



FIRST TIME COMPETITORS PACK

Information for Swimmers

All meets that the Club enters are emailed to the relevant swimmers and displayed on our online [Events Calendar](#) (**Team Events**) and via On Deck (**Events / Events & Meet Entries**). The entry criteria and meet information can also be found in the Forms / Documents section of each specific meet, both online and via On Deck.

TIME TRIALS

These occur at any time throughout the year during regular training sessions. They give the swimmers a chance to update their times to gain entry to swimming meets.

CLUB GALAS

GASC's Annual Club Championships are held in Inverurie Swimming Pool each November. All members of GASC participate and it is a fantastic opportunity for new and younger swimmers to gain competition experience in a relaxed and fun environment.

MINI MEETS

These are aimed at younger and more inexperienced swimmers, usually aged 11 years old and under. They are normally accredited / licensed meets where a full complement of Technical Officials will be present.

GRADED MEETS

These are completed under full swimming rules and regulations and will be accredited / licensed meets. Swimmers that have been entered into these meets must have times slower than the times stated in the entry information. 'Speeding tickets' are issued to swimmers faster than the time stated in the entry information. Getting a speeding ticket is a good thing!

OPEN MEETS

Any affiliated Club, organisation or individual may enter these accredited / licensed competitions. They have no time restrictions, however, the swimmer must be a member of SASA (Scottish Amateur Swimming Association).

DISTRICT MEETS

SASA is divided into districts and GASC is part of the North District which covers the North of Scotland and the Islands. These are also accredited / licensed meets and usually only open to swimmers aged 12 and over.

NATIONAL MEETS

These are for all swimmers who make the qualifying standard within Scotland and determine the best swimmers in Scotland.

WHAT TO BRING

- 2 towels (at least)
- Club swim cap
- Swimming costume / trunks
- Goggles
- Water bottle
- Spare costume / trunks, cap and goggles if possible (goggles can snap, caps may tear and a dry costume after your race is more comfortable)
- Club t-shirt and shorts or any navy or dark coloured shorts / leggings / tracksuit bottoms for poolside.
- A club hoodie can be worn to / from the meet (though you may see some of the club arrive to the meet in a club tracksuit - these are children that have joined the Squads)
- Suitable shoes for poolside - these could be flip flops or sliders
- Healthy snacks (cereal bars, fresh or dried fruit, digestive biscuits etc) and drinks (water, diluting squash, fruit juice, sports drinks) but no chocolate, crisps or fizzy drinks and no glass bottles or containers
- If you are competing in more than one session, remember to bring a packed lunch (pasta, rice, sandwiches, salads, yoghurt, jelly, fruit etc)

TIMETABLE

You must arrive in plenty of time - usually this is at least 30 minutes before the warm-up time ***but under current COVID guidelines please only arrive 15 minutes before the warm-up time** - and report to the appointed poolside coaches / team manager. If you do not arrive at least 30 (15) minutes before the start of the warm-up you risk being withdrawn from all of your races in that session. Try to let the poolside coach know if you are delayed for any reason on your way to the competition - you will be given the poolside coaches names and numbers via email or Team Feed before each meet.

All swimmers do a warm-up at the time allocated by the organisers at the beginning of the sessions, regardless of the time of their first race. Information about competitions, including warm-up and start times can be found in the Forms / Documents section once you have clicked on the specific meet name, which is found in the **Events** tab, both online and via On Deck. For all registered meets, information is also available on the [SASA North](#) Meets page.

Normally the host club will allocate time slots and lanes within the warm-up period to clubs. Competitors will be supervised and told what to do during the warm-up by the poolside coaches and helpers appointed by GASC prior to the Meet. After the warm up, swimmers should dry off, have a drink, eat a small snack, change into a dry costume if they like, put on their poolside shorts, t-shirt and shoes and report back to the poolside coach or team manager.

