



Competitive Swimming

From the age of 9 a swimmer may wish to start competing in competitive galas. **If your child is 9yrs old and in Bee Squad they will be expected to enter Gala's**

In swimming there are three Classification groups:

Cat 1

This classification is basically for young new swimmers or for swimmers who do not choose to compete in galas.

Cat 2

This classification is basically for the more advanced swimmer who wishes to enter licensed swim meets local meets and if they achieve the times the Lancashire and North West region meets.

Cat 3

This classification is Coaches and Officials plus committee members of the Club

Your ASA fees are paid at the beginning of the year with your club membership fee. From this fee the Club then pays for the swimmers yearly [registration](#) to the ASA, the North West Region and to Lancashire County. This then covers the swimmer for Insurance purposes.

There are different Types of Swimming Galas

- Galas where the club competes as a team against other clubs in Leagues or friendly Galas.
- Galas where the individual swimmer competes individually in licensed meets.

Team Galas

At Everton SA we compete we take part in several leagues such as; the Merseyside & District League; the North West Region Arena League and some local competitions namely the Echo Cup and Presidents cup.

We also organise a Charity Gala once a year in memory of Faye Lafferty who was a young talented swimmers who sadly passed away with Leukaemia a few years ago, we invite local clubs to compete and all money raised is donated to the Anthony Nolan Trust.

The Echo Cup is a competition for swimmers aged from 9 yrs to 12 yr old and takes place during September and October each year with all of the local clubs involved, so every club hopes to reach the final and [win](#). During the preliminary rounds the club tries to get a lot of the swimmers involved so that they gain experience in competition swimming but for the final the club tries to swim its strongest team. It's always a difficult decision to leave out swimmers but parents must trust the judgement of its coaching staff in doing this.

Licensed Meets

Licensed meets come in various standards either Level 1, 2, 3 & 4 and all have qualifying times that the swimmer must have achieved before they are allowed to enter. Level 1 being the top level gala with higher (tighter) qualifying times.

Invites to galas are sent to our Gala Secretary Lynn Stuttard who will email it to the ESA email distribution list and will also ask for it to be posted on to the website. Some galas specify a band of times that your child's PB should fall between for each event. Some specify a time where your child's PB must be equal to or faster and occasionally a time is specified where the swimmer's time must be slower.

All entries for galas are submitted to the gala secretary who will then submit the entries using electronic entry system... Once the results of the entry are known she will then inform the swimmers of either accepted or rejected

entries. Rejected entries at this stage are refundable, however it must be noted that if you are accepted and do not compete on the day of competition for whatever reason the fee is not refundable.

Fees are approx £4 to £5 per event for Licensed Galas and at the entry fee to the gala on the day for parents is around £8 - £10 per day. Often they have a system of refunds if you only attend for half days. Each gala may differ.

The Tadpole Development galas take place once a year. The main purpose of this is to give young inexperienced swimmers a taste of competition. This is a Licensed gala and gives our younger swimmers their first chance of competing against swimmers from our local area whilst also gaining personal best times which are recorded by the ASA- Amateur Swimming Association.

What do I need at a Gala

A swimmer needs at least 2 costumes, 2 pairs of goggles, a tea bag club shirt or club t-shirt or both, two towels (one for poolside so that between the races they can get dry and stay warm), and 2 swim caps, they will also need plenty drinks and possibly some food – they are going to be poolside for about 3 hours so some jelly sweets are also good a good idea...You (the parent) will need something to drink (and eat) as it is usually very warm and humid at a swimming pool. Dress in such a way that you can cope with very hot conditions.

At the Gala

Once at the gala the swimmers have to go off and change and then have to go poolside by themselves. Parents are not allowed poolside unless they are one of the volunteers helping to manage the team. This can be a bit daunting especially for those younger swimmers in the first couple of galas. There will be coaches and timekeepers from each club on the poolside to make sure that the children are supported and in the right place for each of their races. What do the parents and supporters do? They get to sit poolside and cheer on the swimmers – if you're lucky the pool will have proper tiered spectator seating – otherwise you end up sitting very close to the pool. There is also a small charge for spectators, and maybe a raffle or two to raise funds for the hosting club.

