

A Parent Guide to Competitions

This guide has been designed to help you understand and prepare for the various swimming events as your child progresses through the Club.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Competitions are usually controlled by Swim England rules and regulations.
- Swimmers who are 9 years and older may participate in most competitions including league galas.
- Swimmers who are 8 years and younger may only participate in limited internal galas.
- A child's age may be determined on a calendar year basis or age as on the day of the competition.
- Guildford City provides a competition programme suitable for the development of swimmers of all ages.
- The competition programme is comprised of internal and external galas and is generally squad dependent.
- Swimmers are generally seeded into heats by their entry time and medals are awarded to the top three only within each age group and gender. If your child wins their heat, it doesn't automatically mean they will win a medal!
- Swimmers with no entry times are grouped together in the earliest and slowest heats. For some competitions a swimmer must have a pre-existing entry time.
- Disqualifications are almost inevitable for the youngest swimmers in the three form strokes – breaststroke, backstroke and butterfly - and whilst disappointing, are all part of the learning process .
- Swimmers can determine their personal best status and national or local rankings in any specific event or distance by referring to event rankings held by Swim England. [Swimmingresults.org/eventrankings/](https://swimmingresults.org/eventrankings/)
- Important abbreviations
 - HDW – heat declared winner
 - DQ – disqualification
 - SCR – scratched, entry to an event rejected

On the last page of this document is a table entitled 'Whole Club Competition' which sets out the annual internal competition programme including the event progressions by squad.

INTERNAL COMPETITIONS

There are five different categories of internal competitions -

- (a) **Unlicenced Time Trials** – time trials can be held during training at any stage of the season.
- (b) **Licenced Level 4 Club Championships** – generally featuring 200m freestyle and 200 IM, 100 freestyle and 4 x 50m events, held twice a year at Spectrum on one Saturday in January and June. No qualifying times are required to enter.



- (c) **Licenced Level 3 Open Meets** – featuring all events 200m and down, generally held in April and October each year at Spectrum on a Saturday afternoon and all-day Sunday. Licenced Level 3 Open Meets are open to external Clubs as well as appropriate Guildford City members. Entries operate on a first come first served basis, 9 years and above.
- (d) **Licenced Level 2 Open Meets** – featuring all events, held in November each year at Surrey Sports Park. Licenced Level 2 Meets are short course, and entries are accepted based upon fastest swims taking priority. Even if you have the qualifying times to enter a Licenced Level 2 Open Meet there is no guarantee of your entry being accepted because of the competitive nature of this event which is primarily aimed at senior elite swimmers.
- (e) **Licenced Level 1 Open Meets** – featuring all events, held in March each year at Surrey Sports Park as a long course competition (50m pool). Even if you have the qualifying times to enter a Licenced Level 1 Open Meet there is no guarantee of your entry being accepted because of the competitive nature of this event which is primarily aimed at senior elite swimmers.

EXTERNAL COMPETITIONS

The lead coach of each squad will determine an appropriate competition programme. Information can be found on the club website: gcsc.co.uk/club-designated-competitions-2/

NATIONAL ARENA SWIMMING LEAGUE

Guildford City enters team(s) into the National Arena Swimming League South every year. There are three rounds held in October, November and December with the goal of determining the regional champion. The age groups involved are 9/10/11, 12/13, 14/15, 16 years and over (ages as at 31 December in the year of competition). The regional champions and runners-up are then invited to a national final held long course in March the following year. Teams are chosen by the coaches and because of the history of our success in this competition, it should be seen as an honour for swimmers to be selected to represent their club.

NATIONAL ARENA JUNIOR LEAGUE

Guildford City enters team(s) into the National Arena Junior Swimming League every year. There are three rounds held in May, June and July with the goal of determining the seeding for the National Final held in September. The age groups involved are 9/10, 11, 12 years (ages as at 31 December in the year of competition). Teams are chosen by the coaches and because of the history of our success in this competition, it should be seen as an honour for swimmers to be selected to represent their club. Only one team comprising the fastest swimmers in each event are invited to the final.

SURREY COUNTY AND THE SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

As swimmers progress through the Club, County, Regional and National Championships will be targeted. Swimmers must be 10 years old as of 31st December in the year of competition to be eligible to take part in the Surrey County Championships (long course) which is the first rung of the Championships ladder. Note that there is



a two-year age band combining the 10- and 11-year-olds and qualifying times are targeted at the older age group. This event is held over two weekends late January and February of each year.