Swimmers stay with their poolside coaches / team managers during the competition and must ask their permission to leave poolside for any reason. Coaches need to know where their swimmers are in order to be able to prepare swimmers for their race and to make sure they report to marshalling in good time. Swimmers will not be permitted to leave the competition until the session is over and their coach has dismissed them. Swimmers are expected to stay and support their teammates in Finals unless there are extenuating circumstances and agreement has been given by the Head Coach prior to the event.

The team manager or poolside coach will send swimmers to the marshalling area several heats before their event. The marshalling area is where swimmers wait for their heat to be called up and where they are told which lane they will be swimming in. Competitors will be supervised and directed to the start of their event along with their rest of the heat by a host club official (or marshal). Swimmers should report back to their coach immediately after each race for a de-briefing on how the race went.

The people on poolside dressed all in white are the technical officials - timekeepers, judges, starters and referees. Swimmers must follow their instructions.

Parents are not permitted on poolside with swimmers unless they are the poolside helpers / coaches appointed by GASC for that competition. Parents are also not allowed to enter the changing room of any pool which is hosting an event. Parents must also refrain from communicating with their child until the swimmers have been dismissed by the coach at the end of the session.

Swimmers will also be asked to leave any mobile phone they have with them in the allocated GASC Mobile Phone Box and not just in their locker. The box will be kept by a coach during the meet and phones will be returned to swimmers at the end of each session.

SWIMMING TIPS

If you do not wish to dive from the blocks you must tell the marshal or officials on your lane before you line up for the race. Be sure you know which stroke you will be swimming and how many lengths you need to do. Your coach or team manager and the marshal will have told you, but if you are not sure you can always ask the judge or timekeepers on your lane while you are waiting - they won't mind!

STARTS

At the start of each race the referee will give three or more short whistles - this tells the swimmers in that heat to get ready (and everyone else to be quiet). The referee will then give one long whistle telling the competitors to get up on the blocks for butterfly, breaststroke and front crawl (called freestyle) events or into the water for backstroke events. For backstroke the referee will give a second long whistle telling the swimmers to get into position for the backstroke start.

The starter will then say "Take your marks". You must take up your starting position and then stay completely still until the starting signal (usually an electronic beep or horn) is given. The starter cannot give the signal until all the competitors are completely still.

FRONT CRAWL

Swim the whole length, touch the wall, then turn. You do not need to do a tumble turn so long as you touch the wall.

BACKSTROKE

Swim on your back the whole length. You must touch the wall with your hand whilst still on your back. You cannot turn onto your side to touch the wall, or at any point in the race, unless you are doing a tumble turn. Remember to look forward (at the block) at the start of your swim.

BREASTROKE

You must touch with both hands at the same time for turning and finishing. Hands must not pull behind your hip-line except for the one long pull at the start and at turns. No flutter kick between breaststroke kicks and your head must break the surface with each arm stroke.

BUTTERFLY

Again you must touch with both hands at the same time when turning and finishing. No flutter or breaststroke kicks at any time. Both arms must move forward at the same time over the water.

RELAYS

You must wait until the swimmer coming towards you touches the wall before you dive from the blocks (or leave the wall if you are starting in the water). You must also swim in the order you have been given and, in medley relays, you must swim with the correct stroke.

After each race you must report back to your poolside coach for feedback - make sure you have enough to drink, dry off quickly, put on your poolside clothes and have a small snack. Swimmers will normally be expected to stay with and support their team-mates until the end of the session, including medal presentations.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

It can be upsetting for swimmers (and their parents) to be disqualified and it happens to every swimmer at some point. It will help if you remember:

1. A disqualification just means you have made a mistake - it doesn't mean you are a failure or a bad person or that the judge / referee doesn't like you. You are still learning and it takes a lot of practice to get it right. As you improve your technique, get stronger and gain experience in racing you will make fewer and fewer mistakes until you rarely make any at all.
2. The first person you should go to when you have been disqualified is your poolside coach. The referee might have told you what your mistake was but, if necessary, the poolside coach will check with them to find out exactly what happened so that you and your coach can work on correcting the fault for next time.
3. It is understandable and ok to be upset but that swim is done. Learn from it, then "throw it away" and focus on how you will excel at your next swim.
4. Even Olympic and world-class swimmers get DQd, so you are in great company!

