



CITY OF DERBY SWIMMING CLUB

Affiliated to Swim England East Midland and Derbyshire Regions

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Do I have to be a good swimmer to join the club?

The City of Derby Swimming Club caters for all abilities and provides junior coaching for young swimmers and complete beginners. Our Junior Development programme provides an early swimming experience for novice swimmers as young as five years old. Swimmers work towards ASA National swim awards 1 to 9. Junior coaching is carried out in small groups of between six and ten children per coach. At the lower levels, water based assistants are present to help non swimmers gain confidence. The aim is to provide children with the best start in the sport and produce safe, confident swimmers who love the water. Of course we are a competitive swimming club and as you progress through the squad structure, naturally more is expected of you. Each squad has different requirements and swimmers are allocated to the appropriate squad based on age, ability, commitment and aptitude.

2. How do I apply to join?

Swimmers wishing to join the City of Derby Swimming Club must apply for a 'trial'. See Membership for further information on how to apply to join the Club.

3. How much does it cost?

There is an annual membership charge due on joining the Club and renewed thereafter in January of each year. This charge includes the Registration Fee which the Club pays to the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). There are also monthly squad fees with the rates determined by the Club Committee and reviewed annually, or as necessary. Further information can be found under Membership.

4. Can I pay monthly?

Yes. You need to pay the annual membership in one advance payment, but the squad fees can be paid by monthly standing order. In fact, it is our preferred method of payment.

5. When and where do you swim?

The Clubs main base is at the Queens Leisure Centre, Cathedral Road, Derby, but we also utilise many other pools in the area. Details are provided on the swim timetable.

6. What are the Club colours?

The Club colours are navy blue, sky blue and white.

7. What equipment will I need?

The following are essential items of kit:

- Swimming costume
- Swimming hat
- Goggles
- Drinks bottle
- Towel
- Short blade training fins (short flippers)
- Kick board



- Pull buoy

There are additional items which may be required for more advanced training as advised by the squad coach, for example:

- Hand/finger paddles
- Training snorkels
- Drag shorts

A mesh bag to keep the equipment in is also a good investment, as it allows it to dry after each session and stops kit going mouldy. Please note the Club kit, i.e., hats, T-shirts and track suit tops must be worn at all events in which the club takes part.

8. Can I buy equipment through the club?

Yes, you can buy a variety of swim wear and accessories, such as club costumes, hats, track suits, T-shirts, hoodies, club kit bags, etc. Our suppliers for club kit are currently under review. Please ask your squad rep for further information.

9. Which competitions can I enter?

All City of Derby swimmers (aged 7 and above) are expected to enter our annual Club Championships. This is the opportunity to compete with your team mates and also achieve an official time for other events you may enter. These times are important, as when entering any gala you will be asked to submit times for each event. Your coach will advise you on the events to enter according to your age. The Club Champs take place over two Sundays usually between October and December. Medals are awarded to the top six swimmers in each event and trophies awarded to the best male and female swimmers in each age group (from 7 years up to 17 and above). There are also trophies for best freestyle and IM (Individual Medley) performances. The trophies are presented to the winners at a special Presentation Evening which we combine with our Christmas Party. A great evening for all!

Grade C, Novice Galas. These are designed for swimmers new to competition, to gain experience of competition with similar swimmers and obtain entry times for further galas.

Open Galas - Age 9+. Many clubs, including City of Derby, hold Open Meets where any swimmer aged 9+ (minimum age as per Swim England rules) can swim, subject to meet entry criteria. NB., some open meets may have an older minimum age category, e.g., 11+. Age is as the date of the gala. The majority of swimmers that enter these meets are looking to achieve Regional/National Championship qualifying times. Open Meets include a range of events from Sprint (50m and 100m events) to 200m, 400m, and sometimes 800m and 1500m (freestyle) events. To enter an open meet, you must first check that you satisfy the entry criteria, i.e., the age requirement and minimum qualifying time required for the events you wish to enter.

