

Gala Guide

This guide will help explain the different aspects of Swimming Galas.

Gala Types

In competitive swimming, galas can take place in either short course (SC) or long course (LC) pools. Short course pools are 25 meters in length, while long course pools are 50 meters. It is important to acknowledge the distinction between SC and LC times, as SC times cannot always be used to qualify for higher-level meets.

Some LC galas will allow the use of converted SC times for entry purposes. When entering a gala that accepts time conversions, it is crucial to indicate whether the time being submitted is an SC or LC time.

Conversion tools or tables, often provided by the governing body of the sport, are used to adjust SC times to their LC equivalents (and vice versa). These conversions take into account the differences in pool length and the additional turns in SC pools, which can affect overall times.

A typical day at a gala usually consists of two separate sessions.

Each session includes the following:

Warm-up Time: Designated period for swimmers to warm up in the pool

Starting Time: Official start time for the races

Make sure to check the schedule for specific warm-up and starting times for each session.

There are many different types of swimming galas throughout the year which can be Short Course (SC) or Long Course (LC), and they are as follows:

Closed meets:

- Club Championships – This is for club swimmers only. Other clubs may attend, but this is by invitation only
- Unlicensed (Time Trials) – Usually this is run at internal galas for lower squads, or at dual meets with 1-5 external clubs

Open Meets:

- Open meets can be either Level 3 (SC or LC), Level 2 & Level 1 gala
- Borough Championships

Championships:

- Essex County – Qualifying Times are required
- London Region (Winter & Summer) – Qualifying Times are required

- English & British (Winter & Summer)- By Invitation Only based on rankings
- Exception: Welsh Nationals - you must be registered as being Welsh before the published deadline

Leagues

For league galas, the swimmers are selected by the coaches. These are both licenced or un-licenced meets.

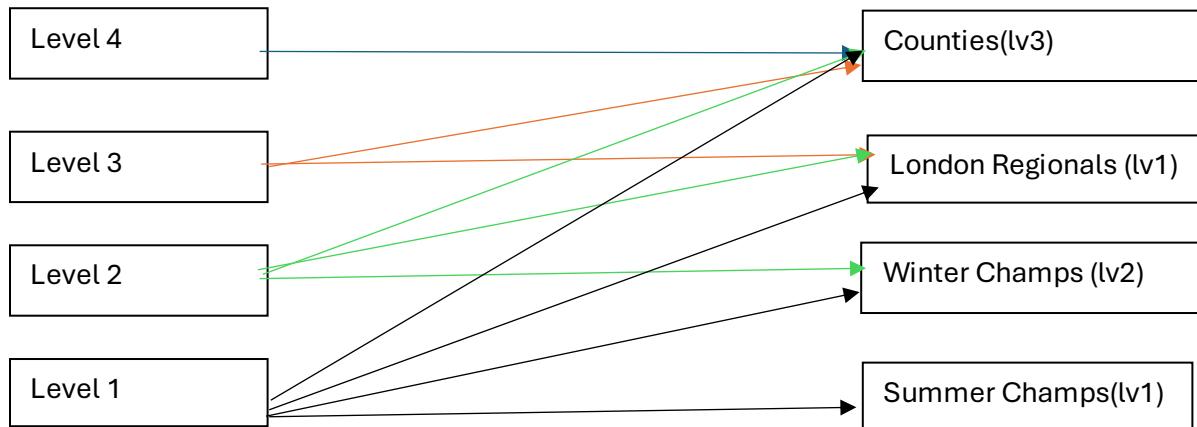
- Essex Swimming League- Series of 4 galas
- Arena League – Series of 3 rounds which are nationwide galas

What Galas Get You Into?

The level of the gala you enter is key as they don't all get you into the next level. For example, time achieved in level 3 gala cannot be used to enter National Championships.

