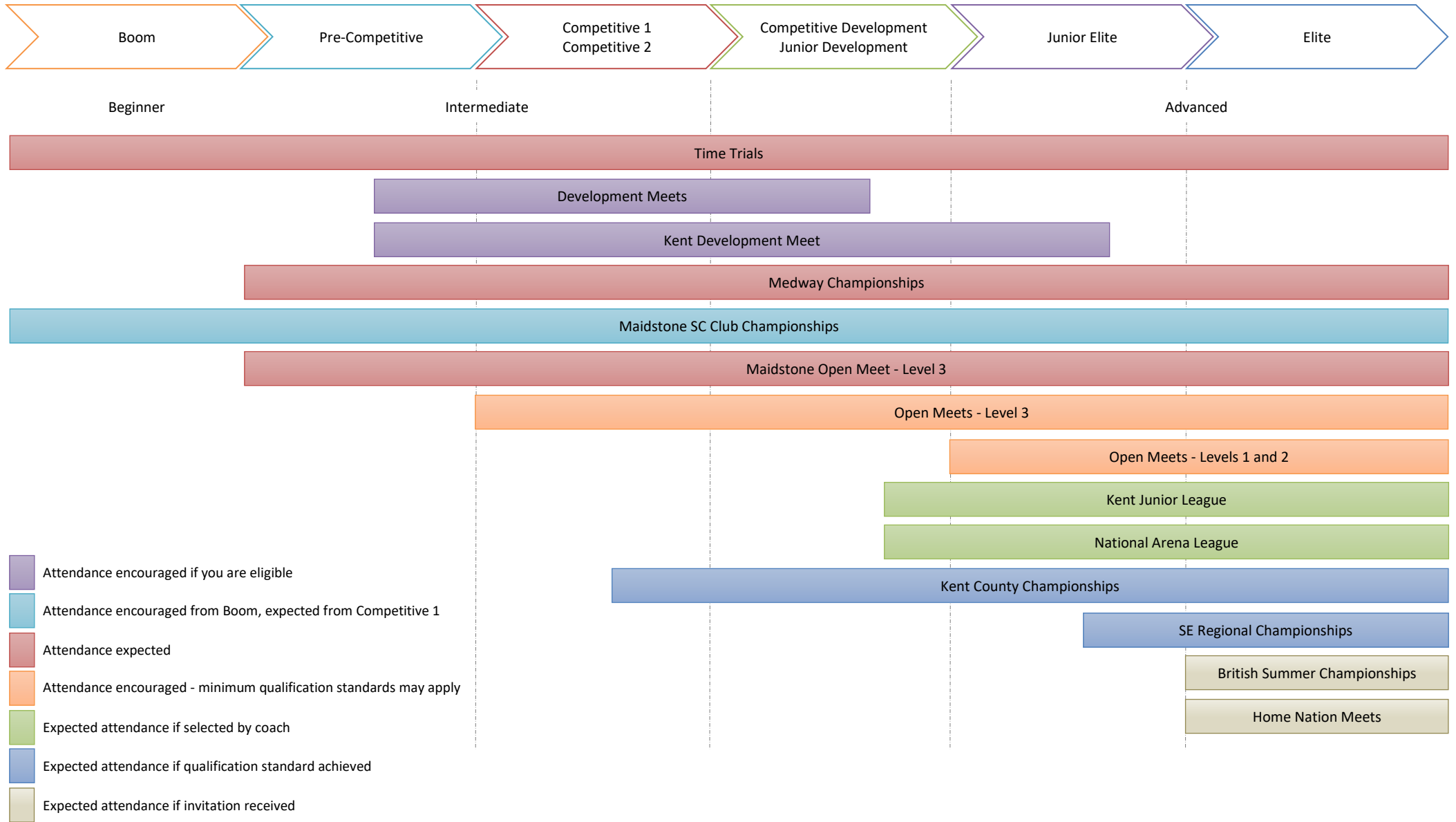


SWIMMING GALA AND MEET OVERVIEW



Suitability of galas and meets for swimming squads is for guidance only

SWIMMING GALAS AND MEETS

A swimming gala or meet is a swimming competition which allows swimmers to compete both as individuals and as representatives of their swimming club. There are lots of different types and formats, but here is some general advice which swimmers who are new to competitive swimming (and their parents) may find useful.