There are various levels of galas aimed at different standards of swimmer. These are denoted by the designated level (if the gala is licensed) and the qualifying or consideration times.

Level 1. This is National standard and requires minimum qualifying times. These meets are aimed at swimmers wanting to achieve National Championships qualifying times. **Level 2.** This is Regional standard and requires minimum qualifying times. These meets are aimed at swimmers wanting to achieve Regional Championships (in our case, Midlands) qualifying times.

Level 3. This is County standard and requires minimum qualifying times, but usually also has upper limit times, i.e., you cannot enter an event if your best time for that event is faster than the upper limit time.

There are also Level 4 and Grade B & C galas which have upper limit times.

Graded Open Galas - Age 9+. The difference between a graded open gala and the above, is that graded opens are aimed at swimmers who have not achieved national times. There will be an upper time limit, usually a district time, and should a swimmer exceed this they will be given a speeding ticket! This means the time will stand, but the place will not.

If any of the above seems complex, don't worry as your coach will advise individual swimmers which meets and events to enter.

Derbyshire County Championships - Age 9+. These are held annually, usually over three weekends in February through to March. They consist of individual events and club team relays. To enter these championships, swimmers must first achieve a Derbyshire Qualifying time. These times are updated yearly and published on the Derbyshire ASA website.

Derbyshire 100m Open Championships, 200m, 400m and 50m Sprint Competition - Age 9+. This is a long course event held annually at Ponds Forge, Sheffield in November/December. More details can be found on the Derbyshire ASA website.

Midland Regional Championships. This is the next level of annual Championships, held in May/June. Clubs from the Midland Region can enter swimmers who have achieved regional qualification times in a Level 1, 2 or 3 Swim England Licensed meet. These times are updated yearly and published on the Midlands Championships website. This is a high standard competition and the club expects all swimmers obtaining these times to compete.

National Championships. This is the top level of 'age group' swimming for swimmers aged 11-13 (girls) and 11-14 (boys) followed by the National Youth Championship for girls 14+ and boys 15+. It is held in July and is open to swimmers who achieve a National Qualifying Time (NQT) in a Level 1 or 2 ASA Licensed meet. These times are updated yearly and published on www.swimming.org under the heading 'Events'.

10. What swimming kit will I need for competition?

So the day of your first competition is fast approaching but what kit do you need? Swimsuits. The good news for parents is you can forget about that expensive top of the range racing suit for now. All you really need is something tight fitting to keep the water out and make you feel that you can go faster.

For the boys, a pair of Lycra™ (or similar) jammers; for the girls, a Lycra™ (or similar) racing suit. Also note that from 1st January 2010, there are new FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation - international governing body of swimming) rules on swimsuits. Other points to note - If the suits are kept solely for competitions they will last much longer. As for sizing, because Lycra™ stretches, typically you need to go down a size from your normal swimming costume.

Goggles. In our experience, the Speedo Futura Juniors with split headstrap are excellent beginners' goggles as they have good suction and usually stay in place as you learn to dive competitively. Elite racing goggles (such as Speedo Speed sockets) are much smaller (and expensive) and many young swimmers can find them very uncomfortable until they have been wearing goggles for 3 or 4 years.

Please note the Club kit, i.e., costumes, hats, tee-shirts and track suit tops must be worn at all events in which the club takes part. It is also advisable to take plenty to drink (not fizzy) and some food, as most children tend to become hungry quickly. Swimmers are not allowed to leave the poolside without footwear, so flip-flops or pool shoes are also useful. Some swimmers also like to wear shorts poolside.

11. When do swimmers move between squads?

The progress of swimmers is continually assessed by the coaching staff. The assessment factors include performance, consistency, attitude and attendance. When the time is right to move to the next squad you will be contacted to discuss the move. Please note that as a swimmer progresses through the squad structure, the required level of commitment to training and competition increases.

