

KINGFISHERS SWIMMING CLUB



Competitive Swimming – Galas

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• Open Meets - Entry

An open meet is a swimming gala which any swimming clubs / swimmers may attend, hosted by a particular swimming club.

The open meets for Kingfisher Swimming Club swimmers which the head coach is recommending can be found in the club calendar. Each open meet will have its own meet conditions, which you need to read, and criteria for entering your swimmer. These may have upper & lower cut off times.

Before entering an event please seek the advice of the coach for event suitability. Some events are graded & swimmers must meet the criteria for cut-off times.

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• What happens to my Entry?

- Once you have applied to enter a Gala, the organisers will communicate back those entries that have been accepted and rejected. Every Gala has a capacity of how many they can take - most edit on times, but some edit on a 1st come / 1st Served basis.

The Fixtures Secretary will communicate by those acceptances / rejections.

Refunds will be returned to you once the organisers have processed all the entries - this can take a few weeks, this is normal.

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▪ What to do on the Day?

- The Entry form normally indicates the Registration and Warm up times for each gala. This may be subject to change by the organisers - often due to numbers accepted - and any alterations will be communicated to you by the Fixtures Secretary.
- If there are no alterations, then you are responsible for attending as per entry form. We do not normally issue reminders.

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• Registration

- Every swimmer or the coach is required to go to the Registration Table and confirm their intention to compete in the events they are entered for. Cards are traditionally used to facilitate this exercise, but more and more are now “Card-Less” meets and you are just ticked off for the events you still want to enter.

Often you will be required to “Sign-In” for each Session. Generally, for an all day meet, there will be 2 or 3 sessions. Please ensure you listen to what you are being told as to when the desk is open for the next sessions sign in.

Once the desk is closed, if you haven’t registered you will not be able to swim.

You do not need to turn up to Register before Session 1 if you are not swimming in Session 1. There are normally Registration periods for each Session on the Programme.

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▪ Warm-Up

- This tends to be mayhem, albeit organised mayhem. Swimmers are normally invited to warm up in different age groups and different sexes - again listen to the announcement. The Warm Up is just that, you are looking to warm up the muscles and have a feel for the pool as a prelude to competing. Younger swimmers need constant reminding not to blow their socks off in the Warm Up - save it for the races.

There is normally a warm up at the start of each session.

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• Pool Side Team

- For those Galas that we encourage swimmers to enter, the Club will have, onsite, a Pool Side team that will comprise at least 1 Coach, the Team Manager and possibly a few other Parent Volunteers.

These are critical as younger swimmers are like sheep and do tend to wander off at the most inopportune times.

All Pool Side Team members are fully CRB checked and ASA Registered
- The non Coaches are all generally parents of current swimmers.

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• Planning your Entries

- Open Galas are normally all day affairs. They are long and tiring days in very humid conditions - both for Parents and swimmers. For the younger swimmers try and plan logically. If most of their events are in the 1st session, and their last one is in the last session, then give some thought as to whether you really want to be sitting around for a further 5 hours for 1 race where they are likely to be jaded and not at their strongest.

If you can even the day out so they compete in each session then this is less of a challenge for both parent and swimmer.

Similarly, younger swimmers cannot perform to the top of their game doing 6 or so races in a day, they must fade at some point.

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• **Withdrawing from an Event during the Day**

- If you decide to not do an event then please ensure that both the Team Manager and the Registration Desk are informed. If you decide, for example, not to do the last session, but you have registered for the last session, then just tell the Team Manager. Those sheep do take a lot of tending, and 1 disappearing without notifying the pool side staff can be very scary!

Whether you withdraw from an event before the day or on the day - do not expect to receive any refund of your entry fee.

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• Medals

- Most Open galas have medals, these are normally set for each sex at yearly age groups

Some events also issue Certificates or medals for 4th / 5th / 6th, this is starting to fade out. In graded meets speeding tickets may be issued if the swimmer exceeds the top cut-off time. This will result in the first place medal been awarded to the fastest swimmer within the cut-off times

Do not despair if you fail to collect a medal, these will get forwarded to the Club post-event if uncollected.

If you do check the results and have secured a reward, then normally there are medal tables to go to, to collect these. These are normally on pool side.

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▪ Results

- Most galas tend to use the same software to run galas, so you will get used to Result sheets. Result sheets are normally printed throughout the day and a copy posted pool side, with another copy posted up where the Spectators can view them. These can take a while after an event to appear (this is unfortunately very normal!)

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• Events / Warm Ups

- Events alternate between Boys and Girls events throughout the day. If the first event of the session is a boy's event, then the boys will warm up for that session first.

This means that swimmers get a rest, but are also able to make the "Whipping / Marshall Area" for their next event.

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• Whipping or Marshalling

- This is where the officials for the meet start pulling together all of the swimmers for the next 1 or 2 events, to get all of the swimmers into their heat and lane orders. (Heats are seeded by entry time)

Rounding up the swimmers and making sure they get to "Whip" for the right events, is the responsibility of the Pool Side Team.

Before each swimmer is despatched to the "Whipping" area, the Pool Side Coach will normally have a few words to remind the swimmers of technique, what to remember and what event they are doing!

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• Post Race

- Generally, most pools that hold galas have what is called a swim down pool. This pool is literally for swimmers to swim down after a race, thus controlling the recovery of their muscles post race.

There is always a temptation for younger swimmers to use this pool as a fun pool. This will be stopped where seen by Leisure Centre Staff & our Pool Side Team, as the older swimmers rely on this warm down and do not take kindly to having another swimmer obstruct or land on them!

