



## Wear Valley ASC

Parents/Guardians Guide to Competitive Swimming

May 2023



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### Introduction

Getting involved in competitive swimming for the first time can be an unfamiliar process for younger swimmers and often just as much for their parents or guardians. There are things to know and understand about what is expected of you; what sort of competitions you should be entering and at what stage; how to enter; what you should bring to galas and Open Meets; the team events the Club enters, and what you should make sure you have with you on the day of competition. Don't worry if

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you don't know all this straight away. You'll pick it up quickly and some of it will become more relevant to you as your child progresses.

Much of this information is on the Club website <https://www.wearvalleyasc.co.uk/> or is explained by coaches on poolside but can be sometimes difficult to find. This guide is an attempt to pull all that information together in one place.

The most important thing for newcomers to grasp is that it is vital to compete and get times in a variety of events. Hopefully the following will explain why.

### **Starting Out**

It is important for you to be clear and understand that Wear Valley ASC is first and foremost a competitive Club. We have a proud record of significant competitive success in swimming, at county, regional and national level. The Club and its coaches will guide you and your children as to what they should be aiming to compete in and achieve as they develop. **Once swimmers are in Competitive Squads, they are training to achieve a competitive result, and not to simply train for fitness. This is to be achieved through acquiring skills as well as aerobic and speed development. There are squads available for older swimmers to keep training for fitness, and in our Academy squads for younger swimmers to acquire the skills and technique required before competing.**

We encourage children to compete as we believe it is one of the key elements in their development into becoming competitive swimmers and well-rounded young people. It is important that swimmers try to enter competitions for several reasons:

- It gives swimmers an idea of what it's like to compete.
- It allows swimmers to monitor their times, giving them a clear indicator of how they are progressing.
- It gives swimmers a goal towards which they can work.
- It gives swimmers a sense of achievement.
- It indicates to coaches how the swimmers cope in a competitive environment.
- Gaining new improved times is one of the major factors in helping the coaches to decide whether a swimmer is ready to move up to the next squad.

Each season the Club enters squads in several team-based competitions. **If your child is selected for the Club in one or more of those teams, they are expected to turn out and compete and represent the Club.** The team events should not be seen as optional "add-ons" to individual competition. Representing the club in Team Events is regarded as more important than competing individually in Open Meets. If your child is regularly unable to compete in team events the Head Coach will reserve the right to remove your child's place in the competitive squads.

Please see the Squad Structure and Athlete Pathways below:

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**Masters** squad is for adults that wish to continue their competitive swimming or indeed just maintain a healthy lifestyle. There is also scope for Masters to train alongside Senior Squads

**A** squad is designed for senior athletes that are aiming to maximise their swimming technique and training to meet their potential. Athletes must maintain extremely high levels of commitment and attendance to stay in the programme. Morning training is very much advised.

**Training:** The majority of focus will be based around a 400m IM training plan (alongside **B Squad**) with added focus on individual events. Athletes on the programme will have access to some small group sessions, individual plans and one to one coaching..

**Age Range:** 14yrs + (female) / 14yrs + (male)

**Target Meets:** L1 / Counties / Regional / National

**B** squad is for athletes that have qualified for, or have demonstrated the potential to qualify for county and regional championships. Athletes on the programme should be fully focused on achieving high standards and an excellent attendance record is required and weekday morning training is strongly advised.

**Training** focus will be around a 200m/400m IM plan with equal emphasis on all 4 strokes and aerobic / skill development.

**Progression:** Athletes meeting the criteria and demonstrating continued progress will be considered for movement into **A Squad**. At 14yrs, athletes maintaining high levels of commitment will advance to **A Squad**. Athletes may move to **A Squad** at a younger age (13yrs) in cases of accelerated development.

**Age Range:** 12-14yrs

**Target Meets:** L1-3 / County / Regional / National

**Sprint 1 + 2** squads are for athletes that wish to continue their competitive swimming journey with like-minded swimmers of a similar age. Athletes should maintain attendance levels required to achieve their desired result. **Sprint** Squad has an emphasis on maintaining a healthy and fit lifestyle and there is room in this squad for other interests/sports. Competing is optional.