TIME TRIALS (BOOM POOL SQUAD SWIMMERS AND ABOVE)

- The first step towards being able to take part in galas or meets is to attend the Time Trials run by Maidstone Swimming Club which are held at Mote Park Leisure Centre.
- These are held on two consecutive Friday evenings at various different times throughout the year where you swim two lengths (50 metres) of Frontcrawl and Breaststroke the first week, and then Backstroke and Butterfly the following week.
- Don't worry if you are nervous, as everybody is the first time. There is also an option to do just one length (25 metres) Butterfly for the younger swimmers and you can start in the water if you are worried about diving.
- Don't worry if you get disqualified the first few times. This is totally normal and the reason why the Time Trials are a great way to practice for more formal galas and meets which you will do later. Your coach can also give you some advice if you are not sure why you were disqualified.
- Attendance at these trials is important, as they help the coaches to ensure fair selection for galas and movement between swim squads.

PROGRESSION FROM TIME TRIALS

- Once you have taken part in the Time Trials and are comfortable in that environment, you may also decide to enter other events.
- The options available depend upon the time of the year and more details are included in the appendices and on the Maidstone Swimming Club website (www.maidstoneswimmingclub.org)
- The Millennium Galas are unfortunately oversubscribed, so swimmers are invited to swim, rather than formally applying. Please do not be offended if you are not asked initially as there are often additional opportunities later on in the year.
- Where Maidstone Swimming Club coaches are attending other club open events and will be present on the day, the meets will be listed on the club website under the Swimming section - Gala Schedule sub menu.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Maidstone Swimming Club is a competitive club, so swimmers are expected to attend galas and meets in order to progress. This requires a big commitment from the swimmers, parents and coaches involved.
- Please aim to arrive as early as possible for these events. Swimmers are to be poolside no later than 15 minutes before the warm-up start time. Please give as much notice as possible to the coach if you are unable to swim for any reason. For some galas and meets (e.g. Medway Championships, Kent Development Meet and Championships) the club will be charged unless a swimmer is withdrawn beforehand and for others a replacement swimmer will need to be organised.
- Car parking can be difficult at certain venues (especially Medway Park) so it is always worth planning an alternative in case the car park is full.
- Remember that we always need helpers to assist with the events we host, so please volunteer if you can spare the time.

APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY LEVEL EVENTS - SUITABLE FOR NEW SWIMMERS (BOOM POOL) AND ABOVE WITH LITTLE OR NO EXPERIENCE

Type	What is it?	Swimming Level?	How important is it?	Where & when?	How do I enter?	How do I pay?
Licensed Time Trials	<p>The opportunity to achieve an accurately timed swim in the four key strokes (Frontcrawl, Breaststroke, Backstroke and Butterfly).</p> <p>For the majority of swimmers this is their first step towards participating in galas and meets. Most children are nervous the first time and then will enjoy it after that.</p> <p>It is a great opportunity to give it a try in a more formal environment with Judges and Timekeepers to assist you.</p>	<p>All squads (Boom Pool upwards).</p> <p>All standards.</p> <p>Swimmers can start in the water if they are worried about diving.</p>	<p>Expected.</p> <p>It is essential if you are going to enter galas and meets in the future.</p> <p>Remember MSC is a competitive club.</p> <p>It also helps to ensure fair gala selection and progression between the squads.</p>	<p>Mote Park.</p> <p>Keep an eye on the website. The trials typically take place 3 or 4 times per year and are usually held on a Friday evening.</p>	<p>On the day.</p> <p>Just come along on the night. Please ensure that you arrive before the cut off time, which is currently 18:45.</p>	<p>Included in your MSC fees.</p>
Development Meets	<p>Maidstone swimmers are eligible to enter other club open events.</p> <p>These are typically Level 3 or 4 meets and have maximum (upper limit) times to discourage very strong swimmers from winning multiple events.</p> <p>The minimum (lower limit) times will either be more generous or non-existent in order to be more inclusive.</p> <p>Age is usually as at the last day of the competition rather than end of the year.</p>	<p>Typically, Pre-Competitive, Competitive 1 and 2 squads.</p> <p>Age: 12 and Under</p> <p>Swimmers must not have swum the stroke at a specific distance at the Kent County Championships.</p>	<p>Encouraged.</p> <p>If you wish to enter and are eligible to do so.</p>	<p>Various pools.</p> <p>Whole day.</p>	<p>Entry is in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p>

