

Advice to Parents on Entering your Swimmer in a Gala **(mainly applies to new or young swimmers)**

Which Gala?

- The coach and the Competition Secretary can advise you on which galas may be suitable for your swimmer to enter.
- For inexperienced swimmers, graded galas are a good place to start, as swimmers generally have to be slower than a given entry time to be allowed to swim.

Which Race(s)?

- Galas can be long and tiring for swimmers and spectators, and often start at the crack of dawn many miles away! So it's a good idea to choose events wisely, especially for your first few galas.
- Try to avoid entering just one race at the end of a long session. Your swimmer will be tired and bored before they have swum. If you need to stay until the end of the session, keep them busy by entering other races in that session.
- Avoid entering races that mean you will be sitting in a pool all day Saturday and again all day Sunday. There will be time enough for this level of commitment when your swimmer gets really serious.
- Look at the qualifying times and identify which races your swimmer could take part in.
- Don't enter your swimmer for a race if they cannot legally perform the stroke(s) over the required distance. Judges at galas apply the rules strictly. Having said that, it is not the end of the world if your swimmer is disqualified. It can be a great learning experience. If you're in doubt about whether your swimmer is ready for a certain race, ask the coach.
- Ask the swimmer what they'd like to enter. After all they have got to swim it, not you.
- It can be difficult making good choices in a hurry looking at the club noticeboard in the Dolphin Centre. If you have access to the Internet, you can find all the information about the galas, including order of events and qualifying times, on websites. Then you can make decisions at home in your own time.
- Talk to parents of other swimmers and find out first-hand from them whatever you want to know.
- Keep a note of what you have entered your swimmer for along with dates, times and venues. Write it on your calendar!

After the Gala

- It's a great idea to start keeping a record of your swimmer's achievements in a small notebook, right from the first gala.
- Record each swim, the date, venue, event and time and perhaps the feedback from the coach
- Start making a list of your swimmer's personal best times (PBs), and keep it updated. Then next time you want to enter them in a gala, you have a good idea of what they are capable.