



Updated May 2014

Welcome to Welwyn Garden Swimming Club!

Back in 2008, as a parent of a new child to the Swim Club I really didn't know what to expect, so I put together some notes which may be of use to other new parents with regard to the activities and events that take place throughout the year.

Time Trials

Time trials take place twice a year (January and October generally) in order for our swimmers to record their best times in the four strokes. Swimmers can decide which strokes they want to swim and what distance to do; although the club does recommend distances according to age groups (e.g. under 10s automatically do 25M). The trials take place at Hitchin pool as they have a 25M pool, which is the standard size used for both Peanuts and Major League Galas. The times are available to swimmers/parents quite soon after the event and the team managers use this information to help decide upon who will represent WGSC in the Peanuts League, Major League and our home Galas. But even if your swimmer is not keen on swimming in galas, the Time Trials are a good opportunity to see your personal best (PB) times improve each time.

Handy tip: Expect the time trials to last up to 2.5 hours and remember it is meant to be fun and is a relaxed way for children to get the feel of swimming in races without the associated pressures.

Peanuts League

This is one competition within the Hertfordshire Swimming League, aimed at the younger swimmers, aged 12 and under. The Club selects a team, based largely on the results of the time trials. There are 3 rounds to the competition and swimmers may be expected to swim individual events (breaststroke/backstroke/freestyle/butterfly and possibly take part in one of the relays. The Club tries to involve as many swimmers as possible across the Rounds and it is important that swimmers are able to commit to the dates as drop outs on the day will undoubtedly affect team performance. Children have to be 9 years of age or over on the date of Round 3 of the Competition. Further details on the Peanuts League can be founded on the following Website. <http://www.hsleague.org.uk>.

Major League

The Major League is another competition within the Hertfordshire Swimming League, aimed at more advanced swimmers, from Under 12's through to Open (16+) age group. Again swimmers for the squad are selected largely on the results of the time trials. Like Peanuts, there are 3 rounds to the competition. Please refer to the website given above for more information.



Herts Development Meet

This is a competition aimed towards children who want to know if they have the ability to compete at a higher level, namely the Herts County Championships. There are advisory times published and entrants submit times they have achieved in the relevant disciplines they wish to compete in. Swimmers are put into heats of similar ability.

Herts County Championships incorporating BAGCATS.

For swimmers of all ages who have achieved the qualifying times for any discipline they wish to compete in. The younger children accrue BAGCAT points from a set of disciplines selected on the entry form.

East Region Championships

Aimed at the successful top swimmers in the county, swimmers at this level tend to come from the top clubs who are able to give swimmers water time every day of the week. Whilst WGSC would love to have swimmers of this ability, the reality is we cannot offer these swimmers the water time and coaching expertise they need to compete at this level.

National Championships

For the top swimmers in the region and unlikely to be regular swimmers with WGSC.

BAGCATS

This stands for British Age Group Categories and is the ASA's (Amateur Swimming Association) points system and is derived from the best times achieved by British swimmers in that discipline and has a mathematics formula to achieve a score for each age group. This is used to find the stars of the future without individuals being confined to single discipline. This is often held in East Anglia Pool in Norwich. Further information can be found on the ASA website: <http://www.swimming.org/asa/> or speak to one of the swimming teachers to find out if this may be a suitable competition for your child.

Galas

The Club itself organises 2 or 3 galas a year and a team of swimmers are selected to compete against other local clubs. Please refer to the Club Diary of Events for specific dates.

The Goldstone Gala	Takes place first half of the year (April/May/June)
The Isabel Gala	Takes place in second half of the year (September/Oct)



Club Championships

These take place during November/December and all Club members are encouraged to swim and can choose which races they would like to compete in. To have a chance of winning the club championships for your gender and age group it is best that you swim all strokes. This event takes place over two full weekends on a Saturday and Sunday evening, at Hatfield pool. Placings and medals are awarded on the evening and the trophies are presented at an awards ceremony which is held the following February and usually involves a social event.

Things to Note When Competing

Make sure you are aware of the competition rules before competing but here are a few pointers!

Swimmers may start a race either by diving or in the water. Swimmers will be disqualified from events if they use the wrong stroke. No swimmers should walk around the starting area when the swimmers are on the blocks and on the sound of the double-whistle. Swimmers should not shuffle/move on the blocks after the starter has said “Take your Marks” or they may be disqualified and if in a Gala the team will lose points.

To be 100% sure of the up to date rules, please refer to FINA rules:

http://www.fina.org/H2O/docs/rules/sw_rules_20132017.pdf. But below is a guide.

Backstroke: Start in the water with both hands holding the bar of the starting block. Toes must be touching the side but not curled around the gutter (if present). You must touch the end of the pool whilst on your back – you must not turn onto your front (unless performing a tumble turn) for a race of more than one length. You can touch the end of the pool with any part of your body but your hand is preferable to your head for obvious reasons.

Breaststroke:

Start in the water or by diving. Two hands touch at the same time at the finish. The hands may touch each other but not stacked upon each other.

Freestyle (front crawl): Start in the water (with one hand on the side) or by diving. Ensure you touch the side at finish.

Butterfly: Start in the water or by diving. Two hands touch at the same time at the finish. The hands may touch each other but not stacked upon each other.



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Lost Property and Security of Changing Rooms

Personal belongings left in the changing areas are left at the risk of the owner. Swimmers are allowed to bring their swim bags onto poolside at Hatfield. Please be aware that the changing rooms at Monks Walk are left unlocked during the swimming sessions and parents should be aware of this both for security of belongings plus child safety. If you do find that you have lost any items please do speak to one of the teachers as often items may be handed in. Or contact the pool provider directly.



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Male parents should not enter the female changing room and female parents should not enter the male changing room at Monks Walk. Please see our WGSC Changing Room Policy for further guidance on use of the changing rooms. Parents/carers must always be present at the end of the session to take their children home promptly.



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Useful things to remember!

- Swimmers should bring a bottle of drinking water/juice (in a plastic bottle) along to every swimming session and these may be left on poolside
- Be prepared to spend 2 hours at the pool when galas and other events are taking place. Bring things to amuse other children who are not swimming and some light snacks and energy drinks for swimmers who get very hungry when competing!
- Please encourage the children to keep the poolside tidy and to take their rubbish to the bins.
- The most important part of any training session is the warm-up so please try to make sure that you turn up on time as late arrivals interrupt the flow of the session which impacts on all the other swimmers in the lane.

Swim Shop

Karen Brennan runs our swimshop which sells swimsuits, trunks, goggles, swim caps, bags and other stuff from time to time. The Club likes its swimmers to wear its specially printed items, especially as it identifies them and makes them look smart at galas. The Club does not make any profit from the items sold and they are very good value when compared with other outlets. Please note that Karen is an unpaid volunteer for the Club and not open all hours! She does her best to meet the needs of our members and is a good source of advice on swim kit sizes etc. Karen is happy to receive email requests from people too via wgsc.kit@gmail.com.

I hope you find these notes useful and would welcome any comments/suggestions so I can improve this information further for new members to our Club!

Jane Millward
WGSC – Swim21 Coordinator