The swimmers need to be poolside in time to participate in the warm up and need to arrive approximately 15 minutes before the warm up time specified,

Once the gala gets going the races happen very quickly and what looks like a daunting list of around 50 races takes around 2 hours, watch out for the posted results (another reason to look at the notice board regularly) to see how fast your swimmer swam.

One thing to be made clear is that after your child has swam, be it in the Echo Cup or a 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.

Trophies/medals are awarded for anywhere between the top 3 and top six in each of the age groups. It varies with the gala as does the age groups.

The ASA also holds a database of all official times recorded at licensed open galas.

Once your child has recorded some times at a licensed gala you can go to the ASA web site to see where your child is ranked at county, regional and national level.

It's at that point you realise how many competitive swimmers there are, and just how good some are! Don't get carried away thinking you have a good Olympic prospect – there are around 400,000 competitive swimmers in the UK, of which about 20 go to the Olympics!

All relevant and useful links are hosted on our website www.evertonsa.com

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does my child have to compete in galas?

A. Yes Everton SA is a competitive Swimming Club and we would expect all Swimmers to compete

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. Let the coaches know in plenty of time and this won't be a problem

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

A. let the coaches know ASAP

Q. My child entered 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.

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

A. You let the coaches know ASAP

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 coaches know so a replacement swimmer can be put in

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

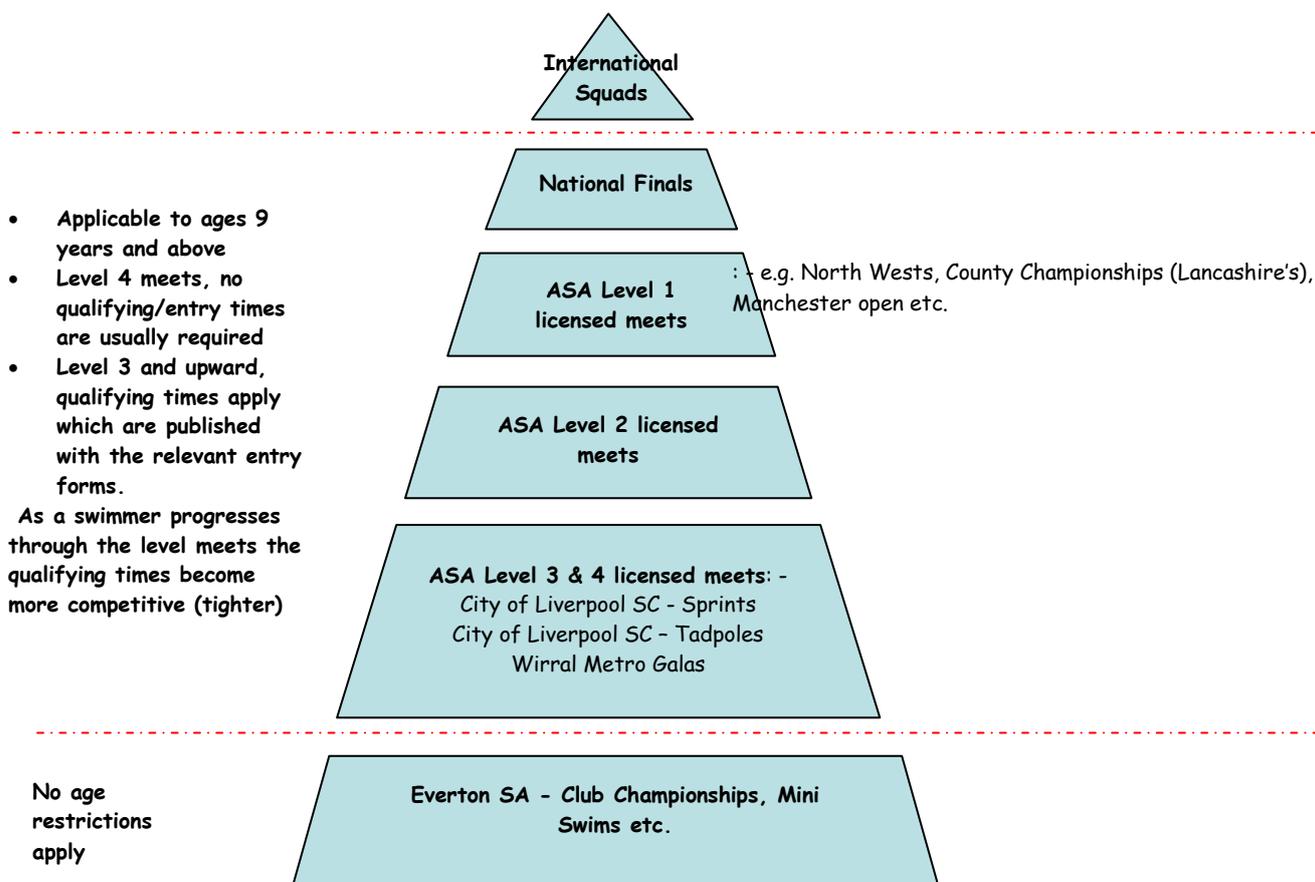
Q. How can I time-keep at a gala?

