and after events and it ensures that no swimmer will miss their line up time. Every gala has a printed programme which shows all the entries in the different events. It's a good idea to bring a highlighter marker with you to pick out all the Asgard swimmers!

Hopefully the gala procedure is covered here, if you have any questions, please ask!

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HOW WELL DO YOU PREPARE FOR RACING?

- Your performance "on the day" depends on you.
- Good preparation gives good results, sloppy preparations give sloppy results.
- Remember practise does NOT make perfect - perfect practise makes perfect!
- While it is possible to do a better race than expected, generally it is the result of what you have done in training, over a period of time

CHECKLIST

Train Well

On the starting block you stand alone. The sure knowledge that you have trained well will give you great confidence. Training well means:

- Getting to every possible training session. You only benefit from sessions you do!
- Being tough mentally. Always go for the toughest training.
- Tackle difficulties cheerfully - don't avoid hard work because that's where the PBs are.
- Take pride in doing quality technique on strokes, starts, turns AND finishes in training. Sloppiness lets you and your team-mates down.

Sleep Well

- Athletes need more sleep than "ordinary" people.
Be sure you get enough, even if it means napping during the day.

Eat Well

- Good protein, fresh fruit and vegetables, wholemeal bread, rye crisp-bread, honey, fruit juice, these are the food to build fit bodies. Sweets are an occasional treat, not a daily diet!
- Know what you are eating (look at the labels!). Avoid regular junk food especially foods made of sugar plus artificial everything.

On the Day

- Plan the day. Avoid panics - they cost mental and physical energy
- Have a quiet evening the day before (relax, read, study, TV) - it will help you sleep and avoid thinking about the race.
- Eat no heavy or fried food at all before the race.
- Most people are better eating nothing at all 2-3 hours before and before that eat lightly.
- Fruit juice or non-fizzy drinks even water helps keep you hydrated - sip regularly.

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Gear Check

- Pool shoes - bare feet on cold wet tiles cause tight leg muscles.
- Hats help keep in body heat especially between races. Tracksuits are best. It is too late when you get cold.
- Reliable goggles plus keep a spare pair in your pocket - it's too late when you are on the block to get your gear bag.
- Check both sets in training then recheck in the warm-up.
- Enough swimsuits to ensure you don't put on wet (cold) gear and enough towels to help you dry completely after every swim.

At the Pool

- Be observant. CHECK EVERYTHING including;
 - ❖ where and when you are to report/check-in
 - ❖ pool markings
 - ❖ pool end walls
 - ❖ Backstrokers: check the ceiling and the flags - are they the standard distance from the pool end walls? Are they the same at both ends?
 - ❖ Don't assume - check.
 - ❖ starting blocks and hand grips
 - ❖ get into the warm-up early and practise **race** turns and **race** starts.
 - ❖ remember losers complain about problems, winners overcome them!

During the Meet

- Keep your body hydrated, warm and ready to race.
- Every few minutes move about, swing and stretch, stand and stretch.
- Keep loose and mobile.

Mental Preparation

- You have prepared well, trained hard and are in peak condition - believe it.
- Remember the good sets and sessions. The good repeat times and training PBs.
- Rehearse the race, calmly, in your mind. See yourself starting fast, going into a fast stroke, hitting the turn(s) fast, holding the pace and finishing fast.
- This "recording" of perfect performance will improve with practice. Practice it regularly and your real performance will get closer and closer to that recording.
- At first rehearsing may make you over anxious. Control it by relaxing particularly your hands, feet and face muscles. If you find this difficult, change your thoughts, forget swimming for a while and when you are calm, try again.

Going to the Start

- Be alert and poised.
- Be strong-minded and do not let anything upset you. In these few moments you must be completely focused and feeling good and on doing an excellent performance.

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Don't think of any negatives, don't think about the result, think about swimming fast.

In the Race

- Be totally committed and focus on one objective - best ever performance!

GOOD LUCK!