**Training and Progression:** Training will focus on all 4 competitive strokes. There will be an emphasis on both skill and aerobic development. Athletes in **Sprint** squad demonstrating the potential to achieve county qualifying times **and/or** wishing to meet training criteria for **B Squad** (13yrs and under) or **A Squad** (14yrs+) will be considered for movement.

**Age Range:** 12-18yrs

**Target Meets:** L3

## Competitive Development

**Competitive Development** athletes continue to develop competitive swimming strokes, along with honing racing skills/turns/starts. **Training** focus will be high on skill and technique with moderate aerobic development. The ideal **Age Range** will be 9-12yrs (though there will also be room for late developers) and **Target Meets** include L3, County and SC Regional.

## Academy Group 2 (Skills Development)

**Academy 2** swimmers learn racing skills/turns/starts to go with competitive strokes developed in A1, attending L3/L4 competitions. They also develop further an understanding of 'club' swimming for movement into competitive squads.

## Academy Group 1 (Stroke Development)

**Academy 1** swimmers learn and develop all 4 competitive swimming strokes as well as an understanding of club swimming, in a fun environment.

Woodhouse LC LTS / School Swimming + Other LTS Schemes

## 2023 Squad Descriptions and Goals

### Academy 1 (Stroke Development)

**Group Focus:** To develop 'competitive swimming strokes' / develop an understanding of club swimming and discipline.

**Progression:** Swimmers move to Academy 2 once all outcomes in Academy 1 'Stroke' outcomes documented are completed satisfactorily.

**Coaches:** Susan Rogers **Assistant Coaches:** Angela Callan, Emily Whitton, Caroline Middleton

### Academy 2 (Skills Development)

**Group Focus:** Learn racing skills/turns/starts to go with competitive strokes developed in A1. Further develop understanding of 'club' swimming for movement into competitive squads. Start to compete in development and L3 competitions.

**Progression:** On completion of all outcomes on the A2 skills outcomes document, all swimmers 11 years and under demonstrating County potential will move to **Competitive Development** with swimmers 12yrs + moving to **Sprint Squad (S)**. There will also be scope for some late developers to move into **CD**.

**Coaches:** Susan Rogers, Angela Callan **Assistant Coaches:** Emily Whitton, Caroline Middleton

### Competitive Development

**Who is eligible for the squad?** **Competitive Development** is for athletes that have demonstrated the potential to qualify for county championships. Age range 9-12yrs. (**Age as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023**)

**Group Focus:** Continue to develop competitive swimming strokes. Hone racing skills/turns/starts.

**Attendance and dedication levels:** Athletes begin to demonstrate commitment to their training with good attendance expected. Athletes will be encouraged to compete regularly in competitions and there will be an option to start weekday morning training.

**Training:** The focus of this group will still very much be around competitive race skills with high technique content alongside moderate aerobic development. Speed development is also essential.

**Progress:** An athlete will be considered for movement into **B Squad** if, when turning 12yrs (AG) and demonstrating the potential to qualify for Counties and regionals. Alternatively, swimmers may move into **Sprint Squad** to continue their swimming journey.

**Squad Goal:** 100% of athletes achieving qualification standards for 2024 N&Ds

**Coaches:** Paul Armstrong. **Assistant Coaches:** Susan Rogers, Sarah Cooper, Angela Callan, Cat Stansfield

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### B Squad

**Who is eligible for the squad?** *B Squad* is for athletes that have qualified, or have demonstrated the potential to qualify for County or Regional championships and have demonstrated commitment to training. Age range 12yrs-14yrs. (*Age as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023*)

**Attendance and dedication levels:** All athletes on the programme should be fully focused on achieving high standards in the sport and as such must aim to have at least a 70% (12-14yrs) attendance record each month and demonstrate excellent effort levels and progressive learning skills. If athletes are unable to maintain attendance levels (unless previously rubber stamped by their coach) they may be asked to move into *Sprint Squad* to better meet their preferred/available commitment levels.

**Training:** The focus will be around a 200m/400m IM training plan with equal emphasis on all 4 strokes and added focus on aerobic development. Athletes at this level will look to develop and hone advanced competitive swimming skills and techniques.

**Progression:** Athletes meeting the criteria and demonstrating continued progression and maintaining high levels of commitment will be considered for movement into *A Squad* at 14yrs (AG). There is also scope for 13yrs (AG) swimmers to move into *A Squad* if they have demonstrated early development both physically and technically.