A. The City of Liverpool SC runs timekeepers courses a couple of times a year. Keep an eye on emails 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,



A club guide to competitive swimming

Ever wondered what all the training is for?
Then see below what all our swimmers should be aspiring to and who knows, maybe one day joining our very own Michael Rock at the top of the Pyramid



Remember as a club we also enter Galas as a team:-

Echo Cup, M&D's, Development Galas (Faye Lafferty Gala), etc

Swimmers swim for points rather than individual times as clubs from our region and beyond go head to head.

Useful Web links:

www.swimming.org - 4 websites in 1

- Swimming Org
- British Swimming
- The ASA - check out your ranking against the best in the country, all licensed meet times are registered to create a database to show where a swimmer is at in their age group. Rakings can be filtered by Club/County/Region/National.
- The IOS

www.swimfit.com

- A great website for swimmers of all abilities and parents.

www.evertonsa.com

- For all our club news and the latest gala applications for you to download.

An Open Letter to Every Swimming Parent in the World –

Dear Swimming Parent,

Firstly let me thank you for being a swimming parent. Without you – we have no sport. There is no swimming without you. Clubs and coaches could not exist without your support. I appreciate everything you do – the early mornings, the late afternoons, the rush to get dinner ready at night for hungry, tired kids, the long weekends of time keeping and team support. For everything you do, I thank you. I wanted to write and show my appreciation by giving you something in return; to thank you for all you give the sport. I am going to give you some ideas and advice to help you be the best swimming parent you can be and to help you help your kids enjoy their swimming to the extent of the talent and to the limits of their dreams.

Your child. –

Your child is not a swimmer. They are a person who swims. And as a person, who they are impacts on every aspect of their swimming. Real progress in swimming comes not from size, strength, speed and hard training – it comes from the development of the whole person: the character, their values, and their personality AND of course their speed, strength, endurance etc etc. The training alone is not enough – the development of the person is far more important and far more enduring. Speed, strength, endurance, power, flexibility and technique are all important. But not as important as integrity. Or honesty. Or sincerity. Or humility. Or courage. Or a strong work ethic. Or the ability to accept responsibility for their own actions. Or the ability to work cohesively with others to achieve a common goal. Or self-discipline. Or the ability to maintain a sense of humour under pressure and stress. These things not only impact positively on your child 's swimming but on every aspect of their life. And not just now, but for the rest of their life and in everything they do. I love swimming. And I would love your child to be a world record holder and Olympic champion. But I would prefer that your kids become better people through the experience of being involved in this great sport. If they happen to also swim fast.....that is a bonus.

