

Tips for Gala Entries

- Don't enter the same event every time, if you swim 100m breaststroke in October leave it alone until December/January – you can't expect to achieve P.B.'s every few weeks. Aside from Championship meets at the end of season, only swim any event 3 or 4 times over the year.
- The qualification period for national competitions does not begin until January, use the galas between now and then to try different strokes over different distances.
- Not every swimmer is a sprinter!! If the 100m events are not going well for your swimmer try the 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m races. There are plenty of swimmers in the club who swim these as open water events in the summer but don't enter them at galas. Some swimmers have pace and stamina rather than speed.
- 50m races are for C and D squad swimmers – this is a bit of a generalisation but unless you are a top sprinter aged 15+ the championships are not geared towards 50m events. 226 girls and 147 boys swam 50m freestyle at this years Div 2 gala, only 29 girls and 22 boys swam 800 freestyle – much better odds!! Swim an occasional 50m race as a filler between main events.
- Swimmers change – as they grow and change swimmers may change from sprinters to distance swimmers or vice versa as they gain strength. Remember their body length and shape changes dramatically at times and this will affect their body position in the water and how they swim their strokes, particularly girls. If they find they can't PB anymore on a particular stroke leave it alone, maybe for the year and try other strokes and distances.
- Don't expect PB's from start of season – times achieved in June/July were on the back of 9 months of training, they need time to get swimming fit again and may not make huge progress until after Christmas. Some swimmers have just moved squad and have to adjust to a heavier training load and early starts, this takes its toll. Starting secondary school also impacts on their energy levels.
- Round Robin Galas are for C and D squad swimmers mainly, those who have just moved up to B squad may still enter for this term in the events where they are "slower than".
- Club Galas are good fun and experience but swimmers also need the regional qualifying galas for "official" times, after Christmas there will be some "official" Level 3 club galas available.
- Every swimmer will plateau at some stage – at some point every swimmer reaches a point where they can't PB on anything even though they are training the same hours or more. It may last a few months or a year or more and all they can do is persevere. This is very difficult when those around them are progressing past them and all you can do is support them and encourage them to keep going.