**Squad Goal:** 100% of athletes achieving qualification standards for 2024 N&Ds

**Coach:** Paul Armstrong. **Assistant Coaches:** Angela Callan, Cat Stansfield, Sarah Cooper

### Sprint Squads 1 and 2

**Who is eligible for the squad?** *Sprint* Squads are for athletes that wish to continue their competitive swimming journey with like-minded swimmers of a similar age. Age range 12-18yrs (*age as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023*)

**Attendance and dedication levels:** There are two tiers within this squad. Athletes in *S2* should maintain good attendance levels, aiming to hit 3 of the 5 sessions available to them to achieve a competitive result. *S1* athletes have 3 sessions available to them. *Sprint Squad* has an emphasis on maintaining a healthy and fit lifestyle and there is room in this squad for other interests/sports. Athletes should continue to progress their competitive skills. Athletes in *S2* should aim to have at least a 60% attendance record each month and demonstrate excellent effort levels and progressive learning skills to maximise competitive performance.

**Training:** Training will focus on all 4 competitive strokes. There will be a high emphasis on skill and aerobic development aimed at complimenting a fit and healthy lifestyle. Training will also be geared towards sprint events (200m and below.)

**Progression into B and A Squads:** Athletes in *Sprint* Squads achieving *or* demonstrating the potential to achieve county qualifying times *and/or* wishing to meet the *B Squad* (13yrs and under) or *Senior Squad* (14yrs+) attendance criteria will be considered for movement into the respective squad.

**Squad Goal:** Measurable improvement in PBs throughout the season. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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**Coaches:** Paul Armstrong, Cat Stansfield, Angela Callan, Sarah Cooper, Caroline Middleton

### **A Squad**

**Who is eligible for the squad?** A *Squad* is for athletes that wish to continue their competitive swimming at a high standard, achieving their potential, with like-minded swimmers of a similar age. Age range 14yrs+ (*age as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023*)

**Attendance and dedication levels:** All athletes in the squad should maintain high attendance levels required to achieve a competitive result. Athletes must aim to have at least a 70% attendance record each month and demonstrate excellent effort levels and progressive learning skills. If athletes are unable to maintain attendance levels (unless previously rubber stamped by their coach) they may be asked to move into *Sprint* squads. Morning training is very much advised as it is very difficult to reach potential without these sessions.

**Training:** Focus will be centered around a 400m IM training plan with some specialization.

**Squad Goal:** 75% of athletes achieving qualification standards for 2024 NERs with 100% of athletes achieving N&D qualification.

**Coach:** Paul Armstrong

## 2023 Squad Training Schedules

### *A Squad (A)* Pool Schedule, Monday March 6th Onwards

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Monday	Woodhouse LC	7pm-9pm	Paul
Tuesday	Woodhouse LC	6.15am - 7.45am	Paul
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC	6.30pm - 9pm	Paul
Thursday	Woodhouse LC	6pm-8.30pm	Paul
Friday	Woodhouse LC	6.15am-7.45am	Paul
Saturday	Woodhouse LC	7am – 9am	Paul
		12hrs	

### *B Squad (B)* Pool Schedule, March 6th, 2023, Onwards

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Monday	Woodhouse LC	7pm-9pm	Paul
Tuesday	Woodhouse LC	6.15am-7.45am	Paul
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC	7pm-9pm	Paul
Thursday	Woodhouse LC	6.15pm-8.15pm	Paul
Friday	Woodhouse LC	6.15am-7.45am	Paul
Saturday	Woodhouse LC	7am – 9am	Paul
		11hrs	



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### *Sprint Squad (Group 1) Pool Schedule, March 6th, 2023, Onwards*

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Tuesday	Woodhouse LC (3L)	5pm – 6.30pm (2L)	Angela
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC (2L)	6pm-7.30pm (2L*)	Paul
Thursday	Woodhouse LC (1L)	7.15pm-8.45pm	Angela / Sarah
		4.5 hrs ( <i>previously 3</i> )	

