

## A GUIDE TO SELECTING GALAS

### FOR NEW SWIMMING PARENTS

LADASC is a competitive club and encourages all its swimmers to enter galas. These notes are written in order to try and help guide parents of new swimmers as to which galas to enter.

The LADASC 'Team Manager' circulates gala meets on a regular basis, especially during the Spring/Summer months, and it can be quite confusing to know which ones to enter your swimmer into.

When joining the Swimming Club, the galas you should be looking at for a novice swimmer are Level 3 galas (the numbering system goes the other way)! These galas are also sometimes referred to as 'Open Meets', this simply means that the Swimming Club hosting the gala is offering it out to other Clubs, rather than it being an in-house event.

Levels 3 Galas usually work on a 'no faster than' qualification system, which means that it is geared towards the more novice swimmers who are just starting out on the gala circuit. Even if your swimmer has not taken part in any galas before, Level 3 galas usually let you enter if you have no times in any events ('NT'), unless otherwise stated. This will enable your child to gain important swimming times so they are able to enter other galas where a minimum entry time is required. If times are required then the Team Manager sends out an eligibility report in his email, this will enable you to check your child's times and see if she/he is eligible to enter the gala and in what events.

Once you have found out if your child can enter the gala (it is doubtful their times will be too fast to enter a Level 3), the next stage is to look at the meeting schedule. Galas can run for one day, or they can run over a whole weekend. If you don't want to spend all weekend at a swimming pool, it is best to guide your child to pick events from a specific session. They can do as many or few sessions as they like, and a rough guide is to pick two or three races per session. If in any doubt at all about which races to enter, then please ask your swimmer to speak to their coach to get guidance. Please note that under ASA rules, no swimmer under the age of 10 is able to swim distances of 100m, apart from the 100m Individual Medley. Once your swimmer has selected their races, then you need to click on the entry link on the Gala email or complete the form, and select the correct strokes & distances and pay for the events.

As your child progresses and their times get quicker, they will eventually become eligible for Level 2 galas. These galas always have an eligibility report attached to the gala email. The eligibility reports for Level 2 & 1 galas are a minimum entry time, so your child needs to be at least as quick as the time shown for their age group. Swimmers may only be eligible for one or two races at these Galas especially if they are strong in a particular stroke. The system for entry is the same as with Level 3 galas.

Finally, Level 1 galas are usually aimed at the fastest swimmers as the eligibility times are extremely fast and aiming towards getting Regional and National times, but I'm sure you will come onto these in time!

One last thing, you may see mentioned on some emails is a long course gala. Most galas entered by LADASC are held at short course pools, i.e. in a 25m pool. However, Cardiff, Bristol and Coventry have a 50m pool, and it is therefore called a long course meet. If the gala at a long course meet requires an eligibility report, your swimmer's short course times will be converted to long course times (there are usually a few seconds difference between the two to take into consideration the turn and push off). The general rule is, read the gala emails carefully to see if your swimmer can enter and is eligible, and please ensure that your chosen gala doesn't clash with holidays etc., as refunds cannot be given unless there is a medical reason that the swimmer cannot race on the day, i.e. a broken arm or something similar.

Finally, a Team or Club Gala, is where swimmers are selected by the Head coach to represent LADASC in a team event. If selected, it is important that you let the Head coach/Team Manager know if you are available for the event as soon as possible, and to ensure once you have committed to the event that your son/daughter attends the gala. If you are not available please be sure to let them know as a matter of urgency, as an alternative member of the club will need to be selected and informed.

I hope this has taken some of the confusion away ... however, if you have any further questions, please either speak to one of the coaches, or one of the committee and they will be happy to help.