

JULY 2025

WARRIORS OF WARRINGTON

GUIDE TO GALAS



WHAT IS A SWIMMING GALA

A swimming gala is a competitive event run under Swim England rules. Any gala that Warriors attend must be licensed by Swim England. Swimmers can take part in internal galas at any age but must be at least 9 years old to compete externally, more on internal/external galas below.

Meets may be held in 25m pools (short course) or 50m pools (long course). The season is typically split into short course (September to February) and long course (March to July/August), with younger swimmers continuing in short course meets throughout the year.

Competitions are usually age-grouped based on either the last day of the meet or December 31st. Entry fees are required for most events, and refunds are only issued under specific conditions, such as illness with a doctor's note.



HOW GALAS WORK

Licensed meets must follow Swim England standards, including entry criteria and electronic timing. Results from these events are added to the British Rankings database. Heats are swum from slowest to fastest, and results are often Heat Declared Winners (HDW). Larger meets may include finals.

Always read the meet entry pack, meet deadlines, and follow payment procedures via bank transfer or Direct Debit collection.

EVENTS AT LICENSED MEETS



Events include:

- Freestyle: 50m, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m
- Backstroke/Breaststroke/Butterfly: 50m, 100m, 200m
- Individual Medley (IM): 100m (25m pool only), 200m, 400m

Longer events often have age restrictions. 800m and 1500m freestyle use lap cards and signals to help swimmers count lengths. Club Badge Galas and Championships may include 25m races, but these are not licensed.

LEVELS OF LICENSED MEETS

- **Level 4:** Internal meets like Badge Galas and Club Champs; open to swimmers with no recorded times.
- **Level 3:** Developmental short course meets with upper time limits; estimated times allowed.
- **Level 2:** Short course meets with minimum qualifying times; no upper limits.
- **Level 1:** Long course meets aimed at national qualifiers; times from SC meets must be converted.

INTERNAL GALAS

- **Badge Galas:** Open to all swimmers; usually four per year. Great for experience and gaining badge times. Enter via Swim Manager
- **Club Championships:** Held in September, sometimes split across multiple weeks.
- Up to 7 events per swimmer. Awards based on FINA points. Novice category for 25m races.



EXTERNAL MEETS

- **Percy Mason Gala:** Warriors hosted Level 3 open meet in November/December. Includes graded events with upper time limits.
- **Grand Prix:** Warriors hosted Level 3 open meet in June/July. Includes graded events with upper time limits.
- **Other Open Meets:** Selected by the Head Coach. Entry details posted on the club website. Forms must be submitted on time with payment.
- Payment via bank transfer or Direct Debit is required. Accepted entries will be posted online. Warm-up times and team details will be shared before the event.

PATHWAY TO HIGHER-LEVEL COMPETITION

- Cheshire County Championships: Level 2 SC meet in January/February. Qualifying times required. Includes BAGCAT points for younger swimmers.
- Swim England North West Regionals: Winter (SC, no age groups) and Summer (LC, age-grouped). Qualifying times required.
- Home Nations Summer Meets: Entry by invitation based on national rankings. Times must be achieved at Level 1 meets.



COMPETITION FREQUENCY

Swimmers aged 12-18 should compete in all galas available to their level on Warriors' competition calendar.

GALA PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Know venue location and parking
- Check if spectating is ticketed and purchase if required to in advance.
- Bring swimming bag: costume/trunks, two towels, goggles, cap, food, drink, and warm clothes
- Coins for lockers, fans for spectators, snacks



TEAM GALAS

- Selected by the coaching team and finalised by the Head Coach. Swimmers must confirm attendance. Team kit is mandatory. Team coach transport may be provided.
- Examples:
- Bolton Central Manchester Mini League (ages 9-12)
- Micro League North West (ages 9-12)
- National Arena Swimming League (ages 11+)



GALA BAG ESSENTIALS

- Spare costume/trunks
- At least 2 towels
- 2 pairs of goggles
- 2 club swim caps
- Flip flops or sandals
- Warm clothes for between races
- Food and drink
- Hydration and warm clothes are key.

NUTRITION FOR COMPETITIONS

Day Before:

- High-carb meals
- Hydrate often
- Avoid unfamiliar or spicy foods

Morning of Event:

- Eat a light, familiar breakfast
- Try smoothies or shakes if too nervous

Between Heats:

- Eat soon after swimming
- Choose complex carbs, fruit, and protein-rich snacks

Good Snacks:

- Pasta salad, fruit, sandwiches
- Smoothies, cereal bars, yogurt, nuts
- Water or sports drinks



WHAT HAPPENS AT A GALA?

Warm-up is mandatory. Team Managers are our volunteers who assist swimmers and track attendance. Swimmers must report to Team Managers on arrival and must sign out before leaving the care of our Team Managers.

There are strictly no parents allowed in the changing rooms or on the poolside.

Heats are seeded by time. Final rankings are by age group. Results posted poolside and online. Medals vary by event.

Swimmers over 9 will have official times recorded in British Rankings. Only events of 50m or longer are ranked.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- Common causes:
 - Incorrect stroke technique
 - Illegal turns or finishes
 - False starts
 - Fouls (unfair advantage)
- All swimmers should learn from disqualifications. Coaches can advise on technical rules and where they have not witnessed the disqualification themselves, they will be responsible for checking with the race referee and will confirm the disqualification reason to the swimmer, and how to prevent this from reoccurring in the future.

GALA TERMS / JARGON BUSTER:

- **SC:** Short Course – Length of swimming pool is 25m
- **LC:** Long Course – Length of swimming pool is 50m
- **DQ:** Disqualified from event due to technical infraction of the FINA rules
- **DNC:** Did not Compete – Swimmer did not enter the water at the start time of their race
- **BAGCAT Points:**
 - The name stands for British Age Group Category and is a way of measuring and comparing the performance of swimmers across a range of different events and age groups.
 - The intention of the ASA is to encourage younger swimmers to compete in a wide range of events and not specialise in a particular stroke and distance too early. When a swimmer competes in a BAGCAT event their time is converted into points that take into account not only their time but also the stroke, their age, sex and various correction factors.
- **EOY:** End of Year – Refers to swimmers age at the end of the year, this aligns with British Swimming and qualifying times which show as age as of 31st December.
- **HDW:** Heat Declared Winners
- **PB/SB:** Personal/Seasonal Best
- **IM:** Individual Medley
- **Marshalling:** Pre-race gathering area
- **Over the Top Starts:** Swimmers remain in pool for next heat
- **Touchpad:** Electronic finish timer

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