

GASC GUIDE TO SWIMMING GALAS

How Galas Work And Some Questions and Answers about Galas

There are different levels of galas

The Scottish Nationals - The top 20-30 swimmers from each age group for a particular stroke would qualify. Mainly competitors from Scotland but lots of Clubs from England and Ireland usually attend (cost around £8 per swim)

West District - This is for Clubs across the whole of the West of Scotland and is a high level gala (cost around £4 per swim)

Opens - This is a 'swim as fast as you can' gala and are usually high level (cost around £4 - £6 per swim)

Graded galas - These galas usually have time limits so swimmers cannot enter if they are faster or slower than a certain time. Not everyone can swim at the same level so some galas are run to allow all level of swimmers the chance to compete (cost around £3.50 - £5 per swim)

Galas also have different ratings and are judged differently....

Level 1 Galas are the top level so the Nationals and Districts etc. Any infringements (not adhering to swimming rules) would mean that the swimmer would be disqualified

Level 2 Galas tend to be your open Galas and ones like the Central Regional Championships, again swimmers would be disqualified if any infringements were reported

Level 3 Galas would be your graded Galas (you can't be faster than a certain time to enter) Junior League would fall into this category. In this level of gala the referee has the discretion whereby they choose not to disqualify a swimmer or certain infringements i.e. one handed touch in breaststroke, none simultaneous arms in butterfly etc. but does make sure the swimmer is spoken to so they know what not to do the next time. However some disqualifications will still take place i.e. swimming the wrong stroke, relay team take off before the next swimmer touches - really anything where the swimmer gains an advantage.

How Galas Work

To be entered for a gala we have to have times for your child so the club runs 2 internal Galas each year, the Club Championships which were held in November and the Summer Squad Challenge which is held in June. We also do time trials at training sessions throughout the year.

Clubs set their own criteria for Galas i.e. some will make it that you have to be a certain age to swim i.e. age 8, age 9, age 10 etc. others will have an age under gala i.e. 8 and under, 12 and under etc. Some allow swimmers to swim up an age group in a relay i.e. 12 and under relay you could swim an 8 year old in it to make up the team whereas others don't.

If your child is selected for a gala.....

- The gala entries secretary will put a notice on the board with details of the number of swims your child qualifies for, where it is and when it is. It will also give you a date that you must respond and pay at the desk by. If you miss it unfortunately your child will not be entered.
- A gala scheduled for say the 20th June may have a closing date of the 15th May so entries must be in by that time. This means that the notice has to go on the board at the end of April to allow 2-3 weeks for swimmers and parents time to consider it
- You need to pay the fee at the desk any Tuesday prior to the closing date mentioned on the notice. You can specify that you can only do 1 day, all weekend, am or pm only etc. However you will be asked to pay the whole fee and a refund will be given back once the gala has taken place
- Gala entry is subsidised by Grangemouth ASC to the value of £1.50 per swim. So if your child is in for 8 swims over a weekend and the cost of a swim is £4.00 then you will pay £20 (£4.00 - £1.50 subsidy x 8 swims). Grangemouth ASC will pay £12.00 (£4 per swim less £1.50 subsidy = £2.50 x 8 swims)
- The gala convenor before they send the entries will check and see if the swimmers agreeing to go to the gala have any more up to date times that will allow them to get more swims at the gala i.e. Jane Brown was entered for 3 swims but at a gala last week gained times that would qualify her for 2 more (remember the notice goes on the board around 3 weeks before entries are one so other Galas could have run in that time). The gala convenor will enter her for the additional swims and ask the parent to pay the other swims. However they will not add in swimmers who were not on the original list i.e. Tom Smith wasn't on the original list but a gala 2 weeks ago he got 1 qualifying time
- The gala convenor will make a judgement on what swims to enter the swimmer for and will seek help from the coaches if need be. We tend not to put swimmers in for say 2 swims at a 2 day gala where the 2 swims do not fall in the same session i.e. the swimmer had 1 swim on the Saturday morning and 1 on the Sunday afternoon at Prestonpans. Also if a swimmer had 5 swims over a weekend whereby 4 were on the Saturday and 1 was on the Sunday afternoon we would tend to just enter the swimmer for 4 swims on the Saturday. We also look at the results from the gala last year to see if we actually think the swimmer will qualify i.e. Tom Smith does a 100 Freestyle in 1:59:12 but last year's slowest time was 1:18:34 then we would not enter him for that swim as we know he will definitely be rejected
- The gala convenor will send Grangemouth's entries to the club hosting the gala and get

confirmation back if our swimmers have been successful (some swimming Galas only accept 20 - 30 swimmers per event so it will be the fastest swimmers for a non-graded event or nearest to the graded entry time for graded meets)