Your child's coach - Coaching is a tough business. Early mornings. Long weekends. Late evenings writing programs and developing coaching strategies. Coaches are passionate souls who live for the opportunity to work with like-minded swimmers and families intent on achieving success and enjoying involvement in a great sport. Coaches want to change lives – swimming is just the avenue. Great coaches possess the communication skills, empathy and compassion to change people – they just chose to use swimming as the vehicle to do it. You, your child and your coach form a team. A team with a single goal – to provide the opportunity for your child to enjoy all the sport of swimming has to offer. And as with any team, achieving this goal is dependent on all members of the team working cohesively, honestly and with unconditional trust. Choose your coach carefully. Meet with them. Talk with them. Regularly communicate with them (away from the pool and outside of training times). And once you have made the decision to entrust the development of your child to a particular coach, give that coach 100% total commitment, dedication and support. If you can ' t...find another coach. Partial support will not withstand the ups and downs of competitive swimming. 100% committed support – the same support you give your child and the

same 100% committed support you want FROM the coach must also given by you TO the coach. Your role as a swimming parent – how you can help. Let the coach do their job but there are some things you can do to help your child that only you can do.

Let me tell you a story about a swimming family I know. I was asked to stay with the family and enjoy a few days with them. The kids both swam and asked me if I would be interested in getting up early with them the next morning for practice. Of course I said “yes”. I set my alarm for 5 am, got up and dressed. It was then the strangest thing happened. Another alarm went off.....in the mother’s room. Mom got up. Got dressed. Rushed into the kitchen and made a cup of coffee for herself and two mugs of hot chocolate for the children. She then rushed around the house gathering up swim gear, towels, swim suits, goggles and filled water bottles. She then put all of these things in the kids ’ swim bags and put the bags near the front door. She then tapped gently on the kids ’ bedroom doors and said, “Darling, it is time to go to swimming”. The kids responded, “I’m not going. I hate swimming. It’s too cold” and some other stuff. Mom then reversed the car out of the garage, carried both swim bags out to the car. Meanwhile one of kids was still in bed and had rolled over and gone back to sleep. The other was sitting on their bed saying “I’m tired. I’m tired” over and over again. Mom helped both kids out of bed, helped them put on their track suits and warm shoes and helped them out to the kitchen table. The kids weren’t even drinking their hot chocolate...they were sitting and moaning and groaning and complaining about swimming and being cold and how it was “too early”. Mom then helped the kids into the car – one laid down in the back seat and went to sleep while the other put his head on the car window and fell asleep. Mom and I talked about this and that on the way to the pool. When we got there, Mom jumped out, helped the kids out of the car and carried their bags to the front entrance of the pool. The kids trained ok and I enjoyed watching the practice while Mom went off doing something else.

After training, Mom came back, embraced the kids with “Hi my angels. How was practice?” The kids answered, “OK” and then sat quietly all the way home listening to Eminem on their CD players. When they got home, the kids went in to shower, while Mom emptied their swim bags, made their breakfast and ironed their clothes for school. I was a bit surprised she didn’t also do their homework!!!! Sound familiar? I suspect these scenes or something very similar were also played out in your own home this morning. You don’t swim. Your kids do. Don’t do it all for them. If people get opportunities easily they do not appreciate them and never take full advantage of them. “Holding the hand” of your kids may seem like the loving, caring parent thing to do but it isn’t. It does not teach them self-responsibility or self-management or self-discipline. All it does is teach them to expect life to be unrealistically easy. The most important thing you can do to help your child achieve their swimming goals is to help them develop as a person with real independence and self-management skills. You prepare them for life.....let the coach prepare them to swim fast. The three of you – parent, coach and child – working together is an unstoppable force!!! Once again sincere thanks for your involvement in this great sport and on behalf of everyone in swimming, my appreciation for your contribution and on-going support.