



FIRST TIME COMPETITORS PACK

Information for Swimmers

All meets that the Club enter are announced on our club noticeboard and displayed on our online Events Calendar: www.gasc.co.uk/club-info/swimmer-info/notices-events. It is the responsibility of swimmers and parents to check the noticeboard after each training session for new meet sign-up sheets. The entry criteria for each meet can also be found on the website under www.gasc.co.uk/club-info/swimmer-info.

TIME TRIALS

These occur at any time throughout the year during training sessions. It gives the swimmers a chance to update their time to gain entry to swimming meets.

CLUB GALAS

GASC Annual Gala is held in Inverurie Swimming Pool at the end of the year. All members of GASC participate and it is a fantastic opportunity for new and younger swimmers to gain competition experience.

MINI MEETS

These are aimed at our 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 North District which covers the North of Scotland and the Islands. These are also accredited / licensed meets.

NATIONAL MEETS

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

WHAT TO BRING

- 2 towels (at least)
- Club swimming 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)
- T-shirt, shorts / tracksuit bottoms for poolside
- Suitable shoes for poolside
- 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 - at least **30 minutes before the warm-up time** - and report to the appointed poolside coaches / team manager. If for any reason you cannot make it to the competition, please let the poolside coaches know as soon as possible by contacting the club mobile. You will be given this number before the meet.

If you do not arrive at least 30 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.

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, is available on the GASC website: www.gasc.co.uk/club-info/swimmer-info.

Normally the host club will allocate time slots and lanes within the warm-up period to clubs. Competitors will be supervised and instructed in 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 clothes and shoes and report back to the poolside coach or team manager.

Swimmers only 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. It is much appreciated that swimmers stay and support their teammates in finals.

The team manager or poolside coach will send swimmers to the marshalling area several heats before their event. Competitions will be supervised and directed to the start of their event by a host club official (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 to sit with swimmers on poolside unless they are the poolside helpers / coaches appointed by GASC for that competition.

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 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 3 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** 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 all the way up and touch the wall, then turn. You do not need to do a tumble turn so long as you touch the wall.

BACKSTROKE

You must touch the wall with your hand whilst **still on your back** - you cannot turn onto your side to touch. This includes touching at the turn unless doing a tumble turn. Swim on your back all the way to the finish except for tumble turns. Remember to look forward 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. 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 kick 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 should 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 DQ'd so you are in great company!

IN GENERAL

- You must be quiet for the start of each race so that the swimmers can hear the starting signal. 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!

FIRST TIME COMPETITORS PACK

Information for Parents

SWIMMING COSTUMES

Standard training/competition swimwear such as Speedo, Maru, TYR, Arena, Funkita etc are all that is required for developing swimmers - a one-piece costume for the girls and briefs, swim shorts (close fitting) or jammers (above knee length) for the boys. Costumes should be well fitting, not too tight or loose.

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!). Keep a look out for bargains at online shops, swim shops at competitions and even, especially for younger/smaller swimmers, supermarkets and chain stores.

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. They are extremely expensive, need to be a perfect fit and provide absolutely no benefit for young swimmers. **In accordance with GASC policy, developing swimmers will not be permitted to wear performance swimwear (kneeskins or jammers) in training or competitions.** This type of swimwear is easily identified by its price - in excess of £50 for men's jammers and over £100 for ladies kneeskins. If in doubt, consult your child's coach before purchasing swimwear.

SWIMMING 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 for more info. Please note, **GASC swim caps are only to be worn at club training 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 bridge may be the answer if you are having difficulty finding a good fit e.g. Speedo Mariner Junior etc for younger swimmer. Ask your coach for advice.

MEDICAL INFORMATION AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Coaches must have ready access to medical, allergy and emergency contact details for all swimmers present at training sessions, competitions, training camps etc. **It is the parent / guardian's responsibility to advise GASC whenever there is any change in the swimmers health or medication, and a new Medical Declaration form MUST be completed.**

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.