

## Gala advice for swimmers

You should have the following items with you when you go to a gala:

- Swim trunks/suit
- Pair of goggles & a spare pair
- H.B.S.C club swimming hat & T-shirt
- clean flip-flops or very clean trainers for the pool-side
- towel
- drink (water or sports drink)
- something to help you relax (CD/cassette players, magazine, book)

### Some information about pre-race meals

Keep in mind that a pre-race meal affects your performance. You should NOT change your eating habits drastically on the day you have a gala. You should however avoid certain foods which tend to upset your stomach or cause discomfort. It is a good policy to finish eating a moderate-sized meal at least 2½ to 3 hours before competing, if you are in a morning session, eat something which is light on the stomach and that you enjoy. Try to **avoid** the following foods prior to a gala: fried potatoes, chips, fried chicken, hamburgers and pies, spicy and BBQ food, large servings of steak and fish, hard-to-digest vegetables: radish, onion, cucumber, and raw vegetables. If you are nervous, avoid milk and dairy products.

**PLEASE! do not eat anything** during the gala until you have swum in all your races in that particular session. If you are hungry have small energy snacks and some of your drink by just taking little sips, as this stops you from feeling bloated. Never have fizzy drinks, unless it is an isotonic drink ie; Taut Sports drink.

**Registering at the poolside is very important.**

### Pre-race warm-up in the pool

At every gala there is a short session when everyone gets into the water for a warm-up - you will be told which lane is the lane you should use. Girls go first, then they get out and the boys get in and you will find it useful to run through your strokes with some dives and turns - take this seriously as it helps to put you at ease.

Why you should do a warm-up: stretching a muscle causes the fibres in the muscle to lengthen. Longer muscle-fibres generate more contraction force than shorter fibres. During any exercise muscles produce lactic acid which causes the muscles-fibres to shorten and reduces contraction-force. This is what we feel as fatigue develops and our muscles begin to “tighten up”. If you begin the race with longer well-stretched muscle-fibres, you will be able to generate greater contraction forces for longer as lactate builds up. You will be able to swim more aggressively for longer.

After you have finished your warm-up, you should take a hot shower, dry yourself off and keep warm. Change your costume and wear a dry suit. It might be a long time before your swim and you should keep your muscles warm. Also do a couple of light stretches to loosen your muscles. Try to stay active! Do not lie down and have a sleep, you will find it hard to get your adrenalin running through your body before you race.

When going to the whipping-area before your race put your goggles on your head or push them down around your neck. If you are carrying them it is possible that you will put them down or get in

a faf at the last minute. Have your swim-cap on in plenty of time. Lads tie your costumes up tight - double-knot! Girls, wear a well fitting swimsuit – tighter rather than looser. Good Luck!

## **Gala advice for parents**

If this is your child's first gala then there are a few things you might want to know.

The athlete (formerly known as your son/daughter/nephew/niece) will have come home from a training-session at the pool and told you the date of the gala. For open galas (see below), closer to the day the athlete will have been given a slip of paper showing the events they are due to swim in.

### **What's my job?**

You have to make sure that the athlete gets an early night before the gala and arrives at the pool in plenty of time. Make sure the athlete has their costume and a spare costume, goggles, spare goggle-straps. Remind the swimmer they must register at the desk on poolside before the deadline for that session. This is how the gala officials know the athlete is in the building and ready to race. There is usually a morning and an afternoon deadline – during the warm-up, around 30 minutes before the races start.

### **What's my main indicator of success for the day?**

Registering at the poolside is very important. If the swimmer arrives after the deadline that's it! The dash from home has been a waste of time and you are in deep-trouble with the athlete. So leave home in plenty of time so that the athlete (and you) can remain calm.

## ***What kind of gala is it?***

### **External galas**

Our **Trophy galas** (the Gordon Trophy, Allan Davies Trophy, Millbank Trophy and John Watson Trophy) are those in which Haringey competes against other clubs. These are all held at Park Road pool.

### **Internal galas**

**Davy Trophy** galas are held three times a year and all Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum Squad members are invited to take part. Swimmers are placed in one of four teams: Red, Yellow, Green or Blue. You will be contacted by your team manager before the gala to confirm whether you can attend. Some of the Davy trophy galas are held in Tottenham Green Pool and some at Park Road Pool.

**London Graded League**. In these galas each event is graded according to set times, with some events aimed at the faster swimmers and some for developing swimmers. Graded galas are a good opportunity for developing swimmers to gain experience of competing against other clubs, while racing against swimmers of similar ability. Haringey competes in six LGL galas a year, held at various locations around London.

### **Middlesex County and London Region galas**

Where swimmers have fast enough times to qualify, they will be invited to take part in Middlesex and London Region events, which are usually held over a whole weekend. These galas are entered for on an individual rather than a team basis. Entry forms will be given out in advance to those swimmers with qualifying times, and it is up to the swimmer and their parent/carer to return the form by the closing date. There is an entry fee for competing in these galas based on the number of events entered for. Swimmers will be told a few days before the gala whether their entry has been accepted – this depends on their entry time and the number of other swimmers who have entered.

**Middlesex Development Meets** are held twice a year, in April and October at Southbury Pool in Enfield. These are aimed at developing swimmers whose times are not yet fast enough to enter the County Championships or Age Groups.

The **Middlesex Age Groups, Short Course Championships and Long Course Championships** are the top-level County galas, and are held at either Southbury Pool in Enfield or Gurnell Pool in Ealing. London Region galas are held at Crystal Palace.

## **London Youth Games**

The London Youth Games and Mini Youth Games are held in July at Crystal Palace. Children who live in Haringey or attend a Haringey school are eligible to apply to be in the borough's team. The team is organised through Haringey Council.

### **How long does it take?**

Galas can last absolutely ages! Depending on how many competitors there are in an event there can be a lot of heats. And the races are all over pretty quickly, so be sure you don't miss it by an inappropriate moment for the loo, coffee or a snooze. It can be a long day so it's a good idea to try and share the load if you and another family have athletes competing across the day, you can share the morning out and evening back.

### **What about the trophies and certificates?**

For these sometimes you have to wait right through to the end, as these are handed-out at the end of the morning and at the end of the afternoon sessions - after the events and the finals.

### **What's the social dynamic?**

It's a club and this is a team. Mutual-support is the order of the day. As parents you'll probably have little direct contact with your athlete as being poolside is restricted to teams and team managers but support from the viewing gallery will be appreciated and expected (not just for your own offspring but for other club swimmers)!