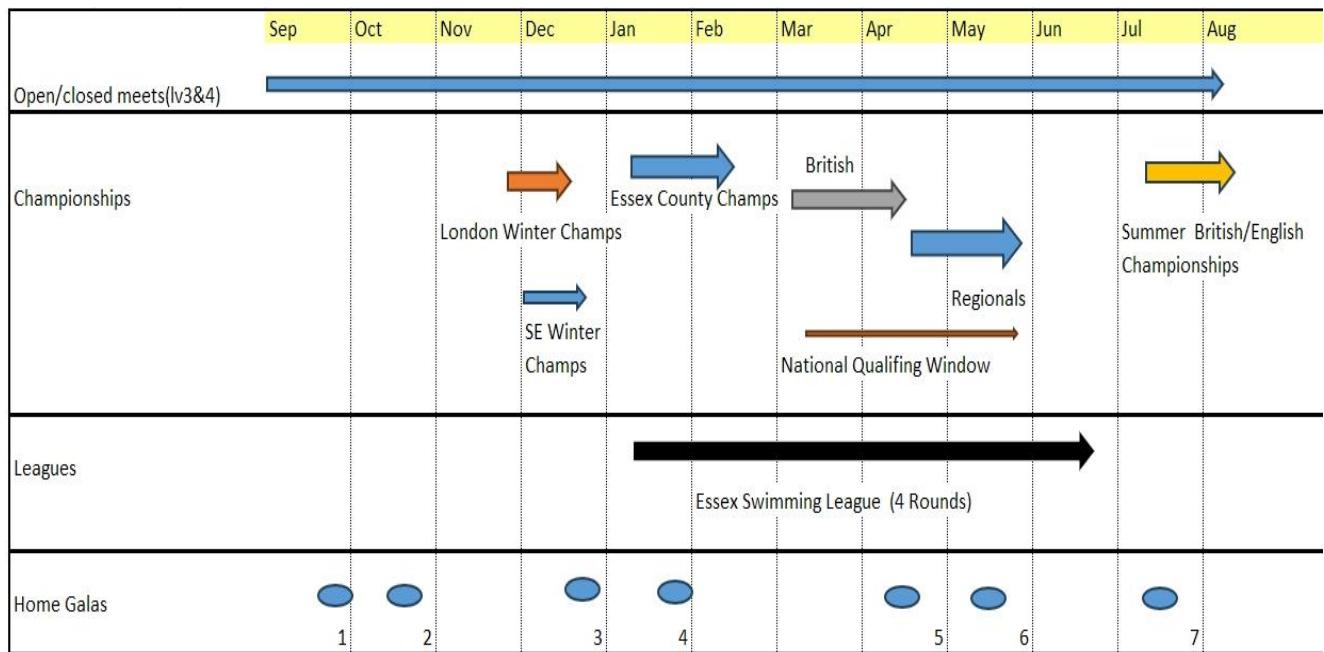
Promoters' conditions are important, it's a file with all the key information about competitions and is usually published before gala is open for entries. This document **must** be read prior to entering any gala, whether you are a newbie or an experienced swimmer as they change from year to year, gala to gala.

Please see below example of what level gala can get you into if you get the qualifying times:



Competitions Calendar

The swimming season is divided in 2 parts; the Winter season (Short Course) which runs September-December and the Summer season (Long Course) which runs January to August.



1 RTSC Autumn Season Opener Meet

2 RTSC Long Distance Qualifier

3 RTSC Christmas Cracker Meet

4 RTSC Non-County Qualifiers Meet

5 RTSC Last Chance Regional Qualifier

6 RTSC Last Chance National Qualifier

7 RTSC Long Course End Of Season Meet

Volunteering

Swimming is a sport that relies heavily on the dedication and support of volunteers, especially parents/careers. While coaches and teachers are compensated for their work, the smooth operation and success of the club depend significantly on parental involvement.

Here are the key areas where parent help is essential:

Committee:

Role: The committee is responsible for running the club.

Duties: They handle HR matters, manage the pool schedule, oversee finances (treasury), ensure the welfare of members, membership and more.

Support Team (Non-Committee Roles):

Role: The support team assists with various organizational tasks.

Duties: They organize league events, manage the club's Open Meets, handle gala entries, and perform numerous other tasks that keep the club functioning smoothly.

Officials:

Role: Officials are crucial for running the races at any given gala.

Importance: Without officials, galas cannot be licensed, which means they wouldn't count for official times or records.

Team Managers:

Role: Team Managers support the coaches by overseeing the children while not in the water and send them to the marshalling area for their races at galas.

If you can spare a few hours every now and then to support your child's growth environment, please put your name forward. Training will be provided for all roles.

Gala Entries

Whenever a gala is organized, the promoter creates an electronic entry file that allows clubs to enter participants in bulk. You can also enter galas not supported by the club as an individual, but only if this is to achieve a qualifying time within a specific qualifying window.

National Championships are on individual entries, and money is paid directly to Swim England/British Swimming as per the "Entry Pack" for that competition. If a gala is included in the RTSC competition calendar, entries must be submitted through the club.

The gala entry form is shared with swimmers on WhatsApp by Squad Representatives. The form must be printed, filled out, and handed back to the squad coach. All fees need to be paid at the point of submission via bank transfer to the club's account. **If fees are not paid you may not be entered for the gala.**

Entries or rejections are then confirmed a few days before the competition (The club will refund monies for rejected entries). Please check the "confirmed entries" file to see if you have been rejected or accepted for all the races. The club will not notify you of this individually.