### *Sprint Squad (Group 2) Pool Schedule, March 6th, 2023, Onwards*

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Monday	Woodhouse LC	8pm-9pm (1L)	Cat
Tuesday	Woodhouse LC	5pm – 6.30pm (2L)	Angela
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC	5pm-7pm (2L*)	Angela / Paul
Thursday	Woodhouse LC	7.15pm – 8.45pm	Angela / Sarah
Saturday	Woodhouse LC	7am – 9am	Paul
		8 hrs	

### *Competitive Development (CD) Pool Schedule, March 6th, 2023, Onwards*

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Monday	Woodhouse LC	7pm-8pm (2L)	Paul / Cat
Tuesday	Woodhouse LC	6.15am-7.45am (1L)	Paul
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC	5pm-6.30pm (2L)	Paul
Thursday	Woodhouse LC	6.15pm-7.45pm (2L)	Paul / Angela / Sarah
Saturday	Woodhouse LC	7am-9am (1L)	Paul
		7.5 hours	

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### *Academy Groups 1+(2) Pool Schedule, March 6th, 2023, Onwards*

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Tuesday	Woodhouse LC	5pm-6pm (5pm-6.30pm)	Susan (Susan + Angela)
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC	5pm-6pm (6pm-7.30pm)	Susan (Susan)
		2 hrs (3hrs)	

### *Masters Pool Schedule, March 6th, 2023, Onwards*

Day	Venue	Time	Coach
Monday	Woodhouse LC (1-2L)	8pm – 9pm	Paul
Wednesday	Woodhouse LC (2L)	7.30pm - 9pm	Paul
Thursday	Woodhouse LC (1L)	7.45pm-8.45pm	Angela / Sarah
		3.5 hrs	

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### Structure of the Competitive Swimming Season

For very young swimmers, aged 9 and under, the wider structure of the swimming season may not be very relevant but for other swimmers it is. For older swimmers the competitive season is divided for championship purposes into a Short Course (25 metre pools) phase from September to late December and a Long Course (LC) (50 metre pool) phase from January to August.

Short course competitions continue from January onwards but in the second half of the season will tend to be for younger swimmers or those not aiming to qualify for regional and national championships.

In competitive terms the season is structured approximately as in the table below:

September to December	Qualifying for County Championships (LC) and Regional/National Winter Championships
January to February	County LC Championships
January to April	Qualifying for Regional LC Championships
April to June	Regional LC Championships Qualifying for National Championships
July / August	National Championships

### Registering Official Times

Once you are a Swim England registered swimmer and have competed in a licensed event you will have times for each swimming event recorded on the national Swim England database. As your child competes in more Meets and events and improves their times the record of their Personal Best times will be automatically updated on the Swim England database. You can access this database either via the National Swim England website <https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/> or via the link on the Club website <https://www.wearvalleyasc.co.uk/about/links/>

## Wear Valley Guide to Competitive Swimming

### The Different Competitions

#### Team Competitions:

**Northumberland and Durham County Teams:** for swimmers 9yrs up to Open (over 16). This is the premier team competition for swimmers over the age of 9 so the Club aims to put out its strongest / fastest swimmers in this competition. The competition is generally held in early March. Ages are as of 31<sup>st</sup> December in the year of the competition.

**National Junior Swimming League (Diddy):** for swimmers aged from 9 to 12, age as at the last date of a league gala in any year. This league is for the strongest swimmers in the Club in those younger age groups and fixtures are normally in spring and early summer.

#### Club Galas / Development Galas (L3, L4)

Our Club hosts 2-3 galas a year. We expect all swimmers in competitive squads to take part in our 'home' galas. They are also an ideal opportunity for younger, less experienced swimmers to get experience of competing and registering official times. Medals are awarded in each age group. We also have a minimum of 3 'development' in-house galas designed for younger academy / development swimmers to get valuable gala practice.

#### Licensed Meets (L1, L2, L3)

Throughout the season the Club will decide to enter several Licensed Meets organised by other Clubs. Most of the Meets the Club enters are local but occasionally are further away.

There are three different levels of Licensed Competitions. The most demanding level with the fastest qualifying times is a **Level 1 (LC) meet**. Only the fastest swimmers in the Club will qualify. **Level 2 (SC)** meets also require a qualifying time to be met. **Level 3** meets are open to all swimmers that have not swam *faster* than the entry times stated. All squads should qualify for these meets. Some swimmers in A and B squads may be too fast for some level three meets. Each licensed Meet the Club enters will be posted on a squad's 'Competition Plan'. When a gala is approaching there will be details of the programme; the Qualifying times (QTs) and Upper Qualifying or Cut Off times by event, age group and gender. When entries are in, there will also be a list of submitted and accepted entries (when that information is available.)