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• Times

- Most events run on electric timing. During the race and at the 50m turn or end the display will provide times. Where the electronic timing fails - and that can be for a number of reasons - there are 2 further back ups.

These back ups though do not normally get announced and you have to wait for the results sheet, to get posted, to find the time.

Even Electronic timing is subject to override by the referee in certain extreme circumstances. 99% of the time it can be relied upon, but until the Results are published, the electronic time on the scoreboard is provisional.

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• Parents

- Parents normally tend to congregate in the spectator gallery area in Team groups

Parents must not go poolside at any time. You need a Pool Side pass to be Pool Side, and that goes for those Parents who are CRB checked with the Club.

The fact you may hold a CRB clearance with some other institution cuts no ice at any Swim gala.

Galas tend to have Parents full of anticipation at the start of a day and totally flagged at the end. Sitting around all day in a cramped seat in humid conditions is not a lot of fun, especially if your sibling is swimming frequently.

Take things to occupy yourself: highlighting Kingfisher swimmers on your entry programme and writing down Kingfisher swimmer times against their listed entry time has limited long term upside.

Parents can make arrangements to take pictures, either on a phone/camera/recorder, but this will only be possible if you register your intent to so do with the event organisers (registration desk). If you do wish to do this, you will be asked to complete a declaration form, and often wear a label that indicates you have registered.

If you have not registered, and are observed taking pictures, then the organisers reserve the right, under ASA Child Protection Laws, to remove you from their gala.

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▪ Between Sessions

- Get a change of scenery and get some fresh air. If you leave the building then Parents need to remember to take their programme with them, most events only allow re-entry upon presentation of the programme.

Do not stray too far and if leaving before the end of a session then please ensure the Team Manager is notified of your departure.

If you leave the area, then you are responsible for ensuring you are back on time. Frequently sessions overrun when - this happens a change to the warm up time and session start time will be communicated via the PA system. Make sure if you have left the area that somebody who is staying has your mobile and can contact you with such changes.

Don't forget you may need to sign in ahead of the next session.

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▪ What to Wear

- Swimmers tend to turn up in whatever is comfortable, with most opting for their Team kit or Club Hoodie and track bottoms.

Many swimmers will have a "Competition" suit as well as suits to do their Warm Ups in. By "Competition" suits we mean the more expensive race suits, many of which are so scientifically advanced that they are too fragile to wear on a continuing daily basis unless you have very deep pockets.

Many of these suits (and this doesn't mean the top of the range Olympic swimmer LAZR type suits) need a lot of care and attention to retain their "design advantage", i.e immediate washing in Cold Water after removal.

Consequently, at events where our more elite swimmers take part, you will see a number of them disappear back into the changing rooms after each warm up to switch to their racing costume.

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▪ What to Wear Continued

- At the more junior end this investment is probably not financially merited, but the idea of having a change of costume for different session will have merits if your child is likely to get back changed into outdoor clothes for example, (to get that fresh air) as the idea of trying to put a wet costume back on tends to be unappealing to many.

Whilst on Pool Side, no outdoor shoes are allowed, so many swimmers take flip-flops which we would recommend.

If swimmers are allowed to climb into the spectator area to visit parents, they will only be allowed, by the event organisers, if they are wearing something on their feet and are wearing something over their costume (T-Bag).

As for Parents, even in the harshest winter, pool side spectator areas are notoriously baking hot, and frequently the lack of fresh air, and heat generated by the assembled masses mean that you need to think carefully about what to wear for the day.

You normally know when there is a swim gala on at a Leisure Centre, when you see loads of Parents, in almost beach wear, queuing up outside a venue in the coldest of temperatures. Plan accordingly.

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• What to Eat

- Get used to the idea of Open Galas first sessions start very early. Don't forget to build in the travel time, parking time and registration deadlines to your planning.

Many swimmers tend not to want to eat this early so please ensure they have various snacks to get them through the day.

High Calorie nutrition is actually recommended. Swimming is renowned for burning an incredible amount of Calories, and for demanding considerable fluid replacement.

Like at a training session, drinks should be taken, and drunk throughout the day. I have lost count how many children manage to lug heavy bags around full of energy drinks, only to take them all home again. If fluid isn't replaced, then swimmer performance will deteriorate fast.

Drinks should not be fizzy, galas get stopped for the cherub that pukes in the pool, and the other parents tend not to be too sympathetic to such occurrences when they too have travelled miles to attend.

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• What to Eat Continued.....

- For lunch, you will see many swimmers and parents remain in the gallery and eat pre-packed lunches. This is advisable, both financially, but also often sessions overrun and you may not get a break between sessions long enough to go out and buy something.

You will very quickly get used to every other swimmer opening a Tupperware box full of pasta for lunch, this seems to be the acknowledged first choice for athletes to replace the Carbs.

Parents, don't forget yourself: Remember Boredom = Hunger !!!!

Try and avoid Chocolate, pools are very hot places and are not kind to chocolate.

Most Gala locations will provide some kind of catering service, but best not to rely on this as your main source of Lunch.

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▪ What to take with you

- Swimmers should normally have in their Kit Bag the following:
 - Costume(s)
 - Goggles (include a spare pair - they always break or get lost at the most inopportune time)
 - A couple of towels (1 for Pool Side & 1 to get changed) - think about the number of sessions
 - Club Swim Hat, in Competition these are recommended for Boys also (include a spare)
 - Team Kit
 - Flip Flops
 - Snacks.

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Questions ?