- A list of accepted swimmers will go on the club board and website together with the venue and warm-up times (If your child is not accepted a refund will be given to you usually the Tuesday **after** the gala takes place)
- When you go along to the gala before the warm-up time there should be representative's at poolside who will look after your child, send them in for a warm-up and send them up for their swims. Coaches attend some galas but we also rely on parents to help at poolside and to be timekeepers and judges. If you are interested in helping please speak to the desk on a Tuesday

Junior League

- Another gala your child might be asked to swim in is the Forth Valley Junior League. The team managers will select the team of swimmers they want to compete and put a list on the board. All you have to do is tick if your child can swim and turn up at the right time and venue. There is no cost for these galas. If they cannot swim on the day or in the lead up to it, it is important that you telephone the team manager as soon as possible so a reserve can be called in as most of the events in this are relays.
- One thing to be made clear is that after your child has swam, be it in a Junior League or a any other Gala, that your child goes to the coach that is on poolside for feedback on how they swam. A lot of the kids go straight to their parents and don't get feedback that could help them progress within galas. If they can just spare a few minutes after their swims to get the feedback, this would be great. It also means the coaches can speak to them straight away, and not forget what they had to say if the child comes back half an hour later to ask how they thought they swam. All help with this is appreciated.

Questions and Answers

Q. Does my child have to compete in galas?

A. Grangemouth is a competitive Club so we would like your child to take part in some galas throughout the year

Q. What if our circumstances change and my child can't swim i.e. going to a birthday party, studying or doesn't want to swim?

A. If you do not turn up for a gala you will be fined the charge the Club has incurred e.g. if your child was meant to have swum 4 swims (at £4.00 per swim) and you decided to pull out of them then you will be fined £6 (club subsidy of £1.50 over 4 swims)

Q. What if I can't do one morning of a gala?

A. Just tell the people at the desk that you want to be put in for i.e. Sunday afternoon only

Q. Why do I have to pay the whole entry fee if I am only doing one day?

A. It may be that your child only had 2 swims the day you can't go and 4 swims the day you can go so the gala convenor will enter your child in for 4 swims and refund 2 back to you

Q. My child was on the board as having 5 swims but only ended up with 2 - why is that?

A. Entries to Galas come from lots of clubs so say 20 clubs sent their entries in and the girls 100m Freestyle had space for 4 events of 6 swimmer so 24 swims, there were may well be 30 girls names put forward for that event. This would mean that the 10 girls slowest or further away from the entry times would be rejected. Some Galas would reject 8 and make 2 reserves but the board will reflect if you are a reserve in any event and where possible we will let you know if you get your swim prior to going

Q. What if my child injures themselves or is sick and can't make a gala?

A. You should let the gala convenor (e-mail address the.nimmos@hotmail.co.uk) or the poolside helper whose name is on the club board know as soon as you can. If it is a day or so before the gala the gala convenor will let the host club know of the withdrawal beforehand, which will allow a reserve to be put in their place. If it is the day of the gala the poolside helper will withdraw your child. If your child is sick or injured you will not be fined

Q. What if my child just gets a reserve swim and nothing else?

A. You can still go for that one swim but we understand that you may not want to travel a distance and not get the swim. In this case the club will not fine you but you should still let the gala convenor and poolside helpers know so they know not to expect your child

Q. What if my child is in a relay team but we can't make the gala for whatever reason?

A. You definitely need to let the gala convenor know so a replacement swimmer can be put in

Q. How can I offer to help at a gala?

A. Easy all you have to do is put your name on the club board saying you're new and we will make sure you have someone with you on the day to guide you. You won't be on your own as we always have 2 or 3 people at poolside

Q. How can I time-keep at a gala?

A. The club runs timekeepers courses a couple of times a year. Keep an eye on the board for details. Some galas will allow you to time-keep before you have done the course (usually lower level galas) so you may still be able to help. If you time-keep all day, lunch will be provided by the host club as well as tea and coffee in the morning!

Linda Nimmo August 2011