#### Qualifying times and cut-off times

- A qualifying time is a time that is required to enter an event.
- A cut-off time is a time that is the fastest a swimmer can be to enter an event.

As well as giving general competitive experience, Licensed Meets are an opportunity to bring down Personal Bests or achieve qualifying times for County, Regional or National Championships. They may also be used as 'practice' galas to hone race skills for later in the season. Your coach will advise.

You will gradually get used to seeing that some Open Meets have tougher or higher entry times than others. Usually, Level 1 licensed Meets are tougher than Level 3 Meets. Use the information on QTs and the eligibility report as a guide to the Meets you should think about entering your child for. **If in doubt consult with your child's coach.**

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### **Northumberland and Durham County Championships**

Once your swimmer is at least 10 years old (age as of 31<sup>st</sup> December) they will be able to aim to achieve qualifying times to compete at the Northumberland and Durham Long Course Championships, usually held over 2 weekend blocks in February each year. Times are generally achieved by mid-December preceding the Championships but can be achieved as late as up to 2 weeks before the event.

Each year the Club gets around 15+ of its swimmers achieving at least one QT for the Northumberland and Durham Championships and this is the first main competitive goal your child should have once they have got used to competing at Level 3 and Open Meets.

### **North East Region Championships**

Usually held in late April and May the Long Course (LC) Regional Championships are for swimmers at the next level up from County Championships and for swimmers aged 11 upwards. There is also a Short Course (SC) Championships, generally held in the winter months (short course season). Normally your child will be in either A or B squads before they will have a realistic chance of achieving regional QTs, though times can also be achieved in all other squads and can be used as a performance indicator for possible movement to other squads. Times can be achieved any time in the 12-month period preceding Championships. Each year around 10+ swimmers from the Club achieve regional times and compete in the championships.

### **National Championships**

Held in late July (British) and early August (Home Nations) the National Championships are at an even higher standard than regionals and a swimmer will need to be ranked in the top 42 or so in the country in any event to qualify for Nationals.

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### **Disqualifications**

Inevitably, sooner or later, swimmers will be introduced to the concept of disqualification. (DQ) Like all sports, competitive swimming is governed by strict technical rules which are there to make sure that races are run completely fairly. These rules are included within the Swim England Handbook. In fact, our Club galas are governed by the same set of rules used in the Olympic Games! All gala officials such as referees and judges have passed examinations (both theoretical and practical) and would prefer not to disqualify, however they must maintain standards without which some swimmers could gain an unfair advantage. We do understand it is very upsetting to new swimmers when DQs happen, but the club must get the swimmers used to these rules from the start.

When a disqualification occurs, the reason (if not immediately obvious) can be sought by a coach or team manager from the lead referee. The main reasons for disqualifications are:

- A false start – there are no 2nd chances on the start. Please note a false start can consist of no more than the swimmer moving on the starting blocks once the starter has called “Take your marks”.
- Incorrect stroke technique, particularly for breaststroke and butterfly
- Incorrect touch at the turn or finish, again particularly breaststroke and butterfly when you must touch with both hands simultaneously. Turning off your back to touch on your front when swimming backstroke
- Incorrect turn
- Taking a ‘flyer’ in a relay race i.e., diving in before the incoming swimmer has reached the end.

Sooner or later, your child will almost inevitably be disqualified. Being disqualified should be looked on as a learning experience; it is not the end of the world. It happens to everyone, and even experienced swimmers are disqualified occasionally. It is much better to be disqualified early at a club event and learn from that disqualification, than to be disqualified at a County Championship or National League event, later in a swimmer’s career when it really matters.

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### **Entering Competitions**

All competitions that have been approved by our coaches are on their squad's competition plan. Expected swims will be provided by the swimmer's coach before a competition, and when the gala becomes live, entry information will be provided to swimmers and/or on the Club's Facebook Page along with information on qualifying times and eligibility of individual swimmers. Entries for galas are done as group entries by the Club's Competition Secretary as this is the method preferred by competition organisers.