The Southeast Regional Championships (long course) are held in April and May. Note there is a two-year age band combining the 11- and 12-year-olds and qualifying times are targeted at the older age group. Qualifying times for both the Surrey County Championships and Southeast Regional Championships are subject to change annually and coaches will advise swimmers when this information is available.

THE PROCESS FOR ENTERING A LICENCED MEET

Details on all forthcoming competitions can be found at gcsc.co.uk/club-designated-competitions-2/. The meet Conditions of Entry and Race Schedule can be accessed via the 'click here for more details' link under each meet listed.

- Either Swim Manager, your coach or a meet administrator will advise you when a meet is open for entry.
- There will be an opening date and a closing date for every competition which must be adhered to.
- Full details of the meet programme schedule will be posted under 'Competitions' on the Club website gcsc.co.uk/club-designated-competitions-2/
- Please note swimmers may only enter meets where the squad has been invited

STEP BY STEP ENTERING A MEET VIA SWIM MANAGER

- All entries are made via Swim Manager. Please log in using your email address and password. Any problems, contact liz.simmons@gcsc.co.uk
- Log into your Swim Manager account and from the menu on the left side of the screen click on the 'meets' tab, then select the meet you wish to enter. Only meets currently open that your swimmer is eligible to enter will be listed. Note the meet description will contain important information including –
 - Closing date and time
 - Any meet restrictions
 - Meet acronym to add to the bank reference when making payment
 - Bank payment details
- Click on the entries tab to locate swimmer name and then click 'enter meet'
- Tick the box next to every event you wish to enter
- Scroll back to the top of the page where you will see two buttons – 'save draft' or 'submit entry'.
- Select 'Submit entry' only if you are sure of your entry selection, once made you can only make changes by contacting the meet administrator requesting them to unlock your account so you can start again
- Select 'save draft' if you wish to subsequently return to your entry and make any adjustments before submitting your final race selection
- **Races selected and saved as a draft are not confirmed entries.** Once the meet entry date has closed, they will be deleted, and it will not be possible to then enter



- Once an entry is submitted an invoice will be generated and a link automatically emailed to you. The invoice must be settled by bank transfer as soon as possible **and no later than before the stated meet closing date and time**. Please ignore the payment date on the invoice and note the following -
 - Click the green button on the invoice when making payment, this will generate a Swim Manager payment record
 - The entry will not change status to 'paid' immediately as all bank transfers have to be processed manually
- After the closing date your child will be notified whether they have been successful in their application
- Credits are given for any scratched race rejections (SCR)
- Scratches may be made because of a swimmer not meeting the qualifying time, oversubscription to the meet or not being age eligible
- Entry ages are usually 'as at 31st December' of the year in which the competition takes place. Occasionally a meet will be run as 'age on day of competition', this will be made clear in the conditions of entry
- All training is generally cancelled on the day of the competition, see Altered and Cancelled Sessions Schedule on our website: gcsc.co.uk/club-diary-altered-sessions/
- Competitions will be designated as either 'Sign In' or 'Sign Out'. For 'Sign In', swimmers need to arrive in time to locate the sign in desk and sign into each individual race. 'Sign out' means you need to alert the meet organiser or club administrator and your coach that you are withdrawing from a race. Both are equally important – miss sign in and you won't be able to take part in your race, miss sign out and you may receive a fine
- Parents are advised to carefully read the applicable Meet Conditions

COMPETITION SET UP

A competition can be run as a one-day event or whole weekend event. Each Open Meet will be divided into sessions, a full day of racing can be divided into two or three sessions and a one-day event run as one or two sessions. Generally, each session will be no longer than 3 hours' duration. For a full weekend event there will be a warmup before racing commences each day and a further warm up prior to the start of the second and/or third sessions. Warmups and timings will be made clear in the competition programme for each meet.

WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU

- Your GCSC hat and goggles as well as a spare hat and spare pair of goggles are essential
- A towel and/or dry robe to keep warm poolside
- Suitable pool shoes or sliders
- GCSC T shirt
- Nutritious snacks – please no sweets. Speak to your coach for further advice
- Water or diluted squash in a refillable plastic sports bottle
- A small poolside bag to pack all the above into



GUIDE AND FURTHER INFORMATION FOR ALL PARENTS NEW TO COMPETING

If you are unsure as to which events to enter, please speak to or email your coach well before the meet closing date to get any advice you might need.

