

## **TYPES OF COMPETITION**

### **INTERNAL GALAS**

These are competitions restricted to members of COSACSS.  
We usually hold the following:

#### **Junior Galas**

Swimmers from Development to Junior Groups may enter these competitions which are usually held throughout the year and are ideal events to experience the competitive environment in a relaxed atmosphere.

#### **Club Championships**

This event is open to all swimmers in the club and is held over several weekends during June and July. This Gala is held under ASA rules and therefore is a little more formal than the Junior Gala. Children should be encouraged to enter a wide range of events at these events in order to gain times on the British Swimming database which are necessary to enter other meets. The awards from this event are presented at a Social Night which is held in September.

### **LEAGUE GALAS**

COSACSS currently swim in 3 different leagues as follows:

#### **CRUSADER LEAGUE**

This is a small local league with 3 rounds. We try to use this event to give swimmers a 1<sup>st</sup> experience of swimming in a team. Swimmers are aged 9 and above and the events are a mixture of 50 and 100 metre swims

#### **STAFFS LEAGUE**

This is a league which consists of most of the clubs in Staffordshire and we swim 3 rounds and a final. Swimmers are aged 9 and above and the events are all 50 metre swims.

#### **ARENA LEAGUE**

We swim in the North West Division of this Nationwide League. This event is a high standard and we try to swim the best possible team. It

consists of 2 rounds and a final and the events are a mixture of 50 and 100 metres.

For all league swims a team sheet is issued approximately 2 weeks prior to the event. If your child is selected please make every effort to attend but if for some reason this is not possible then please advise the Team Manager as soon as possible to enable a replacement to be found.

### **OPEN MEETS**

These are competitions in which swimmers enter individually

There are different levels of Open Meets and the Coaches will always try to source the correct competition to suit your child's development. At these meets whilst your child is entered through the club, they are swimming for themselves. An entry fee for each race is payable and this is usually between £5 and £8. A small charge is also made towards the cost of a pass to allow the Coach on Poolside.

The events at a Gala are swum in heats which are seeded according to the times submitted, not in ages. Therefore your child may be swimming in a heat with children of various ages. The times the children achieve are fed into a computer and the results of each age group are then produced. So, winning the heat is not important, although it may be pleasant, and nothing is awarded to the swimmer for this.

You will be charged a fee to spectate and you will probably wish to buy a programme. Usually you will be charged for the whole day and then if you leave early you will be refunded for the unused sessions.

### **UNLICENSED MEETS**

Entries into these competitions do not usually have very fast entry standards and are therefore the ideal starting point onto the competitive ladder. Children must be 9 or above on the day of the gala to enter. Times achieved at these galas are not recorded on the British Swimming database.

## **LICENSED MEETS**

All times achieved at Licensed Meets are included on the British Swimming Rankings database.

### **Level 4 Meets**

This is the lowest level of Licensed Meets and there are usually no minimum entry standards. Our Club Championships are registered at this level. Times from these meets can be used to enter many open galas and County Championships

### **Level 2 and 3 Meets**

These meets usually have a minimum and maximum entry standard which restricts the fastest swimmers from competing. Swimmers use these competitions to gain qualifying times for County & Regional competitions.

### **Level 1 Meets**

These galas are held in Long Course pools and are aimed at the quicker swimmers who are trying to achieve qualification for National Championships. They usually have quite fast entry standards.

### **County Championships – Level 2**

Cosacss swimmers compete in the Staffordshire Championships which are usually held in February. The qualifying standard is set to ensure that the best swimmers in the County compete against each other. The swimmer's age will be taken as age on 31 December. Achieving a 'County Time' is a major milestone on your child's swimming journey.

### **Regional Championships – Level 1**

We compete in the West Midlands Region and the Galas take place in May.

They are always held in a Long Course pool and the qualifying times are quite tough to achieve. As at the County Championships the age will be as at 31 December.

### **National Championships**

These championships are held in July and August in a Long Course pool. To qualify swims recorded at Level 1 meets during the qualification window are ranked for each age group and the top 24 for each event will be invited to swim at British National Age Group Championships the next 20 swimmers from each home nation are invited to swim at the Home Nations National Championships. The age is at 31 December

It is worth pointing out the importance of maintaining good records of all your child's swims. Information about the date, venue, distance, stroke and time should be recorded. Not only is it useful when it comes to completing entry forms, but it is also a great way of monitoring progress. The times recorded from Licensed Meets can be viewed on the ASA website, [www.britishswimming.org](http://www.britishswimming.org), or follow the link from Cosacss website

## **WARM UP**

Warm ups are needed to help swimmers prepare physically and mentally for the upcoming training or competition.

A good warm up consists of

### **1. Flexibility Exercises**

Before entering the water swimmers should spend 5-10 minutes doing some flexibility exercises. Particular attention should be given to increasing the range of motion in the ankles, hips, lower back and shoulders.