When considering entering the gala you should read the promoter's conditions, they will cover important information as laid out by the Host of the gala, you should look out for key information like address, parking options as well as:

- Age groups
- As-At-Date Age/End of Year Age
- Deadline for entries (please note the internal deadline will differ from the gala real deadline. This allows us to process all entries prior to submission)
- First-Come-First-Served vs Hard Deadline. If a gala is on a first-come-first-served basis, the promoter can close entries early
- Qualifying Times. Please be aware that for the Counties/Regionals the Consideration Times do not assure you a place at those galas. Auto Times do, unless specified in the promoters' conditions
- Usually for distance events, races can be limited to 2-3 heats
- Sign-In/ Warm-Up times & Events schedule
- Sign-In vs Sign-Out. Please make sure you withdraw by the advertised time, or you will face a fine (Counties/Regionals)

- If your swimmer doesn't have a time for a particular event, speak to your coach to see if he/she could give you a time or time you at training (only to be used towards L4/3 galas entries - time trial)
- Once the internal deadline has passed, late entries cannot be accepted by us as we are usually running on tight deadlines, especially for the Counties/Regionals, so it is important to stick to the deadlines advertised
- Check if Time Trials are accepted on the day, should your child decide to swim more events post entry deadline. Speak to the Coach or Team manager on the day
- Check the chat groups the day before the event in case of any changes

Qualifying Times & Accepted/Rejected Entries

Read the promoter's conditions, they will cover important information as laid out by the Host of the gala.

- Some galas have Upper and Lower Qualifying time, meaning you cannot be faster or slower than the given bracket
- Some galas accept faster/slower times but usually on a Time Trial basis only: this means the swimmer won't be eligible for an award
- For galas with a Hard Deadline (not first-come-first-served), should the gala be oversubscribed, the slowest swimmers will be rejected per age group
- Auto Times – These times get you an automatic acceptance to specific galas, unless otherwise in the promoters' conditions. Examples: Distance events tend to be limited in number of heats
- Qualifying Times for any given gala change each year, so do not think that a 2023 QT will get your child in this year. Each year is different
- Some galas have a qualifying window e.g. for the Essex champs, only times achieved on or after the **1st of January of the previous year** can be used to enter a swimmer
- If your child has achieved a Consideration Time, please enter your child for this event. You never know, they might get accepted
- You will get a refund for all rejections
- If you withdraw your child after the Internal Entry deadline has come and gone, you will not get a refund unless you have a doctor's note/certificate

Gala - On the Day

- Don't forget to **sign-in**, if that's the gala's requirements. If running late, ask someone you know to sign you in where applicable and always let your squad rep know on the squad whatsapp chat, so they can let the Team Manager/Coaches know
- Find your Coach/Team Manager on poolside and make yourself known to them
- Follow their instructions
- Go to the marshalling area well on time. Listen to the Team Manager/Coaches but also to the announcements. Adults on poolside will not be held responsible if you miss your event. If you arrive too late for your event, even if not started but all swimmers got called, you will not be allowed to swim
- For older swimmers, help the younger swimmer, set a good example
- Stretch before your warm-up and each of your races

- Parents – keep an eye on your child from the spectator's area
- Follow coaches, team managers and official's instructions
- Don't forget you are representing the club, and you must follow Code of Conduct at all the times. Coaches/Team managers will send swimmer to their parents should they misbehave on poolside
- **Mobile phones can only be used to listen to music with headphones on and the phone must be in your bag. You should NOT have your phone for any other reason**
- Disqualifications (DQs) are there for a reason, so don't feel frustrated, don't take it on the coaches/helpers/officials if you child got disqualified but you felt it was wrong
- DQs are there to make sure all swimmers are all treated the same and swimming according to the rules on a fair level as well as to tech swimmer's rules of sport
- Always go to the coach (might not always be your squad coach) to get feedback immediately after your race, as there might have some valid tips on how to improve your next race

Gala Results

- Post-Race results are posted after each race. Typically, there are two lists: one for swimmers and another for parents, usually located near the viewing gallery. These lists will show official times and any reasons for disqualification (DQ)
- Some galas are linked to the "Meet Mobile" app, where results can be checked on a mobile device almost instantly
- Generally, results are uploaded to <https://www.swimmingresults.org/> within two days of the event.

Gala Checklist: What to Take

Below is a rough guide of what to take to each gala:

- x2 swimsuits in case one splits
- Romford Town Swimming hat
- Goggles
- Draw string bag as big bag may not allowed poolside
- T-shirt to wear poolside (Romford town one if you have one if not a blue or yellow top)
- Shorts to wear poolside
- Jumper to wear poolside (Romford town one if you have one if not a blue or yellow top)
- Change of clothes to go home in
- Towel
- Sliders/Crocs
- Lunch if you are there for both sessions each day (pasta, banana, flapjack etc)
- Lucozade (if you want)
- Bottle of water/Juice (make sure you have enough for the day)
- £1 for lockers
- Carrier bag to take the wet clothes home