APPENDIX B: INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EVENTS - SUITABLE FOR SWIMMERS FROM ALL SQUADS WHO HAVE SOME PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

Type	What is it?	Swimming Level?	How important is it?	Where & when?	How do I enter?	How do I pay?
Kent Development Meet	<p>Swimmers may only enter a specific number of events and invitations will be extended to attend a Development Camp based on points achieved from their best 50m, 100m, 200m and IM swims.</p> <p>If an individual entry has been accepted for the Kent County Championships, they will not be eligible for the Camp.</p> <p>Age is as at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Typically, Pre-Competitive, Competitive 1 and 2 squads.</p> <p>Age: 10 to 14</p> <p>Not eligible to enter a stroke at a specific distance if swum at Kent County Championships.</p>	<p>Encouraged.</p> <p>If you wish to enter and are eligible to do so.</p>	<p>Various pools.</p> <p>Whole day.</p>	<p>Entry is in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p>
Medway Championships	<p>This series of events is licensed at Level 3.</p> <p>Age is as at the end of the year.</p> <p>The stroke specified in the programme will be swum at each gala and swimmers will be seeded by entry times.</p> <p>The 50m and 100m events shall have heats and age-group finals. The longer distance, 400m Freestyle and 200m Individual Medley, will be heat declared winners.</p>	<p>All squads from Pre-Competitive upwards.</p> <p>All standards.</p> <p>Age: 10+</p>	<p>Expected.</p>	<p>Medway Park.</p> <p>Saturday late afternoon and evening. Currently starting at 17:15.</p> <p>Allow the entire evening as it can be a late finish. Please check car park ticket expiry times.</p>	<p>Entry is in advance.</p> <p>You enter for the whole series at the beginning of the year.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p>
Maidstone SC Championships	<p>Intra-club competition for everybody who is a member of Maidstone SC.</p> <p>The swimmers with the fastest times can swim in their age-group finals which take place at the end of the year.</p> <p>If you finish in the Top 6 you get a medal which is awarded at the Presentation Evening.</p>	<p>All squads.</p> <p>You must be a member of MSC</p>	<p>Encouraged: Boom and Pre-Competitive</p> <p>Expected: Competitive 1 and above</p>	<p>Mote Park.</p> <p>September and October.</p> <p>Evenings during the week. Typically, Tuesday and Thursday.</p> <p>Run in parallel with certain Time Trials.</p>	<p>Entry is in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	<p>Payment in advance.</p>

APPENDIX B: INTERMEDIATE LEVEL EVENTS - SUITABLE FOR SWIMMERS FROM ALL SQUADS WHO HAVE SOME PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

