

The Route into Competitive Swimming

How do I enter swimming events and what does each event mean?

Staines Swimming Club organises its own club level competitions, and also participates in a number of external ones.

Club Level Events

- **Mini Sprints (Spooky, Cupid & Springtime) - aimed at 9 years and younger (Learn to swim programmes, AT3 and Elite 4)**
 - These are held three times a year and are a great introduction into competitive swimming gala.
 - These are a great opportunity for swimmers (especially the younger and newer members) to get valuable experience of competitive swimming conditions over just 25 meters.
- **SPLASH AND DASH CHALLENGE - All ages without County times (Learn to swim, AT3, AT2, C, B, A, Elite 4 and Elite 3 Squads)**
 - Usually held every year around December, February and June.
 - Swimmers don't require an entry time and involve only sprint events, this is 25m for 10yrs and younger and 50m for 8yrs and older, however swimmers are not meant to swim both 25m and 50m events.
- **CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS - All ages and all squads**
 - These are also held annually.
 - All swimmers who have been members of Staines Swimming Club for at least 3 months are eligible to enter. Medals for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place are presented during the Championships. Trophies for the winners are presented at a later date.



External Events

● OPEN GALAS

- Clubs around the country hold "Open Galas" of varying entry.
- Chosen by the Head Coach who will select those galas which fit in with both the training plans and the Club's existing fixtures and agree the year's calendar with the Clubs Fixtures Secretary.
- These are published in the Calendar on the Club website, and as they come up for entry, the forms will be emailed out to appropriate members (depending on the grade of the competition).
- Qualifying times tend to apply, and beginners to the Club are actively encouraged to enter the Club Championships/Novices Championship as a means of having a time to enter. Estimated times are not acceptable.
- Galas are graded. A Grade galas come in 4 categories:
 - Level 1 & 2 - National Level
 - Level 3 - County & Regional Level
 - Level 4 - Sub County Level / Internal / Club Galas

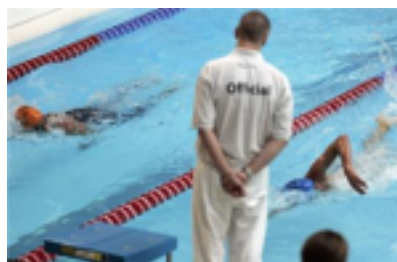


● MIDDLESEX CHAMPIONSHIPS - Licensed qualifying times are required to enter

- Middlesex County Championships normally offer 2 County championships and 2 Development events, we believe this offers more to the development of our swimmers. Again eligibility to these Championships is subject to qualifying entry times, but this event for the Club and is the cornerstone of our calendar.
- It is the first large competitive event(s) where Swimmers know where they stand in the bigger pond, with many of our swimmers using the qualifying times as a target to their first big gala!

● REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- These are even bigger ponds ! To reach this level of competition is a major achievement.
- These are annual events, with the long course Regionals being located either at Crawley or Portsmouth in May and the short course Regionals at Portsmouth at the beginning of November.



● NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

- These are EVEN bigger ponds still ! To reach this level is an even greater achievement.
- Whilst the Nationals are held up in Sheffield at the end of the season for its long course championships and the weekend before Christmas for its short course championships.

Inter Club Events

● LEAGUE EVENTS

- The Club takes part in several Leagues
 - National Arena Swimming League in which Staines participates in the Premier Division in the South region.
 - Milton Keynes Junior League (commonly referred as *Diddy League*).
 - For both of these leagues Staines A teams are selected as a 'Swim to Win' and swimmers are selected to swim by the Team Manager and Head Coach and are notified (by email) that they have been selected.



- They must confirm back to the Team Manager whether they will or not be able to participate.
- On occasions (e.g. due to illness of another swimmer) a swimmer may be called as a reserve at short notice to take part.
- Staines SC also attend various other league galas for a number of other swimmers to experience the excitement of racing for their team, e.g. *Thames Valley Junior League, Rother League, Hants and South Coast...*

