



## FIRST COMPETITION GUIDE

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### PREPARATION

Before arriving at the meet make sure you know which races you are in and, if applicable, when sign-in closes.

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

- Swimming costumes x 2
- Goggles x 2
- Maidstone swimming hat x 2
- Maidstone pool t-shirt
- Shorts
- Towels
- Water bottle and healthy snacks (see Nutrition)

### ON ARRIVAL

Do arrive in plenty of time especially before sign-in closes and **SIGN-IN** if you are required to. If you are going to be late please let someone know, so that you can be signed in.

If you do not sign-in, you will be scratched from all races from that particular session and may not be able to swim. After sign-in go and get changed and put on your club pool t-shirt and then go to poolside and find your Coach.

### WARM UP

Before the races start you will be allowed some time to warm up. Listen out for the announcements as the warm-up time will generally be split between age-groups and/or girls and boys.

This is a good time to do your pre-pool flexibility.

Near the end of your warm-up time some (or all) of the lanes will be set aside for practising your starts. After the warm-up put your club pool 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.

### 'AGE AT' DATE

Galas set an 'age at' for the competition. This may be the last day of the competition or may be 31 December. If the gala is in March and your birthday is in June, but the 'age at' date is 31 December, then your age will show up in the programme and results as 1 year older.

If you are 10 at the date of gala but turn 11 in June, then if competition has an age at of 31 December then your age will show as 11 years old.

For the classification of results and medals most competitions group age groups, so the age category you may be swimming in is 11/12 years rather than just swimming against 11-year olds.



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### **MARSHALLING**

Listen out for the announcement to go to the marshalling area for your event. Once you hear the announcement tell your Coach that you are going to the marshalling area.

At the marshalling area there will be marshalls (usually parent helpers) who will organise all the swimmers for an event.

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 club pool shirt on until the last minute
- 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

### **RACE START**

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.

### **RACE FINISH**

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 club pool t-shirt and then go to your Coach to discuss your race. After your discussion with your Coach go to the warm down pool (if available) for your warm down routine and then re-hydrate and have a healthy snack before your next event (see Nutrition).

### **DISQUALIFICATION**

All galas are held under strict Swim England 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 Coach so you learn from the experience.



## BASIC RULES FOR THE START, STROKE & FINISH

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### THE ONE-START RULE

Any movement on the blocks is interpreted as the swimmer trying to gain an advantage. Therefore, all swimmers must remain 'completely still' once they are in the starting position.

Any movement at this time will disqualify the swimmer (even to adjust goggles).

### BREASTSTROKE

Movement of hands and feet must be simultaneous and on the same horizontal plane.

At some point during each stroke the head must break the surface of the water.

At the start and turn only one complete stroke may be made under the water (one arm pull followed by one leg kick) before the head breaks the surface.

At the turns and at the finish, the two hands must touch at the same time. Elbows should remain in the water at all times except on the turn.

### BUTTERFLY

Movements of hands and feet must be simultaneous. Arms must be brought forward above the surface, and back on or below the surface.

At the turns and at the finish, hands must touch at the same time at the same level. One or more leg kicks and one arm pull are permitted under the water at the start and turns.

### BACKSTROKE

Swimmers must remain on their back during the race except when executing a turn. During the turn the shoulders may turn over the vertical to the breast but the swimmer must have returned to a position on the back when leaving the wall. Gliding into the turn is disqualifiable. At the turn a touch must be made by some part of the swimmer's body.

At the finish, the touch may be made by hand, arm, shoulder or head and some part of the swimmer's body must be above the water and the swimmer must remain on their back.

The flags across the pool are to assist backstroke swimmers and indicate 5m to the wall.

### INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

Order of the swim - Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle

All of the above stroke rules apply. In addition, during the Backstroke to Breaststroke turn swimmers must touch the wall on their backs and then can push off on their front.

### THE FINISH

Stay in the water and hold onto the lane ropes until advised to leave by the side by an official.