



A Swimmers Guide to Galas!

I want to swim in galas – what do I do?

Regularly check the sharks website (www.staustellswimming.co.uk) and look at the noticeboard at every training session so that you do not miss them. Also ask your coach what's coming up and what might be suitable for you to enter.

I've been selected for a Gala! What now?

That's brilliant news! Galas are the best bit of swimming competitively and they are what you do all that hard work for. This handy guide is aimed at helping you through your first gala experiences

Am I available?

- ✓ If you are not sure, check before you agree!
- ✓ If you say yes you are committed.
- ✓ If you are not available simply say so.
- ✓ Write it on the calendar at home, set a reminder on your mum's phone!
- ✗ Never agree to swim and either pull out or not turn up
 - your team mates need you, especially in team galas
 - in some gala's the club will be fined if you are not there
- ✓ If you are ill, text or ring the team manager as soon as you know you cannot swim not 5 minutes before the gala starts

Getting there

- ✓ You should aim to arrive 20 – 30 minutes before the start of the warm up
- ✓ If you need a lift ask at the desk and we'll organise something
- ✓ If you cannot enter the pool or changing area straight away, wait sensibly with your teammates

What to wear

- ✓ Anything you are comfortable in that makes for a quick change (the changing rooms will be packed)

What to bring

- ✓ Swimming trunks or costume – tight fitting for races. You should have a different set for warm up and racing, and change in between.
- ✓ Spare trunks or costume
- ✓ Goggles
- ✓ Spare goggles
- ✓ Sharks swim hat – be proud to wear your sharks hat – it also helps the coach and supporters identify you when you are on the blocks or in the pool.



Fancy hats are for training !!!

- ✓ 2 Towels (1 for poolside and 1 for changing with)
- ✓ Sharks t-shirt or sweatshirt to wear on poolside (be proud to wear the sharks kit)
- ✓ Some swimmers like boardshorts or tracksuit bottoms for in between events.
- ✓ Something for feet like crocs or flip flops (especially if you go to Carn Brea as the floor really hurts your feet)
- ✓ Coins for the lockers – there isn't room on poolside at some venues for outdoor clothes and bags and they WILL get wet



ipads and other electronic devices

When is my race and what am I swimming?

- ✓ For team galas the team manager will tell you what you are swimming when you get to the gala. They cannot tell you until everyone has turned up in case changes need to be made at the last minute.
- ✓ Bring something to write it down on if you think you will forget
- ✓ Be patient, the team manager cannot tell everyone at the same time. You will not be forgotten
- ✓ Everyone sometimes has to swim an event or stroke that is not their favourite. Deal with it!
- ✓ Medley relays are a good opportunity to swim a stroke you don't usually do.
- ✓ NEVER disappear off poolside for ANY reason unless you have asked permission from team manager. Swimmers must not keep going to parents and should have all their food, drinks and equipment in their bags.

Supporting your team mates

- ✓ Stand at the end of the lane to cheer them on
- ✓ Yelling encouragement is always good
- ✓ Encourage them if they don't swim as well as they wanted
- ✓ Be especially encouraging if you notice a goggle malfunction or disqualifiable offence
- ✓ Don't draw attention to mistakes (the official might start to look even harder for errors)
- ✓ Watch the older more experienced swimmers and learn from them. Look at their starts, turns, technique and finishes.

Getting Ready for the Race

- ✓ Think about your races. Plan your start, the pace, your turns and finish.
- ✓ If you think something needs working on then speak with your coach BEFORE the gala at a training session, not as you are about to go up to the blocks.



Don't suddenly decide to change technique at a gala.



- ✓ If you want to try something new because you've seen someone else do it, discuss this with your coach after the gala.

Marshalling

- ✓ You will be called to marshalling a few events before your race
- ✓ Listen out for announcements they are often hard to hear
- ✓ If you notice your team-mate has not gone to marshalling prompt them
- ✓ At marshalling, give your name and stand sensibly in lane order
- ✓ You will be told when to go down to the starting block.

At the starting block

- ✓ At the starting block stand behind your lane.
- ✓ Stand back whilst the previous race starts and finishes
- ✓ Give your name again to the official when asked
- ✓ At the first whistle, get ready to step up to the block
- ✓ At the second whistle stand on the block, or jump in if it is backstroke
- ✓ **TAKE YOUR MARKS Buzz/Bang/Beep**
- ✗ Do not wobble, fiddle with goggles or move at all when starter says "Take your marks".
- ✗ If you go before the signal you will be disqualified.
- ✓ At the end of the race, wait in the water until after the next start.
- ✓ Do not touch the timing pads at the end of the lane
- ✓ Clear the water if asked to do so.

A false start?

- ✓ Stand down from the blocks and wait.
- ✓ If it's you, swim to the side to get out. The official will explain that you have a false start.
- ✓ Depending upon the gala rules, you may be allowed to restart the race. Sometimes not!
- ✓ If you hear several beeps, or the false start rope is in the water, stop swimming and return to the start.

Help! Goggle Malfunction!

- ✓ Ignore it and keep swimming!
- ✓ Get one of your team mates to help tighten and fix them before the next event
- ✓ Try out your goggles and spares in training so you know they will work properly
- ✓ If your goggles always fall off or leak it's time to get new ones or try a different style

Special rules for relay's

- ✓ Make sure you know when and which stroke you are swimming!
- ✓ Medley Relays are swum differently from Individual Medleys. The order is backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and front crawl.
- ✓ It's better to play safe on take-overs and not risk getting your whole team DQ'd



- ✓ At the end of your relay leg, leave the water quickly
- ✓ Look out for the other teams in the other lanes as they finish and start
- ✓ Wait at poolside for the rest of your team
- ✓ Return together.

What if I'm last?

- ✓ Don't worry – it has happened to everyone!!
- ✓ Often heats contain swimmers from mixed age groups so you could have still won a medal in your age group
- ✓ You can place last but still get a pb or still get a medal if other swimmers have been DQ'd

What if I've been DQ'd?

- ✓ Don't worry – it has happened to everyone!!
- ✓ Learn from it, and put it behind you
- ✓ Ask your coach to go to the chief judge for you and get the DQ code and the reason why, so he can explain it to you and you can work on any mistakes in training

What about food?

- ✓ You need a well balanced diet, with vitamins, protein and complex carbs.
- ✓ To compete at your best you need to eat well the night before and the morning of a competition as well as replenish your energy during the event.
- ✓ Bring plenty to drink – water or dilute squash.
- ✗ ABSOLUTELY NO FIZZY DRINKS OR ENERGY DRINKS SUCH AS RED BULL.
- ✓ Try this link to the british swimming website for eating tips and ideas.

(link here: <http://www.swimming.org/swimfit/daily-nutrition-tips-for-competitive-swimmers/>)

Home time

- ✓ Make sure the team coach knows you are leaving
- ✓ Check you haven't left anything behind. Check again, and then check one more time!!!!
- ✓ Pick up any litter, even if it isn't yours! (better still make sure you and your team mates never drop any)