12. Can I discuss my child's progress with the coach?

Yes of course. Our coaches are always happy to answer your questions, but with one important caveat. Please don't expect to have the discussions during the training sessions as the coaches will be very busy. Better to ask before or after the session if it's a quick question, or for longer discussions arrange a suitable time via email.

13. What is SwimMark?

SwimMark is the Swim England's Accreditation and Development tool that allows swimmers, teachers, coaches and those responsible for developing programmes to continually improve. The City of Derby's accreditation is your guarantee of quality provision for your child. It's about putting the swimmers first and ensuring young learners follow the pathway that Swim England recognises for training and competition. For further information contact our SwimMark Coordinator.

14. What's a logbook?

Swimmers usually find it useful to keep individual logbooks to maintain a record of their progress. It is also a good idea to keep a note of your training sessions and what sets you made to record your improvement. Download the ASA Swim21 from www.swimming.org and ask your coach for further guidance.

15. What is a PB?

PB is short for Personal Best. It is the best time an individual has achieved for a particular stroke at a given distance. A record of PBs from licensed events can be found by searching the 'British Swimming Results and Ranking Database'. That said, swimmers are encouraged to keep a log book if they can (see above).

16. Where can I find out what times I have achieved?

After each club event, the results including the times and positions of each swimmer will be displayed for that event on the Meets page of this web site. For other events, the results will be posted on the website of the club hosting the event.

17. How are teams selected for galas?

The coaching staff select the teams for inter-club galas, for example the National Arena Swimming League A and B teams, and the Derby and Notts Junior League based on ASA rankings, current performances and swimmer availability.

18. What does 'age on 31st December' mean?

If a gala is run on an 'age on 31st December' basis (e.g, our Club Champs), it refers to how old the swimmer will be on the 31st December in the year of competition. It does not mean the age of the swimmer on the day of the competition, which may be different. So for example, if a swimmer's birthday was the 20th December and they turned 12 on that date, they would swim as a 12-year-old in the Club Champs even though at the time of the event (October/November) they were still 11 years old.

19. What does 'Licensed Meet' mean?

For an event to be licensed by the ASA it must meet certain criteria (regarding, for example, officials and time keeping), which are assessed when the meet organisers make their application. From a swimmer's perspective the most important points to note are that to qualify for the:

National Championships a qualifying time must have been achieved between set dates at an ASA Licensed Level 1 or Level 2 meet.

Regional Championships a qualifying time must have been achieved between set dates at an ASA Licensed Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 meet.

20. What does 'Short Course' mean?

Events held in a 25m length pool.

21. What does 'Long Course' mean?

Events held in a 50m length pool.

22. What does 'Sign in' mean?

Some galas require the swimmer to sign in once you have arrived at the pool. On arriving the swimmer should ask where the signing in desk is, check their name against the lists on the desk and sign. If your name is not on the list, you should see your coach immediately. If a swimmer does not sign in they will not be able to compete. Similar to sign ins, some galas operate an entry card system. Cards will be sent out by the organising club prior to the meet and given to you by your coach. Usually there is one card per event with details of the session and warm up time plus your name, club, entry time, etc. At the gala, the cards have to be posted by a set time before the session starts or you will be deemed a non-attendee and will not be able to race. There is usually a card post box near the entry desk or changing area to post your cards.

23. Will I be able to take photos at the gala?

Some galas do allow photography (though some don't), but you will first have to register with the meet organisers and provide details, such as address and phone contact details to get a pass to take pictures or video. This is to satisfy child protection policy.

24. My name is on a results list but has DQ by the side, what does this mean?

DQ means Disqualified and it's something that virtually all competitive swimmers will have to face during their swimming career. At the gala (usually wearing white shirts) there will be a starter, a referee, time keepers on each lane and several judges looking at starts, turns and stroke technique. If you breach one of the rules surrounding starts, turns or stroke you may be Disqualified or DQ'd. It is of course disappointing, but is still part of the learning process. What you need to do is to find out why you were DQ'd and then work with your coach in training to try to make sure it doesn't happen again.