Please do not enter galas directly as individuals unless you have discussed this with your swimmers Coach in advance. However, it is up to you and your child to make sure you complete the entries for Open Meets and Championships where you are eligible to compete. The Lead Coaches and Competition Secretary may send out general reminders but ultimately the responsibility to enter is yours.

If you are serious about competing it is a good idea to spot the dates of competitions as early as possible and put those dates in your family calendar so that you make sure you do not get double booked. Of course, there will occasionally be weekends when family commitments mean your child cannot compete but if you are serious about your child progressing in competitive swimming then you need to prioritise swimming competitions as much as possible.

If your child is unable to attend due to illness, please email the competition secretary immediately. This helps the coach on poolside know who is turning up. Competition organisers also have the right to fine a club if a swimmer is not withdrawn prior to the race – please remember that this fine will then be passed back to the parent for paying if they have not informed us of a 'no show'.

Below is an attempt to answer likely Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about entering:

#### **Who deals with entries for the Club / who do I liaise with?**

There is a Competition Secretary for the Competitive Swimming section of the club who liaises with the Lead Coaches to decide which competitions the Club enters and puts the fixtures on the Wear Valley ASC Facebook Page. The Competition Secretary then sends the Club's entries into the Meet Organiser and will also deal with entries for our club's galas. The Competition Secretary can be contacted at [compsecwvasc@hotmail.com](mailto:compsecwvasc@hotmail.com)

#### **How will I know if my child is selected for a team?**

You will receive information from your swimmer's coach. In addition, the teams are placed on the Club's Facebook Page along with details of the venue, times, places to meet etc. You will be asked to confirm that your child can attend.

It is vital that if your child cannot compete you let the relevant person know as soon as possible. Of course, if your child is genuinely ill on the day it can't be helped but if that is the case you need to contact someone urgently so that another swimmer can be brought in. Other than illness no other reasons for withdrawing on the day are acceptable as it can mean the team and the Club are let down.

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### **How do I know what competitions are coming up for me to enter my child for?**

Your child's coach will have a readily available gala plan (sometimes for a full season but often covering just 6 months). You can ask your swimmer's coach for the upcoming competitions, and they will also be added to the Club's Facebook page. Check the Facebook page (or with your coach) regularly for updates. Put dates in your diary / on your calendar, including Diddy fixtures and team dates. Remember you should make every effort to swim for the Club in Teams if selected.

### **How do I know if an Open Meet is a good one to enter my child for?**

Ask your coach. All swims should be advised by your child's coach. Please do not enter any event without your coaches' guidance.

### **What specific events should I enter my child for at a Meet?**

Again, please see above, this will be at the discretion of your child's coach alone. It will be affected by what your child is aiming to achieve. They might want to enter their strongest events if they are aiming for QTs for Counties. Equally they might use some Open Meets to swim some of the events they are weaker at to get more experience or bring down their Personal Bests. If in doubt over swims prescribed, or if you have any queries (please remember that coaches are providing swims for numerous athletes and mistakes are occasionally made) please consult your coach for clarification.

### **Do I have to pay to enter?**

For the Team events. No – the Club pays. For all other events yes you do. All Open Meets and Championships have an entry fee per event and admin fee. This will be detailed on the Entry Form handed to swimmer's and it will be posted on the Facebook page.

### **How do I enter?**

Instructions on how to enter a competition here: Please scan the QR code on the entry form which is provided to swimmers or posted on the Facebook page. From there, a form will be produced for you to enter your child's name and you can select which swims they will be doing. Once the form has been completed, please make payment to the Wear Valley ASC club account with the reference on the form. If the entries have not been submitted or payment if not made by the closing date, we will be unable to submit the entries to the upcoming gala. Please keep an eye out on the Club's Facebook page for accepted and rejected entries for gala's you have entered your swimmers into. If you have any questions, please contact your swimmer's coach or the club competition secretary on [compsecwvasc@hotmail.com](mailto:compsecwvasc@hotmail.com)

### **Can I submit a late entry for a Gala if my child is now available to attend but the deadline for entries has passed?**

In some circumstances, a late entry to a Meet can be arranged after entries have been submitted and the deadline has passed. A late entry fee may be applied which is likely to be greater than the cost per swim previously on offer for manual entry. For all late entry requests, please contact the club competition secretary on [compsecwvasc@hotmail.com](mailto:compsecwvasc@hotmail.com) to discuss options.



