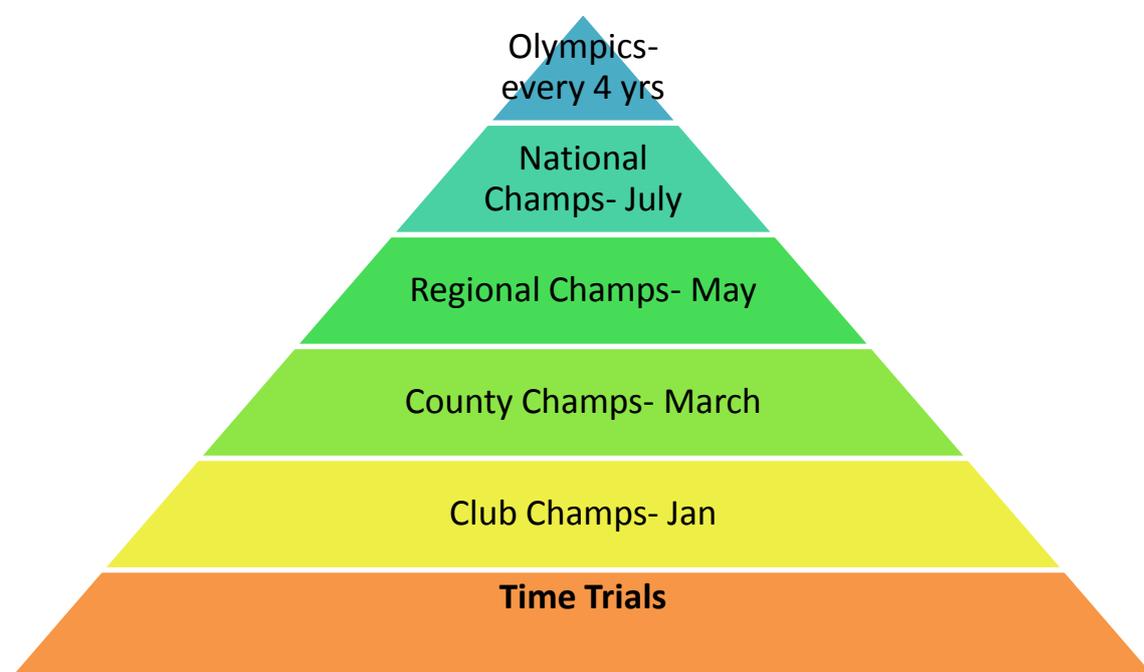




### Havant and Waterlooville Swimming Club- Gala information.

We thought that some parents, especially those with younger swimmers and our new joiners, might find it useful for us to set out some information about galas. No swimmer can compete in “Licensed Meets” until they are 9 years old (with the exception of Club Champs) and to do that they will need competitive ASA membership (level 2).

#### The competitive season-Structure of galas (Sept – July/August )



Swimming galas, often referred to as ‘Meets’, are usually run according to rules set out by the Amateur Swimming Association “ASA”. These galas take various forms. In our club we are involved in different types.

#### Open Galas/Meets

These galas are usually open to swimmers who are at least 9 years old at the date of the gala. These can be designated (licensed by the ASA as a level 1, 2, 3 or 4 )or not, ie. fun or team galas.

- Level 4 – are meets for only one club with no entry times ie. club championships
- Level 3 - These tend to state a time that the swimmer must not have swum faster than (an Upper Limit) Some Level 3 Meets give ‘speeding tickets’ to swimmers who swim faster than the stated times.
- Level 2 - are meets at a 25m pool for faster swimmers with a lower limit that you must have swum faster than.
- Level 1 - are meets at a 50m pool for faster swimmers with a lower limit that you must have swum faster than.

Generally you can use times from level 4 meets to swim at a level 3, and level 3 times to swim at a level 1 or 2. However, the county championships are level 2 and you can use times from the club

champs which are level 4. Team galas such as Junior Cup, Arena League and Gemini Trophy are not licensed and therefore the times cannot be used for level 1 or 2 entries. You should always read the entry conditions of any open meet to see what times can be used.

**We run two open galas at Waterlooville to offer the opportunity for competition but also to raise much needed funds for the club. These are Peter Bull development meet - Early December and Summer Open –June/July. These are both level at level 3.**

#### National Championships

These are open to swimmers who have swum faster than stated times in Level 1 in a 50m pool or level 2 in 25m pool if aged under 14 (held between 1 October and 31 May), including the County championships (February to March), or Regional Championships (usually June). This competition applies to approximately the fastest 1% of swimmers in the Country. These are divided into British Age Group Category (“BAGCATS”) National championships for 11-14 year old boys, and 11-13 year old girls; and the Youth championships for 15-18 year old boys and 14-17 year old girls.

#### Development Galas

The County development gala is for swimmers who are near County times but have the potential to achieve them. You can only compete in this gala if you have the required times and you have not swum in the County champs in that race length or stroke. These are often a BAGCAT competition which means swimmers get points for each event and the best of each category (eg. Best 50m event, best 100m event etc) counts towards the overall placing. You usually need 200m freestyle and 100m medley as well. It is therefore always worth entering at least one event of each category – more if you possibly might get disqualified in a particular stroke.

#### Arena League, Junior Cup and Gemini Trophy Galas

These are team galas where swimmers are selected to swim to represent the club. Selection is made by the head coach and selection sheets will be posted on the notice board 1-2 weeks prior to the gala. (Please check the notice board weekly during the competitive season). Swimmers usually only swim 1 or 2 races and a relay. You are never told what you are swimming until you arrive! However to be chosen to swim in this is a great achievement and honour and is a great team event.

