

First Competition Guide

Preparation

Before arriving at the gala make sure you know which races you are in and if you need to sign in and if so, when sign-in closes.

Make sure you have all your equipment and that it is **clearly marked**:

Swimming costume x 2
Goggles x 2
Clayesmore Club swimming cap x 2
Clayesmore Club T Shirt x 1
Towel x 2
Water bottle and healthy snacks (see **Nutrition**)
Shorts x 1 (optional)
Poolside shoes x 1 (optional)

On Arrival

Arrive in plenty of time for the warm-up, especially before sign-in closes and **SIGN-IN** (if required check the instructions beforehand to find out if you need to).

If you are going to be late, please call and let someone know - so that you can be signed in. If you do not sign-in, you will be scratched from all races and may not be able to swim.

After sign-in go and get changed and put on your Club T - shirt and then go to poolside and find your Clayesmore coach.

Warm-up

Before the races start you will be allowed some time to warm up. Listen out for the announcement as the warm-up time will generally be split between girls and boys. This is a good opportunity to get your muscles warm. Your Clayesmore coach will discuss your warm-up routine. Near the end of your warm-up time some of the lanes will be set aside for practising your starts. After the warm-up put your Clayesmore T shirt back on to keep warm.

Event

For each event there will be a number of heats. Swimmers are seeded based on their entry time, not their age. At the end of the event the swimmers will be classified in their respective age group based on the time that they achieved in their heat. Some galas have finals and others have Heat Declared Winners based on age group times.

Age as at Date

Galas set an "Age at" for the competition. This may be the last day of the competition or may be the 31 December.

If the gala is using age as at 31st December, your age would show as 1 year older if you haven't had your birthday before the competition. For example – If the gala is in March and

your birthday is in June but the Age at date is the 31 December then your age will show up in the programme and results as 1 year older.

For the classification of results and medals many competitions group age groups, for example 11/12 years, 13/14 years.

Before each event

Listen out for the announcement to go to the marshalling area for your event. The marshalling area is where marshalls (usually parent helpers) organise all the swimmers for an event.

Once you hear the announcement tell your swim coach that you need to the marshalling area. Remember to take your goggles and swim hat with you (and a spare set in case one of them breaks)

The marshalls will:

- line you up with others in your heat in lane order
- keep in this order as you move around the pool - the marshall will guide you
- make sure you know what event you are swimming and the number of lengths in your race
- keep your T shirt on until the last minute to keep warm
- at the start of the heat before yours, you will be asked to stand behind the lane you will be swimming in
- It is very important you are quiet at the start of all races
- wait for instructions before taking your place at the side of the starting block

Start of the event

The Referee signals that a race is about to start by a series of blasts on a whistle, followed, when the swimmers and officials are ready, by a single long blast. At this point the swimmers step up onto the blocks or get into the water if it is backstroke.

When the swimmers are ready the Starter gives the command "Take Your Marks" followed by the signal to "Go", which may be by shot, klaxon or command.

Under the One Start Rule now in operation, any swimmer starting before the signal is disqualified at the end of the race. There is no recall of swimmers for a second start. However, if a faulty start occurs (eg there is a disturbance) the swimmers may be recalled by blasts on the whistle, and a rope is dropped into the water across the pool.

All swimmers and spectators should be silent for the start of each race

After each event

After you have swum, hold onto the lane rope until the next race starts at which stage you

will be instructed by the officials to leave the pool by the side. Do not climb over the touchpads as you may damage them. Collect your belongings, put on your T shirt and then go to your swim coach to discuss your race.

After your discussion with your coach go to the warm down pool for your warm down routine (if there is one) and then re-hydrate and have a healthy snack before your next event (see **Nutrition**).

Disqualification

All galas are held under strict ASA guidelines. All swimmers have been disqualified at some point, so do not worry if you are disqualified, just try and learn from your mistake and try not to make the same mistake again. There are a number of reasons why you may have been disqualified, from a false start to a one-handed touch just discuss with your swim coach so you learn from the experience.

WHO ARE THE OFFICIALS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

The ASA laws and rules dictate the number and type of officials that should be officiating at a gala. All these officials ensure that galas are run smoothly and fairly. Here are some of the officials you are likely to see at a competition and what they are responsible for:

Referee

Has complete control of the competition, the venue and other officials in all matters of the swimming laws and conduct. The Referee's decision is final.

Starter

Starts each event.

Stroke Judge

Patrol the side of the pool to observe the swimmers conform to the Laws of Strokes.

Place Judge

Stand at the finish of each event to decide the official places, may also act as a Turn Judge.

Turn Judge

Observe the swimmers conform to A.S.A. Law regarding turns and relay take-overs.

Chief Timekeeper

Records official time from each Timekeeper, if necessary adjusts them to suit the places with the supervision of the Referee.

Timekeeper

Take and record the time of the swimmer in the lane allotted. This is the official time, which may be adjusted in accordance with A.S.A. Law to suit the official places, which takes precedence over times.

Announcer

Announce results after they have been recorded, provides security awareness and any other relevant information.

Marshalls

Arranges the swimmers in each event into appropriate heats.

Nutrition

What to eat during a competition

The Day Before

Eat meals and snacks high in complex carbohydrates. You need to keep glycogen stores topped up.

- Drink fluids little and often to stay properly hydrated
- Eat little and often - every two to four hours to keep blood sugar levels steady and fuel your muscles in preparation
- Eat meals and snacks high in complex carbohydrates (eg : wholegrain pasta, rice)
- Avoid big meals or over-eating in the evening
- Stick to familiar foods

Morning of the Event

Don't compete on an empty stomach! Even if you feel nervous have breakfast. Stick to easily digested foods:

- cereal with milk
- porridge
- banana with yogurt
- fruit
- wholemeal toast with jam

If you're struggling, try milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or a smoothie.

Snacks between Heats

Try to eat as soon as possible after your swim, to give yourself as long as possible to recover if you have to swim again.

If you can't stomach anything solid, try flavoured milk or diluted juice that will help replenish your energy supplies and assist the recovery of aching muscles.

Here are some good things to snack on:

- Pasta salad
- Plain sandwiches eg chicken, tuna, cheese with salad, banana, peanut butter
- Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears
- Dried fruit eg raisins, apricots, mango
- Smoothies
- Crackers and rice cakes
- Malt loaf

- Cereal bars, fruit bars
- Yogurt and yogurt drinks
- Small bags of unsalted nuts e.g peanuts, cashews, almonds

If less than 30 minutes between races

Fluids, juices and fruit are the best options

If 30-60 minutes between races:

Sandwiches with honey/jam/banana, sports bars, cereal bars or low fat muesli bars

If 1-2 hours between races:

Pasta, rice or noodle-based dishes with low fat sauce/toppings or sandwiches

If more than 2 hours between races:

A more substantial meal or meal replacement can be eaten with plenty of fluids

Remember to get prepared and come with your snacks, don't rely on the venues to provide you with appropriate food to fuel you through your races!

HYDRATION

Most swimmers get dehydrated. During training it is important to stay hydrated and in order to do this, it is recommended to drink 1-2 litres of fluid per hour. Caffeinated drinks eg coke should be avoided as caffeine is a diuretic and it is important to watch the sugar intake. Ideal drinks include water, squash, or diluted fruit juice.

After training it is also important to re-fuel, preferably within 30 to 60 minutes of the session. A balanced snack with carbohydrates, protein and fluids is ideal.