## Wear Valley Guide to Competitive Swimming

### Going to a Gala / Competition

For those swimmers and parents new to competing it can be quite a daunting experience. Here are some tips and “dos” and “don’ts” to help you prepare in advance and have what you need on the day:

#### Warm Up

- All swimmers are to arrive poolside no later than 30mins before their warm-up time (unless swimmers are not allowed, by gala organisers, on poolside at that time)
- In this time athletes are expected to complete a 15min stretch routine led by either their coach, or a senior swimmer (if present)
- Swimmers are to be ready behind their warm-up lane with correct kit and drinks 5 minutes before warm-up to be first into the pool **\*\*senior swimmers are expected to have their own individual session warm-ups with them\*\***
- The above applies to all session athletes (even if their event is late in the session) unless prior arrangements have been agreed with their coach (in extreme circumstances)

#### Dress Code

- Only WVASC t-shirts / tracksuit tops / hoodies to be worn (no N&D, NER, or individual meet hoodies/t-shirts to be worn)
- Athletes should have both shorts (preferably WVASC) and tight tracksuit bottoms / leggings (girls) with poolside coach making the decision on which to wear (depending on poolside temperature / marshalling conditions)
- Indoor poolside trainers with socks to be always worn when not in the water. If conditions are hot, flip-flops or other pool-shoes can be worn. Better to bring both.
- No jewellery, including expensive watches to be worn.

#### Poolside Etiquette

- During all sessions, swimmers are to remain poolside with the team unless competing or warming up.
- Only swimmers competing in that specific session are to be poolside **\*\*unless prior arrangements have been made with the poolside coach\*\***
- If an athlete wishes to leave the poolside for any reason (ie. Toilet breaks), team managers or coaches must be informed.
- At no point during a session should swimmers be with parents or indeed parent’s poolside
- Swimmers must see the coach both before going to marshalling for a race and immediately afterwards.
- All athletes are expected to swim-down after every race (including their last of the day) with swimmers given a specific distance **or** time duration by their coach for the meet.

#### End of Session

- At the end of sessions, swimmers are allowed to go and have their lunches with parents, making sure that team managers/coaches are informed before leaving poolside.
- If a swimmer finishes their events earlier in the session, with permission of the team manager/coach they may be allowed to leave the session early to have their lunch/go home.

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- For 'Team' events such as Junior/Arena league and County Championships, athletes will be expected to remain poolside, supporting their team-mates until all session finals (in which WVASC swimmers are competing) are completed.
- Lunches are to be eaten away from poolside and where possible lunch boxes are to be kept off poolside (i.e. with parent or kept in a locker)
- Appropriate (see below) snacks are allowed poolside for immediate post-pool refuelling and not for bored grazing purposes.

### Food / Snacks / Drinks

- Athletes should re-hydrate often with 1.5L-2.5L of water expected to be consumed every session.
- Athletes should have their own drinks bottle (1L-1.5L) and refill it regularly. Dilute juice is fine. No more than 1 sports drink per day and **absolutely no fizzy or caffeinated drinks** will be allowed.
- Snacks are allowed after warm-up/races and can include cereal/wholefood bars (1 or 2 bites after swimming), fresh fruit, dried fruit. **Crisps/sweets/chocolate bars/bread sticks** are not considered appropriate gala snacks.
- Breakfast: this is massively important to performance, should be consumed before attending a gala (even if this cuts in to sleeping time!), and can include cereals, porridge, toast with scrambled egg or beans, fresh/dried fruit, yoghurt **\*\*athletes can and will not perform to their potential without the correct fuel\*\***
- Lunch: should be nutritious and contain appropriate protein and carbohydrates. Sandwiches (i.e. tuna/chicken/egg) are fine but much better are dishes such as pasta with chicken or tuna, vegetables, or rice with chicken etc. Again, **no crisps, sweets or chocolate** with fresh/dried fruit or yoghurt good for after main meal
- Evening Meal: Again, for a pre-competition evening meal see lunch above with pasta/rice dishes ideal. No chips / pizza / fatty foods
- Post competition meal: go wild!