Swimmers are expected to make every effort to arrive at a meet in a timely manner to sign in, change, locate and check in with their coach and be prepared for the warmup. Please always allow extra time for your journey and for parking. Keep your coaches' mobile number to hand so you are able to contact them **by text** in case of an emergency on the day. It is best to send a text as they are not always able to answer their phone when travelling or poolside. Some venues have coin operated lockers and restrict swimmers from bringing large bags poolside due to lack of space on deck. Bags brought poolside can and will get wet, do bear this in mind.

THE MEET PROCESS

Even if your race is the last race in any one Session, you are expected to attend the warmup and stay poolside with your coach until the race takes place, you cannot turn up part way through the session.

MARSHALLING

- Swimmers will be called up for their individual race several heats before it is due to take place. This is to prevent delays in the running of the programme and ensure the right swimmers are in the right place at the right time.
- Please ensure you go to the toilet well in advance of you being called up for your race!
- While a race is running you will notice the next heat of swimmers will already be lined up behind the blocks ready for the next heat, and swimmers for the heat after that will be in a marshalling area ready to step into their place.
- You will be given a lane number that you will be racing in for that race, it can and will change race by race.
- You will usually be lined up in the marshalling area in lane order.
- The timekeepers will also check you are in the correct lane just before you race so do not worry if you forget.

STANDING BEHIND THE BLOCKS READY TO RACE

- Be focussed. This is the time to think the race through, remind yourself of the stroke and distance, and ensure your goggles are in place.
- Behind each block and on every lane will be a timekeeper; if you are unsure what you are doing, please ask them, they will be happy to help you.
- There is a process for the starting of each race that will soon become familiar to your child. The referee in charge of the race will blow 3 or 4 sharp blasts on their whistle initially, this is the signal for the swimmers to pay attention and all non-competing swimmers and spectators to be quiet.
- The swimmers do not do anything at this stage but remain behind the blocks and wait for the announcer to announce the race.



- The referee will then blow a much longer blast on their whistle and raise and hold their arm in the air, this is the signal for you to either climb up onto the blocks ready for the race or jump over the backboard into the water for a backstroke race.
- You need to settle into your race position on the blocks.
- Once everyone has settled into the correct start position the referee will hand the race over to the starter who will announce 'take your marks' and then after a short pause, there will be either a bleep or a whistle and or a flashing light as the signal for you to start your race.
- **It is important that you remain completely still once 'take your marks' has been announced and only move on the start signal.**

ONCE YOUR RACE HAS FINISHED

- Stay in the water and in your lane unless directed to 'clear the water' in which case, leave the pool as quickly as possible via the steps at the side nearest to you.
- Many races take place as 'over the top' races which means the swimmers in the next heat start their race while you are still in the pool. This means that once your race has finished and before the next race starts you are required to move slightly away from the timing pads located directly against the finish wall and hold the lane rope, ensuring you keep very still.
- As soon as the next race has started and the swimmers have dived over you, you are expected to quickly leave the water via the nearest steps.

ONCE YOU ARE OUT OF THE POOL

- There may be a swim down pool available, a separate pool at a meet to allow swimmers the opportunity to swim down after a race. If the meet is at Spectrum this would be the teaching pool.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR DURING THE MEET

- Between races you are expected to always remain poolside with your coach. Your coach is responsible for you at all times **so you must ask if you need to leave the deck for any reason.**
- After your final race in any one session, you are allowed to leave poolside providing you let your coach know and you return in time for the start of the next session sign in and warmup if appropriate. Swimmers are expected to warm up for the start of every session.

MISCELLANEOUS

Heat Declared Winners – every race is very likely to have multiple heats. If you win your heat that doesn't mean you have necessarily won that event. Gold silver and bronze medals are awarded to the fastest three boys and fastest three girls in every age category for every different stroke and distance.

Medals Table – medal winners are continually announced between heats. If you win a medal you need to collect it from the medals table.



Disqualifications – are a normal part of developing a swimmer. Children who become upset while poolside will be consoled by their coach. You do not need to come poolside, simply congratulate them on taking part in the race when you see them.