IN GENERAL

- You must be still and quiet for the start of each race so that the swimmers can hear the starting signal (after the three short blasts you should stand still, wherever you are on poolside). Once the starting signal has been given you can (and should!) be as noisy as you like in supporting your team.
- Programmes, start sheets and results sheets are usually made available for sale at the competition. The host club often has swimming items (costumes, caps, goggles, water bottles etc) for sale too and there is often a raffle or some other form of fundraising.
- If you wish to take photographs and / or video recordings you must apply for permission from the competition organisers by filling in a form which is usually available at the programme sales table. You will then be issued with a wristband or card which must be attached to your camera or video recorder so that it is plainly visible.
- Mobile phones must be switched off - their use is not permitted in the pool hall, spectators' area or changing rooms.
- Parents - please be aware that poolside coaches and team managers are only responsible for your child during the warm-ups and competition sessions. If you are not going to be present yourself, please arrange for another adult to supervise your child during the breaks and ensure that the coach or team manager has a contact number in case of emergencies. Please also note that parents are not allowed in the changing areas during competitions and galas.

FINALLY keep safe, swim well, and most importantly, HAVE FUN!

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Information for Parents

SWIMMING COSTUMES

Standard training / competition swimwear such as Speedo, TYR, Arena, Funkita etc. are all that is required for developing swimmers - a one-piece costume for the girls and short, close fitting shorts for the boys.

There is no need to pay a lot for swimwear. Suitable training / competition swimwear contains Lycra which eventually degrades through contact with chlorine, causing the fabric (even expensive fabric!) to lose elasticity and become transparent. You can extend the life of the costume by rinsing well and drying properly in between uses (but don't tumble-dry!).

There is a confusing array of racing costumes available to the competitive swimmer but this type of performance-enhancing swimwear is designed for the elite athlete and is not appropriate for young, developing swimmers. The suits we refer to as "skins" are extremely expensive, need to be a perfect fit and provide absolutely no benefit for young swimmers. In accordance with Scottish Swimming and GASC policy, only swimmers aged 14 years and over will be allowed to wear performance swimwear and only at District level meets and above.

SWIM CAPS

We recommend silicone rather than latex swimming caps and all GASC caps are silicone. Silicone caps fit better, are longer lasting and allow the scalp to 'breathe' while protecting the hair from the effects of chlorine. The club Swimshop can provide club logo caps and named caps - contact swimshop@gasc.co.uk or your poolside coach for more info. Please note, GASC swim caps are only to be worn at club training sessions and competitions - please do not wear them during public sessions.

GOGGLES

Many children have problems finding goggles that fit well. Goggles with adjustable or interchangeable nose bridges may be the answer if you are having difficulty finding a good fit. Please feel free to ask your coach for advice.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Coaches have access to medical, allergy and emergency contact details for all swimmers present at training sessions, competitions, and training camps via On Deck. It is the parent / guardian's responsibility to advise GASC whenever there is any change in the swimmer's health or medication, and to ensure that both the emergency contact details and the Medical Information is kept up to date on your Team Unify account.

TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS

At most swim meets you will be allowed to take photographs or videos of your child, so long as you read the Photography Policy and sign the hosting club's permission slip at every meet. This is usually available at the programme sales table. You will then be issued with a wristband or card which must be attached to your camera so that it is plainly visible.

RESULTS

A few days after the meet, full GASC results will be available online via our [Events Calendar](#) (**Past & Archived**) or the On Deck app (**Events / Meet Results**), or by using the Meet Results tab on your swimmer's member profile for personal results. For all registered meets, full results are also available on the [SASA North](#) Meet Information and Results page.