25. What are BAGCATS?

BAGCATS is short for British Age Group Categories, which is a comparative performance points system similar to that used in a decathlon in athletics. The points system is used to support the multi event approach to 'age group' competition (Boys aged 9 - 14; Girls aged 9 - 13) and to identify talented swimmers for the first level of the World Class programmes and to track their progress.

With the multi event approach, swimmers at an early stage of their development compete to win an overall category award rather than specialising in a particular event. It's important to note that British Swimming's Talent ID programme will look at BAGCAT rankings rather than individual event winners, as this is a clearer indicator that these competitors are more likely to develop into better swimmers.

So, by way of example, the BAGCAT County Awards has four different categories, namely, Sprint, Form, Distance and Medley (IM). The points are calculated from a set of age-related tables for each of these categories as follows:

- Sprint. Best 50m sprint performance in any stroke (back, breast, fly and freestyle)
- Form. Best 200m form stroke performance (form strokes according to ASA Law are back, breast or butterfly)
- Distance. Best freestyle performance at 200m, 400m*, 800m* or 1500m*
- Medley (IM). Best performance at 100m, 200m or 400m* Individual Medley

*entry to these events is dependent upon age. Please see section 8 of the ASA Long Term

Athlete Development Document for further details including Regional and National Awards. The points for an individual swimmer at a given meet (in the example above, the County Championships) are calculated by adding the points for the best performance in each of the categories together.

26. Why do you need qualified Officials?

For any competition, the officials provide guidance and regulation; they ensure the rules of the sport are enforced fairly and impartially and that the event is conducted safely. They ensure that fairness is achieved in the competition by adhering to and enforcing the ASA laws and Technical Rules of swimming. Although the promoter of a swimming event has the overall responsibility for Health & Safety, all the pool side officials must also be vigilant to try to prevent any accidents.

27. What types of Officials are there?

There are five types of technical swimming official, each described below:

- Timekeeper. This is an introduction into the world of the swimming official. The minimum recommended age for candidates to undertake this training is 14 years and all need to be registered members of a British Swimming affiliated club or a member of the Institute of Swimming (IoS).
- Judge Level 1. This is the first level of British qualification. It encompasses the role and duties of a Timekeeper, Chief Timekeeper and Inspector of Turns. The minimum age to start training is 15 years.
- Judge Level 2. This is the second level of qualification. It encompasses the role and duties in relation to all aspects of judging and the theoretical role and duties of Starter. The minimum age to start training is 15 years.
- Starter. Candidates wishing to qualify as a Starter will be required to hold the Judge Level 2 qualification and be a minimum age of 15 years. Successful candidates will be attributed with the Starter qualification: Judge Level 2S.
- Referee. Responsible for running the event safely and fairly. Candidates for this course are required to be qualified at Judge level 2S and may register to start training aged 17 years, but must be 18 years at 30 November in the year of the course.

There are also other 'non-technical' officials which, although they do not require any particular qualification, are still vital for the successful running of an event. These include:

- Announcer. Reads out safety announcements prior to the gala and then announces each race and any other information as directed by the referee.
- Recorders. Record the results of each race from slips provided by the judges. There are normally two recorders required to write down the results and cross-check them throughout the meet.
- Door Steward. Posted at the pool entrance to collect entrance fees, give out programmes and sell raffle tickets.
- Competitive Stewards/Marshals. To organise the swimmers for events/heats based on start lists and guide them towards the starting blocks at the appropriate time.
- Health & Safety Marshals. To ensure that the venue health and safety regulations are complied with.

28. How do I become an Official?

The Club is only able to function and succeed as a result of people kindly volunteering and giving up their time freely so that swimmers can enjoy their competition. If you are interested and want to find out more, then please speak to a Committee member. Or why not ask one of the club members who already officiates about their experiences.

Each level of technical official consists of some training, a short examination and a practical evaluation of the skills required. Further details of the examinations and other helpful material can be found on www.swimming.org.