### **2. Easy Swimming**

The majority of the warm up should consist of continuous easy swimming. This should last about 10-20minutes depending on time available and be swum at a pace approximately 40% of maximum effort. The aim is to increase blood flow and oxygen consumption in the muscles without causing tiredness. This section of the warm up can also include arms and legs only swimming and stroke drills to help rehearse technique. During this time you should familiarise yourself with the pool, perfecting your turns and push-offs

### **3. Paced Swims**

Paced swims should be used to rehearse the pace that you will use in your race and to practice turns at race speed

### **4. Starts**

There is time available towards the end of the warm up to practice starts. All starts should be performed with perfect streamlining and powerful legs. Swimmers should perform no more than 2 or 3starts to avoid causing fatigue in the large muscles of the legs.

## **Your 1<sup>st</sup> Swimming Gala**

The day will come when your child will be attending their first swimming gala. If you are not sure of what to do, what to take or have any other queries, below are some of the most frequently asked questions that should go some way towards helping parents prepare prior to the day and on the day itself. Hopefully this will contribute towards you and your child's enjoyment of the occasion.

### **What should my child eat?**

No matter how early you have to start out make sure they have a good breakfast. That does not mean a Full English! A cereal containing complex carbohydrates (such as Weetabix) is ideal as this releases energy over a long period of time. Other foods containing carbohydrates, such as toast, are also fine.

Remember if your gala is all day you will have to take enough food to last all day, or be prepared to buy some (not always easy in the time allowed for lunch breaks). Wholemeal sandwiches or rolls are preferable to white. Prepared pasta salad or pasta made at home with a small amount of sauce is also good. Fruit is preferable to sweets, particularly bananas as they are rich in carbohydrates.

Large stodgy meals and junk food during the day may adversely affect your child's performance by making them sluggish. Having said that they must eat or they will run out of energy. A little and often is better than a big meal.

Eating on poolside may not be permitted. Many parents are tempted to send large amounts of sweets and crisps onto poolside with their child. This can have an adverse effect on your child as sugar gives highs of energy followed by lows. If your child swims during a low their performance will suffer. Most children take jelly cubes or small amounts of jelly type sweets (eg Haribo) with them, which is OK.

### **What should my child drink?**

One of the biggest problems on poolside is dehydration, which will result in lack lustre swims and can cause headaches. Your child should be encouraged to take plenty of fluids whilst on poolside, preferably of a specialist still energy drink (eg Lucozade Sport) as these are designed to stop dehydration and assist energy levels, and you should make sure you have an extra bottle available. You should not give your child fizzy

drinks prior to or during a gala as this will make your child feel sick when they have to swim hard.

Drinks should be in a plastic drinks bottle, glass bottles should not be taken on poolside as a broken bottle would halt the gala.

### **What should we take with us?**

Your child will need a large holdall containing at least 3 costumes (or at least one for each session). Some children like to take more and change after warm up and after each race so that they don't have to wear wet costumes whilst waiting for their next race. They should also have 2 or 3 towels.

Your child should wear a Club shirt whilst on poolside, and if they wear a swimming cap it should be a COSACSS cap. They need to keep warm before and after races so a Club hoodie is useful. They should also have some form of footwear such as pool shoes or flip flops.

They should take goggles with them that they are comfortable with and are already properly adjusted, tried and tested. They will also need a spare pair in case of emergencies. It is not advisable to use newly purchased goggles as your child will not be used to them and they may not be properly adjusted. It is a well known fact that goggles are more likely to come off in a race if they are new.

Some people find it easier to prepare separate sets of costumes, towels etc for each session and only keep the kit for the current session in their child's bag. This also stops everything getting wet after a warm up or a race.

It is recommended that names be in all clothing, footwear and bags.

### **What do I Do?**

Make sure you get your child to the gala in plenty of time and with the right kit. Once they are on poolside don't worry about them as there will be the Coach and other helpers to make sure they know what to do, where to go and when. They should stay with the rest of the club's swimmers for the session and should support the other swimmers from the Club when they are swimming. Under no circumstances should your child leave the poolside prior to consulting a Team Manager or Coach. Your child should talk to the Coach before and again immediately after the race so that they can discuss where improvement can be made. At the end of the session or when they have completed their events they can come to you either for food or to be taken home. This will also be a good time to either praise or console them.

It is compulsory at your first gala that you shout and scream for your child...even though they cannot hear you when they are swimming. It is

also compulsory for you to scream and shout for the other COSACSS swimmers.

**What if they are disqualified?**

Don't worry about it or get upset with them. Remember they are only young and these types of galas are used by the club for development. Use it as a learning experience. The referee will normally tell the Coach why your child was disqualified and the Coach will talk to your child about it. Your child will probably need consoling when they see you again, however encourage them to learn from their mistakes as it is unlikely they will make the same mistake again. Do not tell them the officials were wrong and don't know what they are doing!

**What if my child wins a medal?**

Brilliant, fantastic, praise them to the hilt. They are not an Olympic champion yet but their development has started. Make sure they wear their Club top when they go to collect their medal and cheer very loudly when it is presented.

**What if my child does not win any medals?**

Brilliant, fantastic, praise them to the hilt. Most Olympic champions never won a medal at their first gala either but their development has started.

REMEMBER....The most important thing is that your child enjoys themselves, because if they do they will look forward to the next one and your life will be a little easier.