Electronic devices – whilst we are happy for children to bring electronic devices to use between races, please note we cannot accept responsibility for any damage or loss. Swim England rules forbid the use of mobile phones within the changing room areas for any reason, flouting this rule could result in the child being removed from the competition.

Lost property – all property brought poolside by a swimmer is the responsibility of that swimmer. Anything left behind after either an internal or external meet **may** find its way back to its owner via the coaches if it is named, but this is not guaranteed and not the coaches responsibility.

Meet Mobile – the results of swimming competitions are posted on the 'Meet Mobile' app. It is strongly recommended that you download this app onto your device.

Parents remaining at the Venue – for any swimmer in Academy or Transition, the expectation is that a parent or designated guardian always remains within the building. If you have designated another parent to take responsibility for your child at any stage of the competition, please ensure your coach is aware of the arrangement.

Parents Poolside – parents are not allowed poolside at any time during a competition. If an emergency arises the coach will contact the parents via the list of emergency contacts held for each squad; please ensure you let us know if any of these details change. The only exception to this rule is if they are poolside in an official capacity, see next paragraph.

Officiating and Volunteering to help – to be able to run our licenced meets we need to ensure we have the correct number of both technical and non-technical officials at every event. Technical officials are required to ensure we meet all licencing requirements, and non-technical officials are to ensure the smooth running of the meet itself. We cannot run these meets without your help, and it is much more pleasant being poolside than sat on a hot and sticky balcony! We provide training and equipment as required for all poolside jobs and you would like to become a technical official such as a timekeeper or would prefer a non-technical role such as running the medals table or distributing refreshments, please contact Nicky Matthews: nicky.matthews@gcsc.co.uk



GUILDFORD CITY ANNUAL CLUB COMPETITION SCHEDULE 2024 - 2025																					
MONTH	DAY/DATE	LEVEL	TITLE	VENUE	LENGTH	EVENTS	NO TIME ENTRIES	INTERNAL CLOSING DATE	QUALIFICATION STANDARD	EXTERNAL CLUBS	SQUADS										
											Snr Perf	Jnr Perf	Snr Nats	AG Nats	Jnr Nats	Regs	Jnr SC	Jnr CD	Snr CD	PC Gold	PC Silver
OCT	19th / 20th	L3	SC County Qualifier	Spectrum	Sat 2pm – 8pm Sun 8am – 8pm	All events 200 and down	YES	23-Sep	NT's Accepted	Y			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
OCT	(TBC)	N/A	Academy TTs unlicensed	Spectrum	Full week during training	50's only	N/A	N/A	NT	N										✓	✓
NOV	22nd / 23rd	L2	Winter National Qualifier	SSP	Sat 8am – 7pm Sun 8am – 7pm	All events	NO	23/10	Previous year's County QT	Y	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
DEC	8th	L4	Distance TT's	SSP	7-11am during training	400m+	YES	23/10	N/A	N		✓	✓	✓	✓						
JAN	11th	L4	Club Champs*	Spectrum	Sat 2pm – 8pm	All:50s,100 FC, 200 FC + IM	YES	30/11	NT's Accepted	N					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MAR	22nd / 23rd	L1	National Qualifier	SSP	Sat 8am – 7pm Sun 8am – 7pm	All events	NO	24/2	Previous year's County QT	Y	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
APR	5 th / 6 th	L3	Regional Qualifier	Spectrum	Sat 2pm – 8pm Sun 8am – 8pm	All events 200 and down	YES	22 / 2	NT's Accepted	Y			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
JUN	28th	L4	Club Champs*	Spectrum	Sat 2pm – 8pm	All:50s,100s, 200 FC + IM	YES	26/5	NT's Accepted	N					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes 1. If meet oversubscribed scratches to be made from top squad down (*)

Key Championship Competition Closing Dates
Surrey Closing Date: 8th January 2025
Winter Regional Closing Date: 12th October 2024
Summer Regional Closing Date: 4th April 2025
National Window: 8th March - 11th May 2025

Key GCSC Competition Dates
GCSC internal entry closing date: 5 weeks out
External club entry closing date: 4 weeks out
Accepted/rejected entries announced: 3 weeks out

Event Progression	
PC Bronze & Silver	50m's & 100m IM
PC Gold	Add 5 x 100m, 200m FC, 200m IM
Regional Squad	Add 200m Form Strokes
Junior National	400m+ Events



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