Type	What is it?	Swimming Level?	How important is it?	Where & when?	How do I enter?	How do I pay?
Maidstone Level 3 Meet	<p>Maidstone 'home' meet where swimmers from other clubs are able to attend.</p> <p>Typically, Level 3 meets have maximum (upper limit) times to discourage very strong swimmers from winning multiple events.</p> <p>The minimum (lower limit) times will either be more generous or non-existent in order to be more inclusive.</p> <p>Age is usually as at the last day of the competition rather than end of the year.</p> <p>This is the main opportunity for Maidstone Swimming Club to raise money for the club in order to keep the fees as low as possible.</p>	All squads.	Expected.	<p>Mote Park.</p> <p>Usually an entire Saturday at the end of November.</p>	<p>Entry is in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	Payment in advance.
Level 3 Open Meets	<p>Maidstone swimmers who are Category 2 registered are eligible to enter other club open events.</p> <p>Typically, Level 3 meets have maximum (upper limit) times to discourage very strong swimmers from winning multiple events.</p> <p>The minimum (lower limit) times will either be more generous or non-existent in order to be more inclusive.</p> <p>Age is usually as at the last day of the competition rather than end of the year.</p>	Typically, Competitive 1 squad and above.	Encouraged.	Various locations and times throughout the year.	<p>Entry is in advance.</p> <p>Details on MSC website.</p>	Payment in advance.

APPENDIX C: ADVANCED LEVEL EVENTS - SWIMMERS WITH CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

Type	What is it?	Swimming Level?	How important is it?	Where & when?	How do I enter?	How do I pay?
Level 1 or 2 Open Meets	<p>Typically, you must have achieved a minimum (lower limit) qualifying time for your age-group in order to enter.</p> <p>Please track your PB swim times so that you can enter these on the entry form.</p> <p>Age is usually as at the last day of the competition rather than end of the year.</p>	Typically, Junior Elite and Elite squads.	Encouraged.	Various locations and times throughout the year.	Entry in advance.	Payment in advance.
Kent Junior League	<p>Maidstone compete in Division 1 of this team competition, which is for swimmers aged 13 years and under.</p> <p>Age is as at end of the year.</p> <p>The final gala in October determines who will be promoted/relegated.</p>	Typically, Junior Elite and Elite squads.	Expected, if selected.	<p>Various.</p> <p>There are 3 galas held in June, October and November.</p>	<p>By invitation only.</p> <p>You will be contacted by your coach.</p>	Included in your MSC fees.
National Arena League	<p>Maidstone compete in the South League of this team competition. Each league consists of 5 divisions: Premier, Division 1 East/West and Division 2 East/West.</p> <p>Age is as at end of the year.</p> <p>The final round in December determines who will be promoted/relegated.</p>	Typically, Junior Elite and Elite squads.	Expected, if selected.	<p>Various.</p> <p>There are 3 galas held in October, November and December.</p>	<p>By invitation only.</p> <p>You will be contacted by your coach.</p>	Included in your MSC fees.
Kent County Championships	<p>Swimmers who have achieved Kent qualification times at Level 4 (or above) meets.</p> <p>Qualification times are on the club website and noticeboard.</p> <p>Age is as at end of the year.</p>	Typically, Competitive 2, Junior Development, Junior Elite and Elite squads.	Expected to enter all events where qualification standard is achieved.	<p>Pools in the South East region. Recent venues - Crystal Palace, London Aquatics Centre, Dover Leisure Centre.</p>	Entry in advance.	Payment in advance.

APPENDIX C: ADVANCED LEVEL EVENTS - SWIMMERS WITH CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE OF COMPETITIVE SWIMMING

Type	What is it?	Swimming Level?	How important is it?	Where & when?	How do I enter?	How do I pay?
South East Regional (SER) Championships	<p>Swimmers who have achieved South East Regional qualification times at Level 3 (or above) meets.</p> <p>Qualification times are on the club website and noticeboard.</p> <p>Age is as at end of the year.</p>	Typically, Junior Elite and Elite squads.	Expected to enter all events where qualification standard is achieved.	Pools in the South East region. Recent venues - Wycombe and K2 Crawley.	Entry in advance.	Payment once accepted.
British Championships and Home Nation Meets	<p>Swimmers will have the opportunity to post a Long Course (Level 1) ranking time within a qualification window - typically between March and May of the respective year.</p> <p>Age is as at end of the year.</p>	Typically, Elite squad.	Expected if invitation received.	Pools in the UK. Recent venues - Ponds Forge in Sheffield and Tollcross in Glasgow.	Entry to these events is by invitation only, from performances recorded within the qualifying window.	Payment once invitation received.