

Information for Novice Competitors

What to bring:

- 2 Towels (One for poolside & one for changing)
- Club swimming cap
- Swimming costume/trunks
- Goggles
- Water bottle
- Spare costumes/trunks, cap and goggles if possible (goggles can snap, caps may tear and a dry costume after your race is more comfortable!)
- T-shirt, shorts/tracksuit bottoms for poolside
- Healthy snacks (cereal bars, fresh or dried fruit, digestive biscuits, etc) and drinks (water, diluting squash, fruit juice, sports drinks if you like - ***no chocolate or fizzy drinks and no glass bottles or containers!***)
- Suitable shoes for poolside i.e. flip flops

Timetable:

You must arrive in plenty of time – at least 20 minutes before the warm-up time and report to the appointed poolside team.

If you do not arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of the warm-up you risk being withdrawn from all of your races in that session. Try to let the poolside coach know if you are delayed for any reason on your way to the competition.

If for any reason you cannot make it to the competition, please let the secretary and/or poolside coaches know.

All swimmers do a warm up at the time allocated by the organisers at the beginning of the session, regardless of the time of their first race. Swimmers will be supervised and instructed what to do during the warm-up by DASC poolside coaches, team manager and club captains.

After the warm up, swimmers should have a drink, dry off, eat a small snack, (change into a dry costume if they wish), put on their poolside clothes and shoes and report back to the poolside team.

Swimmers must stay with their poolside team manager(s) during the competition and must ask their permission to leave poolside **for any reason**. Team Managers need to know where the swimmers are to help prepare swimmers for their race and to make sure they report to marshalling in good time, several heats before their event. Swimmers will be supervised and directed to the start of their event by a Gala host official (Marshall).

Swimmers should not leave the competition until the session is over and their coach/team manager has dismissed them. It is much appreciated that swimmers stay and support their team mates in their events and are available for relay events.

The people on poolside dressed all in white are the technical officials – timekeepers, judges, starters & referees. You must follow their instructions.

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Parents are not permitted to sit with swimmers on poolside unless they are the poolside coaches/team managers/helpers appointed by the club for that competition. Generally this is because there is limited space on poolside and the meet organisers restrict swimmers and spectators to separate areas.

Swimming Tips:

If you do not wish to dive from the blocks you must tell the marshal or official on your lane before you line up for the race (Note that there is no diving at the shallow end at the Michael Woods Centre, Glenrothes).

Be sure you know which stroke you will be swimming and how many lengths you need to do. Your coach or team manager and the marshal will have told you, but if you are not sure you can ask the judge or timekeepers on your lane while you are waiting – they won't mind.

Starts:

At the start of each race the referee will give a series of short whistles – this tells the swimmers in that heat to get ready (**and everyone else to be quiet!**). The referee will then give one long whistle telling the competitors to get up on the blocks for **butterfly, breaststroke** and **front crawl** events or into the water for **backstroke** events. For **backstroke**, the referee will give a second long whistle telling the swimmers to get into position for the backstroke start.

The starter will then say, "Take your Marks". You must take up your starting position and then stay completely still until the starting signal (usually an electronic beep or horn). The starter cannot give the signal until all the competitors are completely still.

Strokes:

Front Crawl - Swim all the way to the finish and make sure you touch the wall. You do not have to tumble turn as long as you touch the wall.

Backstroke - Swim on your back all the way to the finish except for tumble turns. You must be on your back when you leave the wall after a turn. At the finish you must touch the wall whilst still on your back – you cannot turn onto your side to touch. Remember to look forward (at the block) at the start of your swim.

Breaststroke - You must touch the wall with **both hands at the same time** for turning and finishing. Hands must not pull beyond your hip-line except for the **one** long pull at the start and at turns. No flutter kick between breaststroke kicks. Your head must break the surface with each arm stroke.

Butterfly - Again you must touch the wall with **both hands at the same time** when turning and finishing. No flutter or breaststroke kick at any time. Both arms must move forward at the same time over the water.

Medleys (Individual and Relay) - A medley race involves all four strokes each for a quarter of the total distance. Each stroke must be finished as it would be in an individual race (Backstroke on the back, Breaststroke and Butterfly touching with **both hands at the same time**). The order for an Individual Medley is Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Front Crawl. The order for a Medley Relay is Backstroke, Breaststroke, Butterfly, Front Crawl.

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Relays

You must wait until the swimmer coming towards you touches the wall before you dive from the blocks (or leave the wall if you are starting in the water). You must also swim in the order you have been given and, in medley relays, you must swim with the correct stroke.

After each race you must report back to your poolside team for feedback – make sure you have enough to drink, dry off quickly, put on your poolside clothes and have a small snack. Swimmers will normally be expected to stay with and support their team-mates until the end of the session – including medal presentations.

A Word about Disqualifications(Technical Infringements):

It can be upsetting for swimmers (and their parents) to be disqualified and it happens to every swimmer at some point. It will help if you remember -

1. A disqualification just means you have made a mistake – it doesn't mean you are a failure or a bad person or that the judge/referee doesn't like you! You are still learning and it takes a lot of practice to get it right. As you improve your technique, get stronger and gain experience in racing you will make fewer and fewer mistakes until you rarely make any at all.
2. The first person you should go to when you have been disqualified is your **poolside coach**. The poolside coach will check with the referee to find out exactly what has happened so that you and your coach can work on correcting the fault for next time.
3. It is understandable and OK to be upset but that swim is done. Learn from it, then 'throw it away' and focus on how you will excel at your next swim!
4. Even Olympic and world-class swimmers make mistakes.

General:

- You must be quiet for the start of each race so that the swimmers can hear the starting signal.
- Once the starting signal has been given you can (and should!) be as noisy as you like in supporting your team mates.
- **Programmes, start sheets and results sheets** are usually made available for sale at the competition. The gala host may have swimming items (costumes, caps, goggles, water bottles, etc.) for sale at and there is often a raffle or some other form of fundraising.
- No photography is authorised.
- **Mobile phones** should be **switched off** – they should not be used in the pool area, spectators' area or changing rooms. Some centres have a blanket ban on their use.
- **Parents** - please be aware that poolside coaches and team managers are only responsible for your child during the warm-ups and competition sessions. If you are not going to be present yourself, please arrange for another adult to supervise your child during the breaks and ensure that the coach or team manager has a contact number in case of emergencies.

Finally – Keep Safe, Swim Well and most importantly,

HAVE FUN!