

Your first gala?

Attending a gala for the first time can be a daunting experience for both swimmer and parent. The tips and hints below should help to make that first gala a positive and successful one.

What to bring?

It is a good idea to pack your bags the night before, with everything you might need. Here is a checklist, which should be useful to you (No glass bottles or any other breakable items).

- Swimmers should have everything they need for the session in a bag on poolside with them
- At least 2 swimming costumes
- 2 towels
- A Club hat (plus a spare one)
- Goggles (plus a spare pair)
- Pool/Deck shoes
- A Club top (if you have one), shorts/tracksuit to keep you warm
- Enough food (easily digestible) to last the day including snacks to graze on in between swims
- Suggested food - pasta/rice, bread, pitta, bagels or muffins, rice cakes, popcorn, bananas and breakfast/cereal bars
- Sufficient drinks (1-2 litres) preferably water or diluted squash no fizzy drinks
- Entertainment (for open meets only) - Music/iPod, books, games anything to help pass the time
- Money in case of emergency

Please ensure all belongings are clearly labelled. Swimmers are responsible for any valuables that they bring poolside.

Arrival at the swimming pool.

- Please ensure you arrive in plenty of time (at least 20 mins prior to warm-up)
- Report to the Coach or Team manager
- Sign-in / Register - It is the swimmer's responsibility to sign-in. If you are unsure of where/how to sign in one of the team managers will help you. Failure to sign-in may result in you not being allowed to swim.
- Familiarise yourself with the pool layout (toilets, marshalling area etc), change ready for warm-up and join the team poolside.

Who's who?

At any gala, there should be 1-2 coaches and 1-2 team managers.

The coach will brief swimmers before their race, watch the race, record splits when necessary and give swimmers feedback after the race.

The team manager will advise swimmers when to warm-up, go to marshalling, warm down and eat. Any concerns or problems please come and ask.

Warm-up

Check which warm-up is yours and be on time for it. The coach and team managers will advise you on which lanes to use - swimmers should stay in the lane allocated. Your coach will have shown/told you what warm up to do. Use the warm-up wisely to ensure you get the most out of it. Don't stop to talk to your friends, you will have plenty of time to do this throughout the day.

Where should you be?

Swimmers are expected to sit with the team and not with their parents in the spectator area. Please don't wander off without speaking to the team manager first - please ask before going to the toilet or changing rooms. When you are at a swimming gala and with an appointed coach/team manager, they are responsible for you and you must not leave the building without permission. If your parents are there, please ask the coach for permission to leave the building with them. After your last race in a session, you may be given permission to go join your parents and take a break.

What does a PB mean?

A PB is a Personal Best time and it is a better measure of achievement than where a swimmer finishes in a race. Please note heats in Open Meets are based on times and not on age.

It is a good idea to keep a note of your child's times for future reference as this is a good way of showing your child's progress.

Parents please remember that swimming is a very tough sport and your child can't PB all the time, it's your job to encourage and support - it never looks good when a parent starts ranting at their child for not doing as well as the parent expects. It is the Coach's job to point out where a swimmer could have done better and to ensure your child gets the maximum learning out of a race.

Good behaviour

When you are representing your club you are expected to behave properly. Please make sure you are familiar with the code of conduct - this applies to all the representatives of the club - swimmers, volunteers and parents.

Good luck

Remember galas are fun, cheer on your team, learn the Worcester Whoosh and enjoy yourself.

Tips for parents

- If your child is ill and unable to attend, please let the coach know in plenty of time especially for team galas where a replacement swimmer may need to be called up
- Arrive in plenty of time, it is important for your child to have a warm-up
- Parents aren't allowed on poolside at any time during a competition
- Spectator areas are hot so wear appropriate clothes - shorts and t-shirts aren't out of place even in the depths of winter
- Be prepared and bring a drink (in case the machines are out of order)
- Team galas usually last 2-3 hours whilst open meets can last all day
- There is usually an admission charge so change is always appreciated by those on the door
- Most galas have a raffle
- Try to sit with other Worcester parents, we're a friendly bunch and happy to answer any of your queries (we've all been there and learnt from others)
- A pen, paper and highlighter are a must to help you keep track of your child's swims and a stopwatch if you're very enthusiastic
- Get behind the team, don't be afraid to cheer and enjoy it.