### Swimming Costumes / Equipment

- All swimmers should have 2 swimming costumes for their meet (one for warm-up and one for racing) / 2 sets of goggles / 2 towels / 2 WVASC hats / kick boards / foam rollers **\*\*seniors\*\***
- WVASC hats are to be worn in warm-up, when competing, and in the swim down pool for easy identification
- Racing or "tech" swimming suits: Use of these is not encouraged for any pre-pubescent athletes (as they have no real effect on performance.) In fact, at regular swimming galas senior swimmers are prevented from wearing their tech suit. Please ask your child's coach for advice on this

### Miscellaneous

- Tablets / mobile phones are to be kept out of the way, in bags or lockers, and not used during all sessions, but can be used (except in changing areas) during session intervals (ie. Lunch break)
- If phones are needed to contact parents, permission must be given by poolside coach or team manager.
- Log books / swim diaries can be used and updated poolside and should contain race-plans, warm-ups, stretch routines etc.

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- Homework can be done, but outside of swimming sessions (i.e.. Lunch break) and off poolside. If all swims and swim downs for a session are completed permission can be sought to leave poolside to revise/do homework alongside parents
- Athletes must arrive at all sessions knowing which race they are swimming and when in the session these are. It is best to have these written in their logbooks/diaries. Except with our youngest swimmers, failure to turn-up at martialling in good time is entirely down to athletes themselves. Adhering to all the policies above will make sure this does not happen.

### **Role of the Parent/Guardian:**

At competitions, and indeed in all aspects of an athletes swimming life, the role of the parent/guardian is to quietly support their child. This should include:

- Making sure an athlete is at training / competition at or before the agreed time (if relied upon for transport)
- Making sure a swimmer has the correct kit / equipment / snacks / drinks etc... (For younger swimmers, ***seniors should do this themselves!***)
- Helping lift spirits if a swimmer is downbeat after a swim.
- Supporting a swimmer's coach completely in all decisions and actions, to avoid confusion to the swimmer.
- Provide a complete non-swimming environment outside the confines of training/competition with no talk of technique, PBs, county times etc... ***this is the domain of the coach and swimmer alone.***
- **An athlete's swimming belongs to the athlete alone, and not the parent/guardian.**

### **Unacceptable parent/guardian behaviour might include:**

- Putting any emotional pressure on performance. Even in terms of, "try and get a PB." ***It is not healthy to know all your child's PBs!***
- Comparing swimmers or even passing comment on anyone else's child
- Bribing a child for performance. I.e., £5 reward for a PB or County / Regional Time
- Giving a swimmer advice on technique. Support your child's coach but leave it at that.

### **Medication:**

- Please ensure that you have with you all relevant medication that you may require through the day.

### **Rules for Team Galas:**

- All swimmers must wear their Wear Valley tops and hats.
- All selected swimmers must travel by coach (if available) to the venue. Please register with the team manager either at the coach before departure or on poolside before the warm-up starts.
- Please register with the team manager either at the coach before departure or on poolside before the warm-up starts.
- No swimmer leaves the poolside until the end of the gala and the final result given.
- At the end of the gala all swimmers must sign out with the allotted team manager.

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### Common Gala Terms

- **Consideration or Qualification time** - the slowest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider.
- **DQ'd and disq.** - disqualified
- **Entry time** - The time submitted by the Club for a swimmer being entered in a gala. If entries are made well in advance, the entry time may not be the swimmers current PB
- **Heat Declared Winner (HDW)** - When no final is swum, and the winner is declared on the times swum in the heats
- **Individual Medley (IM)** - The competitor swims all four strokes in the following order: - butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.
- **Licensed Meets** - These are the only meets at which you can qualify for County, Regional and National competitions (see section on Licensed Open Meets)
- **Long Course (LC)** - Events held in a 50m pool.
- **Short Course (SC)** - Events held in a 25m pool.
- **Lower Qualification Time (LQT)** - The slowest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider.
- **Medley Relay** - Four swimmers each swim a different stroke. The order is always backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle.
- **Personal Best (PB)** - A swimmer's personal best time for a given event.
- **Cannon Relay** – Usually the last race of a gala. A freestyle relay consisting of one swimmer from each age group or one swimmer of each sex from each age group.
- **Upper Qualification Time (UQT)**. The fastest entry time for a particular event that the organisers of a gala will consider.