#### Gala Application

Gala application is the swimmers and guardians responsibility, although the club is there to provide support and co-ordination of the entries. A fixtures list is updated regularly and can be found on both the board and the website. In most cases you are either entering a HWSC gala directly, or entering via the club to another meet where a combined club entry is sent.

#### For open galas outside the club

Read all the information provided by the gala organiser and complete the generic entry form and combine with the correct entry fee ( cash or cheque made payable to HWSC). Put in an envelope with your name and competition on it by the date advertised, and put in the red box. The Open meets secretary will then collate all the entries and enter the club entries at one time. Please make sure for National, County and Regional entries your time have been achieved in the period stated and at a registered meet. You can always check your times on line at [www.swimming.org](http://www.swimming.org).

It is swimmers (or parents/ guardians ) responsibility to make a note of what you have entered, so that when the provisional list of accepted entries is published you can check them. These will always be published on the notice board so please check the entries and flag up any mistakes early so these can be rectified. It is very difficult to get races changed on the day and very disruptive to the organisers.

### I have no Times!

This occurs when it comes to entering your first Gala, or when entering a particular race for the first time. When you are in this situation it is good to attend the "Time Trials" which are run approximately four times a year. The Club also hold "Club Champs" once a year where you can get times. It's best to be organised and keep a note of swimmer times at home. If you find that a swimmer is eligible to enter every race, think twice before entering them all. Look at how many sessions there are, and consider whether you and your swimmer want to be at a gala from 7 am to 7 pm. Always discuss race selection with your coach if in doubt.

### Accepted Entries & Withdrawals

A list of accepted entries will always be posted up on the notice board. Although rare, sometimes your entry may be rejected. If this happens your entry fee will be refunded. However, if you do not turn up for your race or withdraw, your fee is non-refundable. If you wish to withdraw (eg. due to illness) please let your Coach know ASAP BEFORE the warm up starts so that the organisers can be advised. Some galas fine the club or swimmer when there is a no show without a formal withdrawal notice being given.

### On the day of the Gala

#### Kit Required

Remember to take enough towels and costumes to avoid being cold at any time. A rough guide is 2/3 towels, 2 costumes (warm up & race), Club hat (and spare), goggles, (remember to take spares just in case they break or split), Club Shorts, Club t-bag and pool side shoes. All are available from the Club Shop.

"Card meets", where swimmers are given cards in advance and hand them in on arrival at a gala, are very rare now. More commonly, swimmers have to "sign in" by the warm up time specified on the gala programme, in order to be accepted on the day. If you do not "sign in" you will not be able to swim.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS ANY PARENT OR SWIMMER PERMITTED TO POST CARDS OR SIGN IN FOR ANOTHER COMPETITOR.**

At the gala, there is usually a "Warm Up" which is split into Male and Female or by age groups and is around 20-30 minutes - time is used to practise starts, turns and to get your muscles ready for a good swim - make sure you use it wisely! All swimmers must be on poolside in time for their correct warm up.

Spectators should make their way to the viewing gallery, purchasing on the way a Programme which will show the events in event order and list all the swimmers in ascending entry time order. A parent or carer is required to remain on the premises throughout the gala.

Each event is divided into heats. This is usually done by time entered, not age, so heats will be multi-age. The winner of each individual age group is decided either on times (Heat Declared Winner/HDW) or a final when the fastest 6 or 8 competitors will swim off for places. Medals are usually awarded at these events, for either the top three – 1st, 2nd and 3rd or six / eight swimmers – ie all finalists get something.

Most galas operate "over the top starts" this is where the race that is swum after yours starts before you are allowed to leave the water. You will be told by an official when you can get out.

After you have swum your heat go directly to your Coach for feed back on how your race went, not your parents. There is sometimes a “swim down” pool; this can be used to relax your muscles by swimming slowly for around 15 minutes. Permission to swim down must be given by coaches.

#### Disqualifications or DQs

Unfortunately swimmers do get disqualified and Officials are as strict with 9 year olds at their first gala as more experienced competitors. Like other competitive sports, swimming has its own set of technical rules to ensure that races are run fairly. While it is obviously upsetting when a swimmer is DQ'd, there is always something to be learned. When a disqualification occurs, it is usually announced along with the reason when the result is announced. Main reasons are:

- A false start – there are no second chances. A false start can be a swimmer moving on the starting blocks once the starter has called “take your marks”.
- Incorrect stroke technique
- Incorrect touch at finish or turn (eg there must be a two hand finish for breast stroke and butterfly) Finishing on front when swimming backstroke

#### Food and Drink whilst on Poolside

Be ready for a potentially long day at the pool. Make sure the swimmer has a drink for replacing lost fluids during races – anything from water with dilute squash, to sports drinks will be fine. Spectators remember that spectator areas are invariably hot places.

#### Pool Side Etiquette

Whilst you are on Pool Side representing the Club we are there as a “Team” and we always sit together. You are under the supervision of the Club Coach who is in attendance at the Gala. Because of this, if you wish to leave the pool side you have to get permission from them. When you have swum your final race, you must ask permission from your coach to go home. Usually, you will not be allowed to leave until the end of that session so that you can support the other team members.

#### Remembering your times

After you have swum and have gone home you should make a record of your times either on the computer If you do this the next Gala entry Form you complete will be a lot easier!

**Remember “TEAM” means. Together Everyone Achieves More!**