



Q. & A. FOR ATTENDING A GALA

Location of Venue:

The location of the gala will be given by your Coach and any details thereof re: warm-up times, etc.

What do we do when we arrive? Do we need to register?

No formal sign in/registration is required apart from reporting into your coach to let them know your son or daughter has arrived.

(The Coach on duty will normally be evident to the TEAM. Ideally if you arrive first then you should try and command an area of the balcony to position the TEAM. As other fellow swimmers arrive we would like them all located in the same area of the balcony. The Coach will have to prepare a 'scratch' sheet normally c. 15 – 20 mins into the warm-up session. Coaches will typically 'scratch' athletes that they have been informed will not be attending or that they are unsure of or have not seen in training in the previous week. If the athletes are not 'scratched' from the start lists an additional fine can be levied against the swimmer – €10/€12 at most meetings per event.)

Do we need to bring food and drinks?

Bring bread rolls/sandwiches, pieces of fruit, breakfast/snack bars and jellies, and of course Water (write your name on your bottle). You can usually buy sandwiches at or near the venue.

Do we need to wear Club gear? What else do we need to bring?

The only item of club gear that is essential is the Club hat. However if the child has other club gear they should wear it. It can make a huge difference to the atmosphere and the team stands out among the crowd of other swimmers. The following gear should be brought to every gala:

Togs x 2 (warm up and race)
Club Hat x 2 (In case one rips!)
Goggles x 2 (in case one snaps!)
T-shirts/Sweat Shirt (you need to keep warm)
Water Bottle already filled (write your name on it!)
Towels x 2 (if there for a full day)
Flip flops or runners

Advice on what to do with personal belongings when at the venue:

The only answer to this is use common sense. The swimmers usually congregate together and the bags are left in/around where they are sitting. If the mum/dad are with them they may hold on to the kit bags. Bring as little as possible. Ipods, phones, etc need to be minded by an adult but its probably best to leave valuables at home.

Do parents meet up with the coach at the venue?

Parents do not formally meet up with the coach. The coach is normally on the poolside/among the swimmers.

How do you find out about the times of races?

When you arrive you should be able to buy a programme which will give you the session times, etc. Also you can listen out as the races are being called and swimmers are being asked to line up. Your coach might have an approximate time of each heat but also leave at least a half an hour leeway in advance of your race in order that you are guaranteed to be there. Ideally coaches would prefer the TEAM to be together and support each other for the duration of the meet. The swimmers also need to learn how to 'sit around' and get used to being at a gala because the older they get at national level, sessions last for 4 or 5 hours at a time. When considering relays, etc on the day, the coach will need to be able to find the swimmers to discuss things with them and to finally select the relays.

What do the children do for warm-up sessions and will they get a chance to practise starting from the blocks?

The Coach will take the warm-up session and give any advise necessary. Diving is NOT allowed during the warm-up except when 'spring lanes' have been allowed by the Gala referee. 'Spring lanes' are generally available for c.10 mins at the end of the warm-up.

What happens if the child will not jump from the blocks?

Children, especially younger ones, have either jumped in from the bank/deck or started in the water. The coach is the best person to advise here. The Rules of swimming do NOT insist that swimmers dive off blocks. They can start in the water if they wish. Inexperienced swimmer may not want to dive off blocks and the coach will support them in an appropriate start.

How do we know if there are heats or the actual race is the final?

The programme will tell you what races are heat declared. Generally there are heats and finals. Some events are run as HDW (Heat Declared Winner) event. After the heats of each event have concluded the gala announcer will announce the fastest swimmer who will either swim in the final or will announce the winners of the HDW event. HDW means the swimmers will only swim once. Check the programme for clarification and the order of how the events will be swum.

How do we go about getting our official times?

These are usually (but not always) posted in a prominent place around the pool. When the swimmer swims, when they finish they get out of the water and ask the timekeeper for their time.

If there is an incident at the pool, who do we raise our concerns with?

If a child is hurt in an incident it must be reported to the records desk. There is a standard accident/incident report form for use at galas. The staff at the pool hosting the event should also be able to provide immediate assistance.

Can we take photos or use camcorders?

The use of camcorders/cameras is not allowed. At some venues a permit is given to those who register their details with the pool reception or gala organisers/desk.

How do we stop goggles coming off when diving in?

Talk to your coach as goggles will NOT come off if they are worn correctly and the athletes dive in properly. It can take a while for an inexperienced athlete to master this. Please talk to the coach if in doubt.

Is there any advice that coaches give to members re rules, etc that parents/guardians should reinforce?

Not really except generally be on good behaviour. Galas can be stressful for younger athletes and all athletes are encouraged to do their best and to focus on doing PB's (Personal Bests). It is not realistic for EVERY child to win a medal every time and also not realistic for each athlete to improve on every swim every time. The primary aspect of competitions is to gain experience in various events, distances and as the athletes develop, to try different race tactics, etc.

Generally the coach will keep it simple with younger athletes. They will focus on one or two key points, get them to do their best and enjoy themselves. Parents should be there to support their child in their attempt rather than 'critique' the swim, that's the coaches role.

For MORE information look on the club website www.teamtsc.net

Or click

<http://www.teamtsc.net/Docs%20for%20Website/HowWellDoYouPrepare.pdf>

for more information on Gala Preparation